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The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION
DHAKA MONDAY JULY 1, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 159 | ASHAR 17, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 24, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Dhaka looks to Beijing for fresh loans

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **JAGARAN CHAKMA**

Talks on Chinese loan proposals will be at the fore during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to Beijing.

During her visit, Bangladesh may seek around $5 billion in budget support in addition to loans for a number of large projects, said a finance ministry official on condition of anonymity.

While visiting Bangladesh in October 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping promised about $20 billion -- the largest amount committed by a bilateral partner of Bangladesh -- over the following four years to implement 27 projects.

Bangladesh is again expecting Chinese financing at a time when it is facing pressure to maintain adequate foreign currency reserves.

Hasina's is likely to be in China on July 8-11.

Seeking anonymity, a top official of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) said they have received proposals for large projects from different ministries which suggest taking loans.

The government has been in talks with China about the projects. However, nothing has been finalised yet, the official said.

One of the projects under consideration for Chinese funding is the construction of a broad-gauge rail line from Bhanga to Kuakata via Barishal and Payra Port. It is estimated to cost about $5 billion.

Another project under consideration is the MRT Line-2, from Gabtoli to Narayanganj via Gulistan with a branch line from Gulistan to Sadarghat.

The underground and elevated metro rail is estimated to cost around $5 billion.

Besides, Bangladesh has already sought more than 36 billion yuan, equivalent to $5 billion, as soft loans from China for

Bangladesh may seek around $5 billion in budget support in addition to loans for a number of large projects.

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An HSC candidate and her guardian shield themselves with an umbrella from the rain as they head towards the exam centre at Habibullah Bahar College in the capital's Shantinagar. The city experienced intermittent rains all day yesterday, the first day of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent exams.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500cr in VAT: NBR

With penalty, they owe govt Tk 7,000cr; S Alam Group official says they didn't 'evade even a single taka in VAT'

SOHEL PARVEZ

S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd and S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd have unpaid value added tax (VAT) and consequent penalty worth over Tk 7,000 crore, as they allegedly evaded VAT through various means, including by presenting lower purchase and sales data in VAT returns between 2019 and 2022, according to an audit by the NBR's VAT wing.

During the period, the two companies "evaded" Tk 3,538 crore in VAT, for which they were fined another TK 3,531 crore, the audit report says.

The audit was carried out by the field office of Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, and was subsequently reviewed by a five-member committee headed by an additional commissioner, Chattogram VAT Commissionerate, which drew the same conclusion.

Of the amount, S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd allegedly evaded Tk 1,917 crore and S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd Tk 1,621 crore in three years from the financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22, according to the audit report submitted in October 2023 and the subsequent review report submitted in May 2024.

The two companies denied any wrongdoing.

The regulator came up with the unpaid VAT claims after analysing the VAT returns and the financial statements audited by the two companies' CA firm as well as their written response to the VAT Commissionerate.

The field office audit team submitted its report on October 2 last year. Later, the field office formed a five-member committee to

- S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd 'evaded' Tk 1,917 crore in VAT in 3 yrs
- S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd 'dodged' Tk 1,621 crore in VAT during same period
- The two companies were also fined Tk 3,532 crore
- They have 90 days to appeal by paying 20 percent (over Tk 700 crore) of the VAT claim
- S Alam Group to appeal the decision

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Cybercriminals breach NBR server again

Use login credentials of customs official in a bid to get container of cigarettes released at Ctg port

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

A "cybercriminal gang" attempted to release a container of cigarettes from Chattogram Port after breaching the server of the National Board of Revenue with the login credentials of a customs official.

Acting on a tip-off, customs officials seized the container loaded with 50 lakh sticks of Mond cigarettes, worth about Tk 5 crore, at the port on Thursday, hours after a ship carrying the container reached the port.

The breach of the server came to light on Saturday after the officials launched an investigation into the incident. They found that Hamko Corporation Limited imported the cigarettes by providing false declaration and fake LC (letter of credit) documents.

The "gang" used the login ID of Mohammad Zakaria, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Customs House,

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4TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF LATIFUR RAHMAN

THE THIRD VIEW

Remembering the flagbearer of independent journalism

8 years since Chotoo, 4 years since Nana Bhai

SEE PAGE 9

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful
8th Death Anniversary of
FARAAZ AYAAZ HOSSAIN
15 April 1996 - 1 July 2016

Eight years have passed since you left us, and not a day has gone by that we haven't thought of you. You left us in grief when you chose to sacrifice your life to protect your friends. Yet you make us immensely proud when we witness your powerful legacy of courage, friendship, and humanity.

You are no longer just our Chotoo, today you are Bangladesh's, and you are the world's.

You live on as a symbol of courage and continue to serve as our moral compass to this day. Though you are no longer with us, your memory, and bravery live on.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love, and support. Please keep our beloved Faraaz in your prayers. May Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

Shahnaz Rahman and Family

8YRS OF HOLEY ARTISAN ATTACK

Militants turning to apps to draw new recruits

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With the so-called Islamic State trying to regroup in Syria and beyond, Neo JMB, a Bangladeshi IS-inspired group, is becoming active again.

Since June last year, at least 315 people accused of militancy have been released on bail, and around 70 of them are suspected Neo JMB members, said officers of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

- Neo JMB chief Abu Bakar, a former Huji leader, is now in the Middle East
- At least 315 suspects released on bail since June 2023
- CTTC arrested 826 suspects, including 128 Neo JMB men
- Neo JMB uses Threema, Signal, Telegram, and Wickr Me

Many of these suspects who know how to make bombs and have combat training are now a cause for concern, they added.

According to five CTTC officials, citing intelligence reports, many of them may have joined four or five online groups of Neo JMB.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful
4th Death Anniversary of
LATIFUR RAHMAN
28 August 1945 - 1 July 2020

Four years since you left us, and you remain as our guiding light. Your strong values of ethics and integrity are still woven into every moment.

You were the pillar of our family and to all those around you. You remain a shining example of honesty, patriotism, and excellence in every sphere of life. We may miss your physical presence, but you live on in all our hearts. You live on in all your strength and as a symbol of ethics.

Though you are no longer with us, your memory, and glorious legacy continues.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love, and support. Please keep our beloved Latifur Rahman in your prayers. May Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

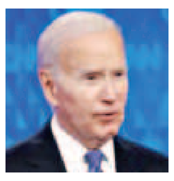
Shahnaz Rahman and Family

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Top Democrats rule out replacing Biden

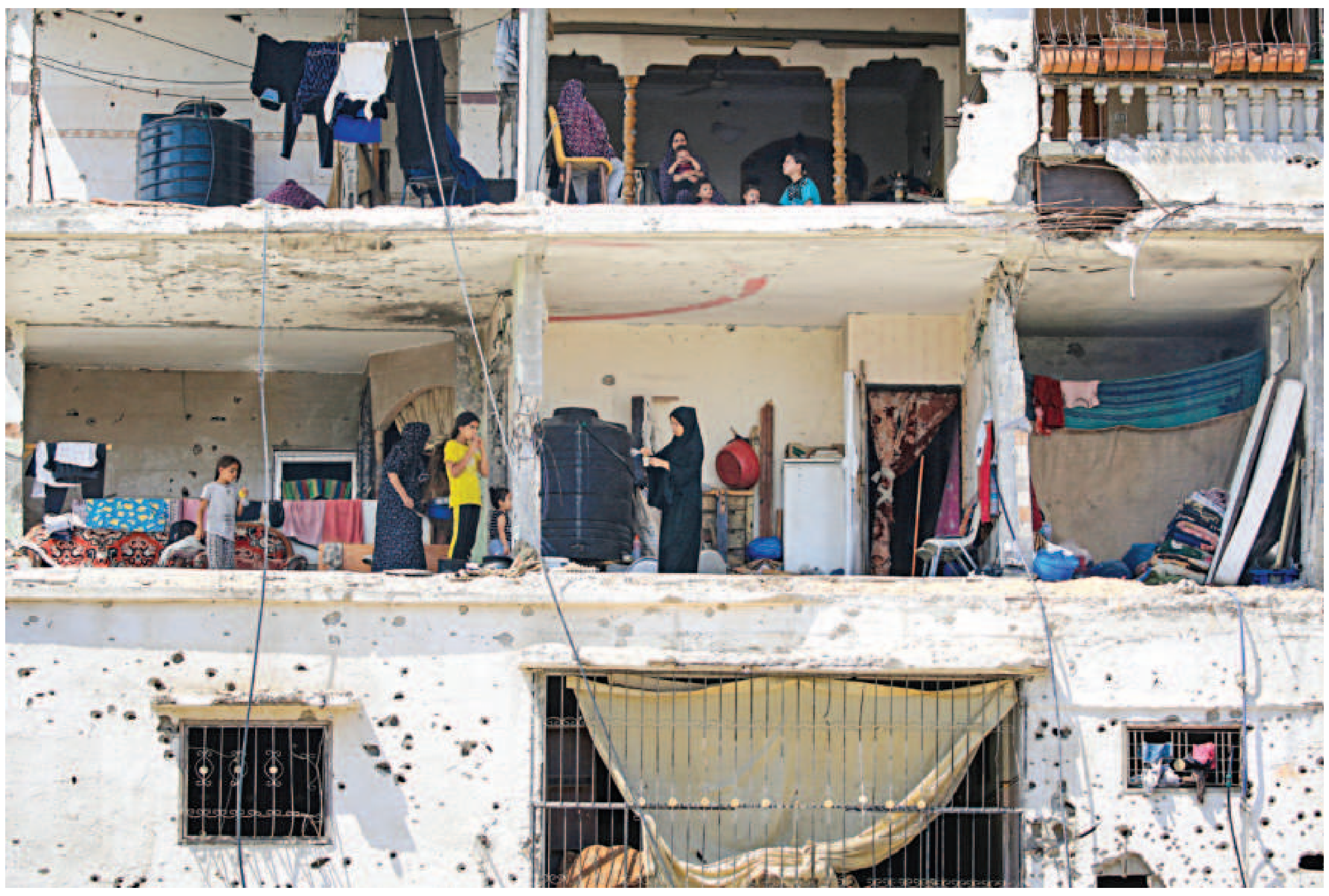
REUTERS, *Washington*

Top Democrats yesterday ruled out the possibility of replacing President Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee after a feeble debate performance and called on party members to focus instead on the consequences of a second Donald Trump presidency.



After days of hand-wringing about Biden and the outcome of the November 5 election, Democrat leaders firmly rejected calls for their party to choose a younger presidential candidate. Biden, 81, was huddling with family members at the Camp David presidential retreat, with his political future a likely topic of discussion.

But the drumbeat of calls for Biden to step aside continued, and a post-debate CBS poll showed a 10-point jump in the number of Democrats who believe Biden should not be running for president, to 46 percent from 36 percent in February.



Palestinian families return to their badly damaged homes in an apartment block hit during previous Israeli bombardment, in the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Diesel, kerosene prices lowered by Tk 1

Petrol, octane prices unchanged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has reduced diesel and kerosene prices by Tk 1 per litre while keeping petrol and octane prices unchanged at Tk 127 and Tk 131, respectively, for the month of July.

The new price will be effective from July 1 (12:00am), said a gazette of the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

As per the gazette, the prices of diesel and kerosene were set at Tk 106.75 a litre, which was Tk 107.75 in June.

The government has been adjusting local fuel prices in parallel with the international market since March this year.

On February 29, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) issued a notification on Automatic Fuel Oil Pricing Guidelines.

According to the notification, the prices of all petroleum fuels – petrol, diesel, octane, kerosene, furnace oil, jet fuel, and marine fuels – will be set automatically based on the international market price.

In May, the government hiked diesel price by Tk 1 per litre, and petrol and octane prices by Tk 2.50 per litre.

In April, the price of diesel and kerosine was reduced by Tk 2.25 per litre but the petrol and octane remained unchanged.

In the first adjustment of March, diesel and kerosene prices decreased by Tk 0.75, Octane dropped by Tk 4 and petrol by Tk 3.

Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500cr in VAT: NBR

FROM PAGE 1

review the audit findings.

The review report, submitted in May 21, said the "VAT dodging allegations have been proven beyond doubt."

On June 9, the Customs, VAT & Excise Commissionerate, Chattogram, in its adjudication orders asked the companies to pay the "evaded VAT" worth Tk 3,538 crore along with the penalty to the tune of Tk 3,531 crore and applicable interest to the state coffers within 15 working days.

The deadline ends on July 3 and if the companies do not appeal against the order, the regulator will "take steps to realise the evaded VAT, penalty and interest as per the law," NBR officials said.

S Alam Group Executive Director (Finance) Subrata Kumar Bhowmik told The Daily Star on June 27 that they did not "evade even a single taka of VAT" and that they will appeal the decision.

The two sister concerns of the business conglomerate have 90 days to appeal by paying 20 percent (over Tk 700 crore) of the VAT claim.

Md Mustafizur Rahman, S Alam Group's company lawyer, told The Daily Star on June 29 that before they file any appeal, they are seeking an in-person hearing with the VAT authorities to present their full response and the relevant documents that the regulator had sought during the audit and review.

"If they give us a full hearing and allow us adequate time, we will be able to convince them that their unpaid VAT claims against us do not reflect the reality," he said, adding that they applied for a full hearing on June 6, three days before the VAT authorities asked them to pay the unpaid VAT, but were not allowed the opportunity.

FIELD OFFICE AUDIT FINDINGS

The VAT office came up with the findings by comparing the sales data given in the VAT returns and the annual financial statements from 2019-20 to 2021-22 that the companies submitted to the income tax office in the port city.

In its report on S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd, the VAT Commissionerate said the company showed "deflated sales in its VAT returns" than that in its annual reports, audited by a Chartered Accountancy (CA) firm, submitted to the tax authorities by the company itself.

"As per the audited reports from the financial years 2019-20 to 2021-22, total sales of the company were Tk 12,725.95 crore. On the other hand, the reported sales by the organisation in the VAT returns during the period were Tk 2,401.92 crore," the report says.

"This means, the company did not present sales worth Tk 10,324 crore in the VAT returns. By concealing actual sales in VAT returns, the organisation did not pay VAT amounting to Tk 1,346.61 crore during the period which is realisable," it says, citing the 15 percent VAT rate on sales of edible oil applicable at the time.

The other company -- S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd -- did the same, but only on a different scale, the audit found.

During the same period, this company's "sales value in its audited financial statement was Tk 12,850.48 crore. But in the VAT return, the figure was Tk 3,620.63 crore, which is Tk 9,229.84 crore less than that presented in the audited financial report," the report says.

Besides, both companies "evaded" revenue by showing lower value of raw material purchase in VAT returns than that reported in their annual reports during the three financial years.

For example, S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd in its financial statement showed "purchase value of raw materials worth Tk 11,245 crore during those three years. But the VAT returns and other related documents submitted by the company to the VAT authorities show the purchase of raw materials was worth Tk 3,145 crore."

The amount is Tk 8,100.39 crore less than that shown in the company's own financial statement.

"It is clear from the comparative analysis of its audited financial statements and VAT returns that in order to evade VAT, soybean and palm oil was sold after producing the item with ingredients procured from local sources or collected by any other means," the report says.

"In the company report audited by a CA firm, there is information of sales without processing ingredients (CDSO [Crude Degummed Soybean Oil] and RBD palm olein).

"It is clear from data that Tk 8,100.39 crore worth of raw materials have been procured locally against which the company failed to submit any VAT chalan or Bill of Entry."

During the period, 7.5 percent VAT rate was applicable on such local purchase, and as such "the total amount of unpaid VAT is Tk 607.52 crore, which is collectable from the firm."

As for the other company -- S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd -- its raw material procurement value was shown Tk 11,171.42 crore during the three years, but the VAT returns and other related documents submitted by the company to the VAT authorities put the purchase value at Tk 5,206.53 crore.

"It is clear from data that Tk 5,964.89 crore worth of raw materials have been procured locally against which the company failed to submit any VAT chalan or Bill of Entry," the report says, adding that the total amount of unpaid VAT in this case was Tk 447.36 crore.

The Customs, VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, also compared the procurement data of goods and services provided in the annual financial statements and VAT returns in the years from 2019-20 to 2021-22 and found that "S Alam Vegetable Oil paid lower VAT at source, known as VAT Deducted at Source (VDS), than the required amount against its purchase during the period."

The company's unpaid revenue against VDS on goods and services, on which 5 percent to 15 percent VAT is applicable, was Tk 5.63 crore in those three years, the report says.

During the same period, S Alam Super Edible Oil had unpaid revenue against VDS worth Tk 1.78 crore.

The Commissionerate report on both the companies says "these sorts of activities of the organisations are a clear violation" of 10 sections of the VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012, and six Rules of VAT and Supplementary Duty Rules 2016.

The field office of the NBR also slapped a penalty of Tk 1,911 crore and Tk 1,620 crore on S Alam Vegetable Oil and S Alam Super Edible Oil respectively for "non-compliance" of VAT rules.

"Legal steps can be taken to realise the evaded VAT against the company under sections 85 and 111 of the VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012," the report says about both firms.

During its audit, the field office sought explanations from the companies and asked them to appear in a hearing on October 30, 2023. In the hearing, both companies submitted a written response and sought more time for a detailed written reply.

The Commissionerate office allowed time extension for both companies three times since, and the companies submitted its written response on December 28 last year, seeking withdrawal of the charges after a review.

'PROVEN BEYOND DOUBT'

Following the written submission by the two companies and their appeal for a review of the unpaid VAT claims, the Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate formed a five-member committee, which submitted its report on May 21 this year after examining the audit report by the field office and other related documents as well as the response submitted by the two firms.

"All things considered and having analysed everything, it is clear that the allegations of VAT evasion worth Tk 1,917.39 crore by S Alam Vegetable Oil has been proven beyond doubt," the review report says, drawing the same conclusion about S Alam Super Edible Oil whose total unpaid VAT is Tk 1,621.92 crore.

RESPONSE TO REVIEW TEAM

Both companies in their written response to the VAT authorities said the allegation of VAT dodging and the demand notice by the regulator is "totally unlawful, baseless, fabricated and not based on data."

"We have been carrying out business by paying all sorts of applicable VAT as per laws and regulations," the two companies said in an identical response.

"Every year, we deposit crores of taka in revenue to the state coffers. But bank loans are needed to operate this large company. We have been carrying out business and producing goods with bank loans. For availing bank loans, we have to show excess transactions which is why excess sales and purchase of raw materials have been shown in the financial reports audited by the CA firm," read both the letters.

"Excess sales value has been presented in the audited reports by the CA firm to get loans from banks. But [VAT] returns have been filed as per the actual sales and VAT has been paid accordingly."

The two companies also said it was "not even possible to produce the goods shown in their audited financial statements with the raw materials that were imported from 2019-20 to 2021-22."

"If import and input-output coefficient and imported raw materials data are analysed, it will be clear that the sales data shown in the annual reports audited by our CA firm is not correct. Rather, the sales data presented in the returns and the amount of VAT paid against the sales are correct," both companies said.

Further, they informed that "the machinery and workforce of the respective companies also do not have the capacity to produce the goods shown in the audited report" and that the "market demand is much lower than the sales value presented" in their financial reports.

They also maintain that the findings by the NBR's VAT wing that they procured raw materials from local sources is "incorrect".

"Because, all the raw materials to produce edible oil is import-based. As such, no raw materials have been procured locally. So the demand for VAT at source is not right."

'CRIMINAL OFFENCE'

The VAT authorities' review report says that purchases and sales data of any firm should be the same in all its commercial documents submitted to regulators, bank, income tax and VAT authorities. This means, it is a legal obligation on the part of the firm concerned that its purchase and sales data presented to VAT office, income tax office, banks and in the financial reports audited by CA firms should all be the same.

"It is clear from analysis of the written response from the firm that the said entity concealed information of actual sales/procurement and VAT at source," the review team said in case of both the companies.

Also, the company authorities "did not provide any proof/documents to support their written response" although they were requested and granted opportunities more than once to submit proofs against their claim. Neither did the companies "nominate any representative to re-examine the evaded VAT amount" though the audit team made such requests in writing to the companies, the review report says.

"They claim that in order to avail loans from banks, they prepared the report by incorporating inflated purchase and sales data. If this is true, they have clearly committed a criminal offence.

"On the other hand, the audit firm that has prepared this report has demonstrated professional dishonesty and aided the accused firm to commit a criminal offence," the review report says, again about both firms.

The related bank has also "acted very unprofessionally" if it sanctioned loans based on an "imaginary and untrue" financial statement, it added.

"To accept such claims by an accused firm will be to patronise its criminal activities, which no government agency can do.

"The related income tax circle has determined tax liabilities of the firm based on the audited financial reports submitted by the firms. It has no relations with bank loans. So the claim that the report has been prepared to get bank loans cannot be acceptable."

Howladar Yunus & Co, which audited the financial statements of these two companies for two of the three years in question, said they were the "auditor of the companies, not preparer of the accounts."

"Our mandate was to audit the accounts along with notes to the accounts prepared by the management. We followed the international auditing standards to conduct the audit and concluding our audit opinion. The question of cooperating with anybody for any reason does not arise at all," it told The Daily Star in a written statement.

RESPONSE TO THE DAILY STAR

S Alam Group company lawyer Mustafizur Rahman said, "The VAT auditors had legal obligations to inspect the factory to assess the sales records and hear us out. But they reached the decision without doing any of these. That is why there has been a misunderstanding. It is solely because we were not given the opportunity to be heard. They would have gotten a clearer picture if they heard us."

He admitted that the VAT authorities communicated with them several times in writing during the audit and review and allowed them time to offer their explanations in personal hearing and in writing.

"But that was not enough. They gave us way less time than what we sought. It was not sufficient for us to prepare all the documents that date back to 2019 and a detailed response in a matter as serious involving such a huge VAT claim," he told The Daily Star on June 29.

About the discrepancies in sales records presented in their financial statements and the VAT returns, he said the financial reports audited by their CA firm contained advance sales as well. "But some of these sales eventually did not take place, and we returned the money to the buyers who were not delivered the goods. We did not conceal anything. We have bank documents showing that we returned the money."

Regarding the VAT authorities' findings that the two companies sourced certain volumes of goods from the local market and "dodged relevant VAT" in the process, he said, "The goods in question are not available in local markets, they can only be imported. And the VAT authorities' own report says that they found our import data correct. So the claim that we procured raw materials from local markets is based on assumption."

'LAME EXCUSE'

Syed Mushfequr Rahman, commissioner at Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, said they allowed the two companies "multiple opportunities for hearing" which are minutely recorded in the adjudication order.

On the June 6 appeal by the two companies for a fresh hearing, he said they already appeared for hearing and made their submissions during the audit.

"Later, we formed a committee to examine their submissions. Based on the committee reports, we asked them to appear before the hearing twice but they failed. Then when we issued the order, they sent another letter for hearing which couldn't be entertained. All these details are recorded in my adjudication order."

On the question of sales figure, he said sales are final figures as per their own audited annual reports.

"We didn't create any figures. Based on their audited reports, they have paid the income tax, but failed to show the same in VAT returns. If any refunds were made to buyers, how come it was not reflected in their financial statements audited by their CA firms? This is an absolutely lame excuse," he told The Daily Star on June 29.

On the question of sourcing raw materials, the commissioner said companies are supposed to import the raw materials.

"But they can be procured locally from other manufacturers, which is the only plausible explanation for the higher sales volumes in their financial statements compared to their imports. That is why, we have imposed VAT that is due to be deducted by the two S Alam companies at source while buying from local sellers."

> **"The VAT auditors had legal obligations to inspect the factory to assess the sales records and hear us out. But they reached the decision without doing any of these. That is why there has been a misunderstanding. It is solely because we were not given the opportunity to be heard. They would have gotten a clearer picture if they heard us."**
>
> **Mustafizur Rahman**
> S Alam Group's company lawyer

> **"We gave two companies 'multiple opportunities for hearing' which are recorded in the adjudication order. We didn't create any figures. Based on their audited reports, they have paid the income tax, but failed to show the same in VAT returns. If any refunds were made to buyers, how come it was not reflected in their audited report? This is an absolutely lame excuse."**
>
> **Syed Mushfequr Rahman,**
> Commissioner, Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Ctg

Dhaka looks

FROM PAGE 1

trade facility.

At present, Bangladesh has about $22 billion trade deficit with China. Once received, the $5 billion policy loan will help the country ease the ongoing pressure on foreign currency reserves.

The ERD official said they were in talks with China regarding the policy loan and that a deal could be signed during Hasina's visit.

Although China had promised to lend about $20 billion in 2016, as of January this year, the two sides managed to sign agreements on only nine projects, involving $8.08 billion, figures from the ERD show.

Of the $8.08 billion, Bangladesh could utilise only $4.91 billion, less than a quarter of the money promised by China.

Red-tape on both sides is largely to blame for the slow loan disbursements, said officials and experts.

The ERD official said this time, loan agreements are expected to be signed under a model different from the one used after 2016.

After China promised the $20 billion, agreements were signed on a project-by-project basis.

This time, officials are expecting that the loan agreements would be signed during Hasina's visit.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said what the Chinese president had announced was a promise.

He thinks that red-tape on both sides has been responsible for the slow progress and low fund disbursements.

Kazi Shofiqul Azam, a former secretary to the ERD, said there were bottlenecks on both sides, causing delays in loan-deal finalisation and implementation.

"The countries need to follow a number of formalities, and they are time-consuming sometimes. This has been the main reason behind the delays a project face ... ."

STATUS OF 27 PROJECTS

Twenty-seven projects were supposed to be funded with the $20 billion initial commitment. Of those, two projects have been struck off the list.

Two projects – the digital connectivity project of Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Ltd (BTCL) and the Info Sarker-3 of the Bangladesh Computer Council -- involving $388 million have been implemented.

Seven other projects received $7.7 billion and their implementation is ongoing.

The Karnaphuli Tunnel, built under a $707 million project, has been opened to traffic.

The $550 million Single Point Mooring with a double pipeline project and the $2.67 billion Padma rail link project are nearing completion.

The expansion and strengthening of the power system network ($1.4 billion), the power grid network project ($977 million), the Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway project ($1.12 billion), and Rajshahi Wasa surface water treatment plant project ($276.25 million) -- are in various stages of implementation.

The loan applications have been sent for two projects. The loan agreement for the establishment of digital connectivity involving $473.75 million is likely to be signed this year.

Negotiations for commercial contracts to convert the Akhaura-Sylhet rail line to dual-gauge from metre gauge, involving $1.3 billion, and expansion and modernisation of Mongla port, costing $354 million, were underway.

Four projects are being evaluated by the Chinese side: Chinese economic and industrial zone in Chattogram ($221 million); construction of dual-gauge line parallel to the existing metre-gauge line on Joydevpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur section ($902 million); water supply, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management for small size municipalities ($229 million); and construction of the sewage collection system under Dasherkandi sewage treatment plant catchment of Dhaka city ($198 million).

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8 YEARS OF HOLEY ARTISAN ATTACK

Final justice yet to be delivered

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Although eight years have passed since the horrific militant attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka's Gulshan, justice is yet to be finalised for the families of the victims.

The High Court bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman on October 30, 2023, delivered a verdict in the case filed over the attack, commuting the death sentences of seven militants to jail sentences until their deaths.

But the HC bench is yet to release the full text of the judgement, which is needed to move any appeal before the Supreme Court.

The judges are now writing the judgement of the Holey Artisan attack case.

According to court sources, it cannot be specifically said when the full text of the verdict will be released and when appeals will be moved, heard and disposed of before the apex court.

Ariful Islam, a defence lawyer for the convicts, told The Daily Star on June 29 that his clients wanted to move their challenge appeals. But they have not been able to do so as the full text is yet to be released, he said.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin said the state will decide, after receiving the full text of the judgement, whether any appeal will be moved before the Appellate Division seeking enhancement of the convicts' sentences.

On July 1, 2016, five militants with firearms, machetes, and grenades stormed the bakery and held the diners hostage before killing three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese people, nine Italians, and one Indian.

The militants were killed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Traffic remains halted due to a gridlock in the capital's Shantinagar area yesterday morning. A combination of HSC exams, heavy rainfall and the fact that it is the start of the week contributed to the problem. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Dhaka University turns 103

UNB, *Dhaka*

Dhaka University, the oldest university in Bangladesh, marks its anniversary today, celebrating a rich history of academic excellence and significant contributions since its establishment in 1921.

DU has chalked out elaborate programmes.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted all concerned on the occasion and wished continual success of the university.

The university played a pivotal role in the Language Movement and Liberation War. However, despite its illustrious past, the university faces numerous challenges, including technological lag, insufficient funding, inadequate campus and library facilities, and the impact of student and teacher politics.

HSC, equivalent exams begin amid inclement weather

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Higher Secondary Certificate and its equivalent exams began nationwide yesterday, except in Sylhet division, where exams were postponed until July 8 due to severe flooding.

The government made this decision on June 20, in response to the ongoing flood impacting the region. Exams scheduled from July 9 onwards in Sylhet will continue as planned.

On the opening day, nearly 10,000 students from nine general education boards remained absent, according to the Secondary and Higher Secondary division of the education ministry.

Exams are being conducted with a reduced syllabus, a measure that was implemented during Covid-19 pandemic and continued for 2021-2023 academic years.

The capital saw heavy monsoon rains early in the morning yesterday. The downpour resulted in reduced public transport availability, creating significant obstacles

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Nothing moves without bribes'

MPs criticise corruption in education system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition Jatiyo Party and independent MPs yesterday in parliament raised allegations of widespread corruption in the education system.

The level of corruption in the education sector cannot be expressed in words. Nothing happens without money. For getting monthly pay order (MPO) facilities, a teacher has to pay from table to table, they said.

They were speaking at the cut motion proposals against the demand of the Secondary and Higher Studies Division of the financial year 2024-25.

Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury in his response speech, neither refuted the corruption allegations, nor acknowledged it.

Md Hamidul Haque Khandker of Kurigram-2 highlighted that the education budget consistently falls short of the GDP target. He pointed out institutional, curricular, and regional disparities, adding that field-level education officers remain in the same workplace for 5-7 years, leading to irregularities and corruption.

Independent MP Pankaj Nath from Barishal-4 praised the NTRCA's teacher recruitment process but added that teachers are often posted at places far from home, which ultimately ends up with them not joining their schools.

He suggested regionalising recruitment, especially in hilly areas, and called for filling vacancies swiftly.

> **Today's education is like -- I have a house and bathroom but no food.**
>
> **HAFIZ UDDIN AHMED**
> Jatiyo Party MP

Jatiyo Party MP Hafiz Uddin Ahmed criticised the education system's focus on building unnecessary infrastructures over ensuring quality teaching.

"Today's education is like -- I have a house and bathroom but do not have food," Hafiz added.

Independent MP Abul Kalam from Natore-1 said no teachers get retirement allowances without paying bribe.

Nasser Shahrear Zahedee from Jhenaidah-2 proposed reducing administrative expenses to boost educational research funding.

The education minister acknowledged the issue of teachers not joining distant posts and mentioned ongoing efforts to amend laws to address this.

Abul Mansur Ahmad speech contest launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, "Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad and Tarkajaal are jointly organising a national speech competition in honour of renowned journalist, politician and litterateur Abul Mansur Ahmad.

Two subjects have been fixed for the competition, titled "Abul Mansur Ahmad Speech Competition 2024," which are -- "Abul Mansur Ahmad in journalism" and "Rashtra Chintay Abul Mansur Ahmad".

To participate in the competition, contestants must be under 30 years old. A participant can compete

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Metro fares won't go up from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the NBR not extending the VAT exemption on metro rail fares, the metro rail authorities have decided not to increase fares from today.

The Metro authorities said they are yet to receive a reply from NBR regarding their appeal seeking a review of the revenue authority's decision to impose 15 percent VAT from Monday.

"We are waiting for their [NBR] reply... We have to talk to them about some technical issues even if we have to impose VAT on fare," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), told The Daily Star.

Another DMTCL official, wishing not to be named, said even if DMTCL decides to impose VAT, they would not increase metro rail fares without giving a prior announcement.

The issue of whether 15 percent VAT would be imposed on metro rail fares from July 1 has been under discussion for the last couple of months.

The discussion began in April when NBR decided to revoke the tax exemption for DMTCL.

But, DMTCL, through the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, wrote to NBR to review the decision.

An NBR official said they did not extend the exemption order till Saturday.

Meanwhile, MAN Siddique said no reply from NBR came till 8:30pm yesterday.

"There are technical issues regarding the imposition of VAT on fare. We have to talk with the [NBR] officials to settle the issues. But they were busy as the budget was passed today," he said.

Rain disrupts life in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Ctg

Chattogram experienced heavy rain yesterday morning, causing difficulty for commuters, including HSC examinees.

The Met Office reported 32mm of rain between 6:00am and 9:00am.

Many areas, including GEC, Muradpur, Katalganj, and Bahaddarhat, were waterlogged, forcing residents to wade through knee-deep water. Low-lying parts of the city faced a shortage of vehicles, making it difficult for students and parents to reach their destinations.

Many vehicles were stranded for hours. Traffic jams were severe on Zakir Hossain Road and in GEC area. Shahnaj Begum, whose son is an HSC candidate, said they had to walk in the rain to the exam centre for transport shortage.

Meteorologist Ali Akbar cautioned that the monsoon could bring more rainfall causing similar distress to the city dwellers.

Many areas, including GEC, Muradpur, Katalganj and Bahaddarhat, in the port city got waterlogged due to yesterday's rain, forcing residents to wade through knee-deep water. The Chattogram Met Office reported 32mm of rain between 6:00am and 9:00am. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Magistrate to look after Benazir's Gulshan flats

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday appointed a first-class magistrate as an administrator to look after four confiscated flats of former IGP Benazir Ahmed and his family members.

The flats are located in Gulshan.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain passed the order accepting a petition filed by ACC director (property management unit) Md Monjur Morshed, said its Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir.

In the application, Morshed told the court that the same court on June 6 appointed administrators to look after some of the immovable properties of Benazir and his family members.

After that, Morshed along with some ACC officials went to visit the flats and talked to the building's receptionist Meherab Hossain. The receptionist informed them that the flats' owners did not live there, and he did not know their

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Padma Bridge project now complete

PM to formally conclude much-talked-about project July 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project came to an end yesterday, around 17 years after it was taken in August 2007, giving great relief to tens of thousands of users daily.

Although Padma Bridge, the largest bridge in the country with roadway on the top and railway on the bottom, was inaugurated in June 2022, some works, including river training, remained incomplete then.

So, the authority extended the deadline up to June 30 this year, with a one-year defect liability period.

"Yes, the much-talked-about project is going to be completed today," Project Director Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally conclude the project through a programme at Mawa end of the bridge on July 5, he said.

When the project was taken in August 2007, the cost of the project was Tk 10,161 crore and it was supposed to be implemented with foreign loan.

The project went through a major revision in January 2011, when the rail line was incorporated into the bridge, bringing the project cost to Tk 20,507 crore.

The project went through several revisions afterwards and the cost rose to Tk 32,605 crore. However, some Tk 1600 crore may not be required, Shafiqul said, adding that the cost of the project would be around Tk 31,000 crore.

The cancellation of World Bank loan, changes in bridge design and the pandemic shrouded uncertainty over the long-cherished project but the project was completed with the government's funds, directly connecting the capital with the southwestern region.

The prize giving ceremony of "Aly Zaker Liberation War Book Reading Initiative" was held at Liberation War Museum in Dhaka on June 29. Students from various schools, colleges and universities took part in the competition. Among others, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, lawmaker and a trustee of the museum Asaduzzaman Noor, Dr Sarwar Ali, Mofidul Haque, Sara Zaker, jury board member and Jatiya Grantha Kendra director Minar Mansur and Iresh Zaker were present. PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Tragedy strikes family twice

Mother dies in road crash while taking deceased son home for burial

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Her boy just died. The relatives could not part the grieving mother from her dead son's side while they were taking the body back home from the hospital.

Although Puspo Begum, 65, was told to travel in a separate vehicle, she refused and boarded the ambulance, which was taking her deceased son Alam Howladar, 45, to their home in Gandamari village of Patuakhali for burial from Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.

Alam had just died in the hospital while undergoing treatment for liver cirrhosis.

Who knew, death was waiting for the mother too.

Or maybe it was destiny which could not keep the mother and son apart.

Puspo died when the ambulance carrying them collided head-on with a motorcycle on Saturday night.

After the collision, the ambulance driver lost control over the steering and the vehicle fell into a ditch.

Everybody in the ambulance survived, except Puspo, said her grandson Omar Farooq.

The motorcyclist, Rubel Sikder, 32, also died in the incident which took place at Daktarbari bus stand in Amtali upazila on Patuakhali-Kuakata highway, confirmed OC Kazi Sakhawat Hossain Tapu of Amtali Police Station.

Alam Howladar's wife Maqsuda Begum, 35, and motorcycle passenger Monirul Islam, 40, were given first aid at the local health complex for minor injuries, he added.

ASP sent to forced retirement over corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An assistant superintendent of police has been sent to forced retirement after allegations of misconduct and corruption were proven against him, according to a circular signed by Md Jahangir Alam, secretary of the Public Security Division under the home ministry.

The circular said Yakub Hossain, ASP of the Bangladesh Police Academy in Sarda, Rajshahi, formed a team in 2019 with the intention of making financial gains.

The other members of the team included former sub-inspector Jiban Biswas, constables Al Amin and Abdus Sabur, driver Samiul, and runner constable Anik.

According to the circular, on January 19, 2019, Jiban, Al Amin, and Sabur entered the house of a ward councillor in Kushtia. They handcuffed two individuals, Ashraf Hossain and Shamim Reza, who were present at the time, and beat them up under the pretence of criminal allegations. They had to pay Tk 1 lakh to the ASP's team through a mobile financial service agent for their release.

Ashraf and Shamim then filed a complaint, leading to the investigation that found ASP Yakub guilty.

Govt deals with India anti-state: Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP yesterday denounced the 10 MoUs signed with India during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent Delhi visit.

Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir termed the deals a "new form of slavery".

He said allowing India to establish a corridor through Bangladesh for linking different parts of their country via railway tracks would compromise Bangladesh's sovereignty and national security.

He accused Hasina of signing agreements for personal gain and demanded transparency in the deals.

The party said they would mobilise public opinion against what it said "anti-state" agreements.

KHALEDA'S ILLNESS

BNP providing false info: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP leaders are confusing people by providing false information regarding illness of the party chief Khaleda Zia.

"There is no precedent for a person convicted of a criminal offence to receive such treatment freely. But the BNP has been demanding Khaleda Zia's release for the last few years without any legal procedure. They are also instigating the people by spreading rumours about her physical condition and trying to get sympathy from the people after failing in their movement," said Quader in a statement signed by AL Office Secretary Biplab Barua.

Quader also said demanding the release of a convict by going beyond the constitution and the legal process is nothing but audacity.

"According to the constitution of Bangladesh, everyone is equal in the eyes of the law. Khaleda Zia is convicted of corruption ... There is no scope for a convicted person to leave the country beyond the legal procedure," added the AL's second-in-command.

Unfit vehicles, brick kilns behind air pollution: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Tazul Islam yesterday told parliament that the main causes of air pollution are unfit vehicles, black smoke emitted from factories and brick kilns, and dust pollution caused by urbanisation.

The minister said this while responding to a tabled question of ruling Awami League MP Mohammad Sayeed Khokon.

He also said the impact of methane gas emitted from landfills on air pollution is not serious.

However, modern technology-based sanitary landfills and waste-to-energy projects have been planned to control methane gas emissions, he added.

HSC, equivalent

FROM PAGE 3

for students and their guardians.

Besides, waterlogging and severe traffic congestion further complicated the situation.

Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of Dhaka Education Board and president of Inter-Board Coordination Committee, said students would be allotted extra time if exams started late due to traffic or waterlogging.

"If an exam centre starts at 10:30am instead of 10:00am, the exam will end at 1:30pm instead of 1:00pm," he added.

HSC written exams are scheduled to continue till August 11, followed by practical exams from August 12 to 21.

This year, a total of 14,50,790 students from 9,463 educational institutions are registered for the exams, which are being held across 2,275 centres.

Among the examinees, 11,28,281 are from the nine general education boards, 88,076 from the madrasa board, and 2,34,433 from the technical education board.

Final justice yet to be delivered

FROM PAGE 3

during a rescue operation by army commandos. A chef who worked at the cafe was also killed during the 12-hour standoff, while another injured employee died later. Two police officers died from wounds sustained during the immediate response to the attack.

After the attack, which drew global condemnation, law enforcers launched a massive crackdown on terror networks.

On November 27, 2019, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal in Dhaka convicted and sentenced seven militants to death for their involvement in the Holey Artisan attack, terming it a disgraceful attack aimed at assassinating the non-communal character of Bangladesh.

The convicted are Jahangir Hossain, Aslam Hossain Rash, Hadisur Rahman, Rakibul Hasan Regan, Md Abdus Sabur Khan, Shariful Islam Khaled, and Mamunur Rashid Ripon.

The tribunal also acquitted one accused as it found him not guilty.

The convicted individuals then filed appeals with the HC challenging the tribunal verdict.

After holding hearings on the death references (lower court documents for confirmation of death sentences) and the appeals, the HC bench on October 30 last year commuted the death sentence of seven jailed militants to imprisonment until death.

Asked why the HC gave them jail sentences until death when the law stipulates life sentence as the highest punishment for the offences, Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed said failing to understand a sub-section of the Anti-Terrorism Act, the tribunal gave death sentences to the convicts, and that's why the HC changed it.

He, however, said 20 people, from home and abroad, and two police officials were brutally killed, which tarnished the country's image abroad and hampered public safety seriously.

So the court handed down jail sentences until death, citing a previous verdict.

Abul Mansur Ahmad

FROM PAGE 3

on only one subject. However, those who have won the essay competition commemorating Abul Mansur Ahmad earlier, will not be able to participate.

The competition will be held in two phases. In the first phase, participants will have to send a video speech spanning 3-4 minutes through e-mail with a Google Drive link. The drive link should be sent by July 30, mentioning the participant's name, identity, age and phone number, alongside the topic of the speech, at "tarkajaal@gmail.com".

The final round will be held in the capital with the top 10 contestants from each category.

A total of 20 participants will be awarded from each category. In both categories, Tk 10,000 will be awarded as first prize, Tk 8,000 as second, and Tk 5,000 as third prize. The winners will be awarded with a certificate and crest.

Each of the remaining 14 will get Tk 1,000 in cash, a certificate, and books.

After the final selection, the information about the prize distribution programme will be announced in September on the occasion of Abul Mansur Ahmad's birth anniversary.

Magistrate

FROM PAGE 3

whereabouts. The owners even took the keys of the flats with them.

Moreover, the manager of the building was not found there.

Earlier, on June 27, the court appointed some administrators to look after the confiscated immovable properties of former IGP Benazir and his family members.

ACC's director of property management unit will look after the properties in Dhaka and Rupganj in Narayanganj. The deputy commissioner of Bandarban will look after the land properties in the district.

Probe

FROM PAGE 5

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Runi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, in their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar.

Their only son Mahir Sarowar Megh, then 5, was at home at that time.

Nousher Ali Roman, Runi's brother, filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Police Station on the following day.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 1

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
JAMAAT	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Admission Going On
SAALIM WISDOM SCHOOL
(English Medium) Govt. Regd.
Mob: 01912 904680
RD 4, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
Looking for a bridegroom aged between 26-27 years for a bride (Canadian citizen) aged 24 years studying MPH (Master of Public Health). The bridegroom studying higher degree or doing professional job in Canada will be preferred.
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D-34

Trust Bank
A Bank for Financial Inclusion
Head Office & Registered Office:
Shadhinata Tower, Bir Srestha Shaheed Jahangir Gate
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206, Bangladesh.

Notification to Shareholders

This is for kind information of all concerned that, the **25th AGM** of Trust Bank is scheduled to be held on ***16 July 2024 at 11:00 a.m. through Digital Platform.*** In this regard, the Annual Report-2023 has already been uploaded to the website of the bank. (**Link**: **https://www.tblbd.com/annual-report-2023**)

Sd/-
Dated, Dhaka
30 June 2024
Md. Mizanur Rahman FCS
Company Secretary

Request for Bids giz

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a federal enterprise with worldwide operations. We support the German Government in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. We are also engaged in international education activities around the globe. Through our work we assist people and societies in shaping their own future and improving living condition.

GIZ has been working as a development partner of Bangladesh since 1972 under bilateral agreement. Currently, we are working in the areas of renewable energy, adaptation to climate change, textile and leather sector, biodiversity, as well as good governance, displacement, and migration.

Energising Development (EnDev) is a global technical assistance programme that has been working in Bangladesh since 2009. EnDev has facilitated access to modern and clean energy solutions for rural households and businesses. In Bangladesh, the programme has supported the provision of clean cooking technology and solar energy solutions. So far, over 1.9 million people have been reached with clean cooking technology and over 1.4 million people with solar energy solutions. Currently EnDev program in Bangladesh focuses on three main areas: development of the market for e-cooking appliances, support for biomass based improved cook stoves, including policy support for the sector, and demonstration of business casefor solar battery charging stations for e-rickshaws.

GIZ is looking for a suitable **with an organisation (distributors, manufacturers, importers of e-cooking appliances)** who intended to work on the **Promotion and dissemination of E-cooking appliances (RiceCooker and Induction Cookstove) in rural and peri-urban areas only Rajshahi & Rangpur Division of Bangladesh** and have long-term interests to pursue market development for the promotion of e-cooking appliances. Following tasks need to perform under this contract:

- Undertake promotional activities to raise awareness on e-cooking appliances
- Strengthen the supply chain process of e-cooking
- Facilitate in selling of 12000 e-cooking appliances (Rice Cooker and Induction stoves)

Technical Offer
- Technical -methodological concept • Strategy • Work Plan • Process
- Personnel assignment plan • Detailed CV of Proposed Expert/Experts

Financial offer (In Separate Envelop)

Interested firms can collect the detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Assessment Grid at the following link: https://enlistment.gizbd.org. Please note, that firms need to register to collect the tender documents.

Interested parties are requesting to attend Prebid meeting which will be held on 8th July 2024 at 10:00 to 12:00 PM, please check pre-bid instruction file for address.

Interested parties with relevant and proven experience shall Submit **Technical and Financial Proposal** by **14th July 2024** in separate sealed envelopes. The envelopes shall be addressed to "**Contracts, Procurement & IT Unit**" denoted with remark **"83468050- Service Contract for Promotion and dissemination of E-cooking appliances in rural and peri-urban areas only Rajshahi & Rangpur Division of Bangladesh."**

GIZ reserves the right to accept or reject offers in part or full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Discipline is Life BIRDEM

বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল
(বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতির একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)
১২২ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ,শাহ্‌বাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
☎: ৪১০৬০৫০১-২৪, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৪১০৬০৪৭৬
Website: www.birdembd.org or www.dab-bd.org

উপদেষ্টা প্রকৌশলী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ফার্মের নিকট থেকে বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতালের অন্তর্গত ঢাকার বাসাবোতে বারডেম নার্সিং কলেজ, নার্সিং হোস্টেল এবং ১০০ বেডের হাসপাতাল নির্মানের জন্য স্থাপত্য নকশা প্রনয়ন, স্ট্রাকচারাল ডিজাইন, প্রাক্কলন এবং অন্যান্য আনুসাঙ্গিক ডকুমেন্ট প্রস্তুতের জন্য কারিগরী ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব আহ্বানঃ

এ সংক্রান্ত কাজের সকল প্রকার অনুমোদন দরপত্র দাখিলকারীর প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নিজ খরচে করতে হবে।

ঢাকা শহরের বাসাবোতে প্রস্তাবিত বারডেম নার্সিং কলেজ, নার্সিং হোস্টেল এবং ১০০ বেড হাসপাতালের জন্য নির্ধারিত ৯৯ শতক জমির উপর নির্মিতব্য ভবন সমূহের স্থাপত্য নকশা প্রনয়ন, স্ট্রাকচারাল ডিজাইন, ইলেকট্রো মেকানিক্যাল ডিজাইন, প্লাম্বিং ও ওয়াটার সাপ্লাই ডিজাইন, অগ্নিনির্বাপন ব্যবস্থাপনা ডিজাইন, প্রাক্কলন প্রস্তুতকরন, বিল অব কোয়ান্টিটিজ ও টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট প্রস্তুত করার জন্য প্রকৃত অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এবং আর্কিট্রাকচারাল কনসাল্টিং ফার্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন খামে কারিগরী ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

প্রস্তাব দাখিলের পূর্বে বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতালের নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর সহিত যে কোন কার্য দিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে যোগাযোগ করিয়া কাজের বিস্তারিত জানিয়া আলোচনা করে সরেজমিনে স্থান সমূহ পরিদর্শন করিয়া কি কি কাজ করিতে হইবে তাহা জানিয়া ও বুঝিয়া আগামী ২১ জুলাই ২০২৪ রোজ- রবিবার সকাল ৯:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বারডেমের ২৩০ নং কক্ষের সম্মুখে সংরক্ষিত বক্সে দরপত্র দাখিল করিতে হইবে এবং ঐ একই দিনে দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্র দাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকে) ২৪৬ নং কক্ষে খোলা হবে। দরপত্রের সাথে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিন, বিন, ভ্যাট ও ইনকাম ট্যাক্সের সার্টিফিকেট দাখিল করতে হবে।

নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে প্রস্তাব প্রেরণ না করলে পরবর্তীতে এ বিষয়ে কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে না এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

মহাপরিচালক
বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, শাহ্‌বাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
D-33

Matiur's wife seeks withdrawal of travel ban

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Laila Kaniz Lucky, wife of former member of National Board of Revenue Matiur Rahman, yesterday applied to a Dhaka court to withdraw a travel ban imposed on her for alleged corruption.

The same court on June 24 issued a travel ban on her, her husband and their son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman Arnob.

Laila, also upazila parishad chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura, in her application, said she is suffering from different ailments, including heart disease, for which she has taken treatment from India, Canada, USA and Dubai.

The application said the travel ban needs to be lifted as she requires regular check-ups in those countries.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam opposed it saying that she will flee if the court allows her to go abroad.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka set July 27 for a hearing on the issue.

On June 24, the ACC placed an application to the court and said Matiur, also former president of the NBR's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, and his family members were trying to leave the country, so a travel ban should be needed to prevent them for going abroad.

Moreover, they are also trying to launder money abroad, it said.

Earlier, the ACC formed a three-member committee to probe into the allegations brought against them over amassing a huge amount of wealth through illegal means.

The controversy regarding Matiur's wealth surfaced after his son Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat posted a photo of a sacrificial goat on social media and claimed to have bought it for Tk 12 lakh.

Santal community yesterday observed the 169th anniversary of their historic rebellion, commonly known as Santal Hool, in Gaibandha. Marking the occasion, they brought out a procession in the afternoon. According to historians, Santals in Jharkhanda revolted on June 30, 1855 against the misrule, torture and extortion by zamindars, wholesalers and police. The revolution lasted eight months and thousands of Santals and others were killed. PHOTO: COLLECTED

15.90 tonnes of rice seized from UP chairman's home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Local administration has seized 15.90 tonnes of government VGF rice meant for fishers from the house of Angaria Union Parishad chairman Syed Golam Mortuza Sukkur in Dumki upazila, Patuakhali.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Shahin conducted the raid around 10:30pm on Saturday, confirmed the UNO.

A total of 318 sacks of rice weighing 50kg each were seized, he said.

> **Nobody is allowed to store government rice in any place except for a government warehouse.**
>
> **UNO MD SHAHIN**

"Nobody is allowed to store government rice in any place except for a government warehouse. A case was filed accusing the UP chairman with Dumki Police Station," he said.

Md Kamrul Islam, Patuakhali district fisheries officer, said the government allocated the rice for distributing among fishers but the UP chairman illegally hoarded it. Contacted over phone, Chairman Ghulam Mortuza, who was not at home during the seizure, said since the union parishad building is far away, he kept the rice at his house to distribute among the local fishers.

Resolving irregularities major hurdle

Says new Biman MD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Resolving irregularities in selling tickets and improving on-time performance are the two main challenges for Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said Biman's new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Jahidul Islam Bhuiyan yesterday.

Jahidul Islam Bhuiyan

While exchanging views at Biman headquarters in the city's Kurmitola, he said the national flag carrier wants to eradicate all kinds of mismanagement by agents in selling air tickets.

"Biman Bangladesh Airlines wants to be free from the situation where no tickets are accessible online despite having empty seats on a flight," said the Biman MD.

This was the Biman MD's maiden press briefing since he assumed office.

Jahidul, additional secretary to the Prime Minister's Office, was appointed as the new MD on June 26.

"We want to solve the ticket problem completely so that no more questions arise in the future. That's why we have already warned the online travel agencies," he said.

On the issue of its 10-year fleet plan, the MD said, "Biman will be an airline with 47 fleets by 2034. In the meantime, six aircraft of the existing 21 fleet will be phased out. So, we have to add 32 new aircraft by the next decade to achieve the expansion plan."

"Discussions with Airbus have taken shape. There is also a proposal from Boeing. Since our needs are high, one company might not be able to meet them," he also said.

Stating that Biman will make a profit in the next year as well, he said, "We expect to earn 1,200 crore taka in the current financial year from cargo alone."

Nexus of politicians, businessmen misusing 'indemnity act'

Speakers tell CAB discussion on power sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nexus of politicians and businesspeople has been taking advantage of the "indemnity act" in the power sector and increasing the energy supply cost, which is ultimately borne by the public, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Since the government took charge of setting energy prices by themselves, the prices have been increasing irrationally, they also said.

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) organised the citizens' discussion on their proposed Energy Transition Policy 2024 at the capital's CIRDAP auditorium.

The Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act, 2010 is commonly known as the indemnity act, as it doesn't require any tender process to allow any company to build power plants, or establish transmission or distribution facilities.

Besides, no officer or employee shall be subject to a suit, prosecution, or other legal procedure for anything done under this act.

The government initially passed the act for two years in 2010 which was later extended several times.

CAB President Ghulam Rahman said it seems like there is a nexus between businesspeople and politicians, which has not been working for public interest.

If the government wants to provide electricity at reasonable prices, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) should be strengthened for transparency, accountability and equality, he said.

In the keynote paper, Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to CAB, said since the government bypassed BERC to set the energy prices by themselves, energy supply costs and prices have been increasing irrationally and illogically.

"The monopoly of the government has been enhancing the scope of corruption. When the private sector gets involved in the market, they also don't face any competition, as they get permissions with the help of illegal transactions and collusion," he said.

In January 2023, the government amended the BERC Act and curtailed the commission's power to set tariffs on electricity and other energies to set them by themselves.

Since then, the electricity and fuel prices have been hiked several times.

"Earlier, BERC set prices after public hearings and let people know the rationale for hiking the prices. But now, there is no transparency, accountability, or clarity in this sector," said Prof MM Akash, former chairman of Economics department at Dhaka University.

"The prime minister announced an all-out drive against corruption. The first step of the drive should be cancelling the indemnity act, which created the opportunity for corruption in this sector," he added.

Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said the amendment of the BERC Act is contrary to the spirit of the main act.

Former Buet Professor Ijaz Hossain said, "It is absurd that we produce electricity from high-priced diesel or furnace oil during the daytime when we could use solar energy instead."

"We should focus on only exploring gas reserves until we confirm that there is no more gas left. But the government always neglects the process. They always depend on either private or foreign investments," he added.

> **The monopoly of the government has been enhancing the scope of corruption. When the private sector gets involved in the market, they also don't face any competition, as they get permissions with the help of illegal transactions and collusion.**
>
> **PROF M SHAMSUL ALAM**, Energy advisor to CAB

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Probe submission deadline extended for 111th time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended till August 4 the deadline for submitting the probe report of a case filed over murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi in February 2012.

This is the 111th extension of the deadline for probe report submission.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahbubul Haque passed the order as Investigation Officer Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, also an additional superintendent of police at Rab, failed to submit the report, said a court police.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

9TH WAGE BOARD

SC to hear NOAB's arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday said it will hear the arguments from the Newspapers Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) about awarding the ninth wage board.

The apex court also said it will pass an order to this effect today.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan passed the order during hearing on two petitions filed by the government challenging the High Court verdict that declared illegal the cabinet committee's recommendations in the ninth wage board award.

Yesterday, Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed told The Daily Star, "We will give the particulars of NOAB to the Supreme Court tomorrow [Monday] so that it can issue a notice to NOAB for placing arguments on the matter."

The SC may fix a date for further hearing on the issue, he added.

Mother, son die in Sylhet road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

A mother and her son were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between a truck and a CNG-driven auto-rickshaw in Companiganj upazila of Sylhet yesterday.

The accident happened on Sylhet-Bholaganj highway in Khagail area around 4:00pm. Smriti Akther, 25, and her son Abdullah, 7, of Narsingdi died on the spot.

The injured -- Smriti's husband Delwar Hossain and the auto-rickshaw driver -- were admitted to a hospital.

OC Golam Dastagir of Comaniganj Police Station, said, "The family was on the way back to Sylhet city after travelling to Sada Pathor area in Companiganj."

North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
Soydabad, Sirajganj

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.155 Date: 30/06/2024

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief description of tender	Publication date	Last selling date & time	Opening date
1	995570	Procurement of Seal Air Fan Motor for Bypass Stack Damper, Sirajganj 225 MW CCPP (Unit-1), NWPGCL	27/06/2024	21/07/2024, 16:00	22/07/2024
2	1000822	Supply of Mechanical equipments & tools for Sirajagnj 225MW CCPP (Unit-01)	30/06/2024	24/07/2024, 15:45	25/07/2024

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

30/06/2024
Engr. Brojendra Kumar Sarker
Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
NWPGCL, Soydabad, Sirajganj

GD- 1053

বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সিলেট
ঠিকানা : চৌহাট্টা, সিলেট-৩১০০, বাংলাদেশ।
ফোন/ফ্যাক্স : ০২৯৯৬৬৩৬৫৩৮ মোবাইল : ০১৭১৫-৭৭০৮৭২
Email : bsfmmusylhet@gmail.com, Web : www.bsfmmu.edu.bd

স্মারক নং- বিএসএফএমএমইউ/রেজি/২৮/২৪/১৭৯ তারিখ: ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি.

ফ্ল্যাট/বাড়ি ভাড়ার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আগস্ট/২০২৪ খ্রি. এবং তৎপরবর্তী নিকটতম সময়ের মধ্যে বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সিলেট এর ঢাকা গেষ্ট হাউজের জন্য কলাবাগান, শেরে-বাংলা নগর ও ধানমন্ডি এলাকায় আধুনিক সুযোগ-সুবিধা সম্বলিত এবং ০১ (এক) একটি গাড়ী পার্কিংসহ সর্বমোট ২৪৫০-২৫০০ বর্গফুটের (কমবেশি) একটি ফ্ল্যাট ভবন ভাড়া নেওয়া হবে। আগ্রহী বাড়ির মালিকগণকে আগামী ১৫/০৭/২০২৪খ্রি. তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন (সকাল ৮.০০টা থেকে দুপুর ২.৩০টা) সময়ের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রার, বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সিলেট এর চৌহাট্টাস্থ অস্থায়ী কার্যালয় বরাবরে বাড়ি/ফ্ল্যাট ভাড়ার শর্তাবলী/ভাড়ার পরিমান ইত্যাদি উল্লেখসহ আবেদন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

উপাচার্য মহোদয়ের অনুমোদনক্রমে

৩০.০৬.২৪
আবুল কালাম মো: ফজলুর রহমান
রেজিস্ট্রার
বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সিলেট

GD-1054

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Bangladesh is lagging behind in female-led projects:

SADIA KHALID REETI

MAHIYA TABASSUM

From penning screenplays to critiquing global cinema, meet Sadia Khalid Reeti– who has navigated the complexities of a male-dominated industry with grace and determination. A multi-faceted talent, Reeti wears the hats of film critic, screenwriter, and journalist with equal aplomb, bringing a fresh perspective to an industry often set in its way.

PHOTOS: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

Fresh from her second stint as a jury member under the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) division at the prestigious 77th Cannes Film Festival, Reeti has also secured her place on the Golden Globes voting panel for an impressive third consecutive year. Her sharp critical eye and deep understanding of cinema have earned her respect in film circles around the globe.

You've recently returned from the Cannes Film Festival as a jury member. How would you describe your experience?

It was exhilarating. My second time at Cannes, I was thrilled by the increased Bangladeshi representation, with co-producers Adnan Al Rajeev and Tanveer Hossain present. The festival buzz and interactions with global filmmakers were incredible, showing Bangladesh's growing mark on this prestigious platform.

Congratulations on your third nomination to the Golden Globes voting panel. What's your approach to evaluating films for such a prestigious award?

Thank you! It's an honour and a massive responsibility. The process is incredibly demanding – we're talking about potentially watching over 1,000 hours of content. I've learned to be efficient, dropping projects that don't meet the mark early on. It's about balancing quantity with quality of assessment. Given my background, I pay special attention to the screenplay but I strive to consider all aspects – cinematography, direction, acting – to give a holistic evaluation.

How do you maintain objectivity in your critiques when you have personal preferences as an audience?

It's a delicate balance. Previously, film critics avoided other industry roles to prevent conflicts of interest, but this is changing. Personal tastes inevitably play a role – I prefer fantasy and horror and usually avoid the crime genre. But as a critic, it's crucial to step back and evaluate each work on its own merits. I believe in specialised criticism; experts in cinematography, for instance, can offer deeper insights. If critics evaluate films based on their expertise, we can elevate and diversify the role of film critics.

We cannot survive wearing only one hat in the evolving media landscape; we must wear multiple hats. The key is acknowledging our biases while striving for a comprehensive assessment.

You've worked with major Hollywood studios. Any standout experiences?

The relentless pace in Hollywood makes it hard to dwell on any single project. I'd say working on ***To the Bone*** was a highlight. It's currently on Netflix, starring Keanu Reeves. Interestingly, my least favourite project also starred Reeves – ***Siberia***, which I haven't brought myself to watch yet.

Bangladesh's OTT platforms are buzzing with content, but there seems to be a lack of diversity in storytelling. What's your take on the current state of Bangladeshi cinema?

Frankly, we're stuck in a rut of caution, too afraid to explore new territories. The capital-intensive nature of filmmaking and limited resources make filmmakers hesitant to break from established trends, sticking to proven formulas instead of risking innovation.

What we desperately need is more comprehensive market research to understand audience preferences and demands. Until we're willing to take calculated risks, we'll struggle to bring fresh perspectives to our cinema.

How do you view the representation of women in Bangladeshi cinema, both on-screen and behind the scenes?

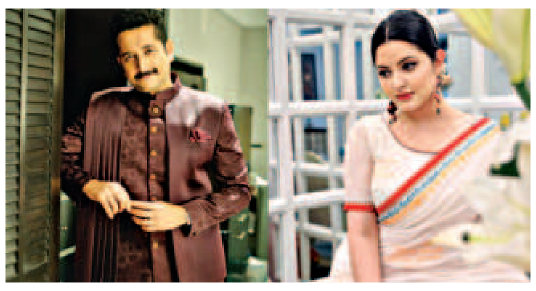
It's a complex issue. Globally, there's a rise in female-led projects, but Bangladesh is lagging. Even acclaimed films like ***Rehana Maryam Noor*** sometimes receive underwhelming audience reception. Ironically, films with misogynistic themes often perform better, even with female viewers. It's disheartening, but producing quality, progressive content may gradually shift audience preferences.

What advice would you give to aspiring filmmakers and critics in Bangladesh?

Do your research. Analyse films, understand the grammar of screenwriting, and then make it your own. No one's born a genius – it takes consistent hard work, expert feedback, and constructive criticism to improve. Remember, cinema is for the audience. And please, avoid shortcuts.

Parambrata calls Pori Moni a 'powerhouse of talent'

Indian actor Parambrata Chattopadhyay's full-length film ***Ajob Karkhana*** is set to release in Bangladeshi theatres on July 12. During a recent visit to Dhaka to promote the film, he expressed admiration for Bangladeshi artistes, including Mosharraf Karim and Chanchal Chowdhury.



However, he showered praise on the ***Bishwoshundori*** actress Pori Moni as he believes her to be one powerful artiste. "I think Pori Moni is a 'powerhouse of talent'. If she utilises her skills properly in films, she could do very well," said the actor.

Parambrata also spoke about his admiration for Afran Nisho and Apurba's performances. He has also seen Tasnia Farin's work and believes that as a budding artiste, she is doing really well.

Arifin Shuvoo to lead in Indian web-series

Jubilee famed director Soumik Sen is on his way to showcase the story of Bangladesh's Liberation War in his upcoming web-series.

According to several sources, Arifin Shuvoo and Sauraseni Maitra will be seen in the lead roles. The still-untitled project will be in Hindi, and reportedly, Arpita Chatterjee will be the producer. The series will stream on OTT platform Sony Liv.

Rumour has it that the first draft of the script is done, and the initial conversations with the two actors have also been completed. If all goes well, shooting will commence soon.

NEWS

What steps

FROM PAGE 12

as a public interest litigation based on a report published on The Daily Star on June 2 headlined "Jobs in Malaysia: Mismanagement left over 3k workers with no ticket to KL".

According to the report, Mismanagement by government authorities and local recruiting agents led to over 3,000 workers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) initially estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 Bangladeshi workers could not reach the Southeast Asian country within the deadline, set by Kuala Lumpur in early March.

On May 31, several hundred workers waited for hours at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to catch flights. Many of them went there without tickets after receiving assurances from local recruiters that they would be given tickets on time, the report added.

NBR official

FROM PAGE 12

and immovable properties of Faisal. The court also ordered the confiscation of all properties of his wife Afsana Jasmin and some owned by his relatives in connection with graft allegations brought against them.

The court order came after the Anti-Corruption Commission submitted documents to the court on Thursday after its preliminary investigation.

The judge subsequently ordered ACC to freeze 87 bank accounts belonging to Faisal, his wife, and relatives.

Corrupt officials

FROM PAGE 12

"Corrupt politicians collude with corrupt officials. They cannot do it without the support of the government officials," the former bureaucrat said.

"The ill-gotten money does not stay in the country. It is laundered abroad. This cannot go on because it is harming the national interest," he added.

Asked if he would place a bill to amendment the laws governing government officials and employees, he said he would work towards this with other MPs.

Latifur Rahman's 4th death anniv today

FROM PAGE 12

terrorists during the July 1 attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan in 2016.

Latifur was the founding director of Mediaworld, the company that owns The Daily Star, and chairman of Mediastar, the owning company of Prothom Alo. The newspapers are the leading English and Bangla dailies in the country.

A respected figure in the global business community, he single-handedly built one of the biggest business conglomerates in the country with his hard work, perseverance, and entrepreneurial skills.

Born in Jalpaiguri on August 28, 1945, he began his education at St Francis School and then went to St Edmund's School, Shillong, in 1956. He also studied at St Xavier's College in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

After coming to Dhaka, he started as a trainee at his family-owned jute mills -- W Rahman Jute Mills in Chandpur -- in 1966. The jute mill was the first to be owned by a Bangalee in the erstwhile East Pakistan.

He became an executive and worked there until 1971. But the government nationalised industries in 1972 and Latifur found himself in a very difficult situation. The family also owned some tea estates in north-eastern Bangladesh but after the independence the price of produce was less than production cost.

But he did not give up hope. The same year, Latifur came across a Swiss company and started a trading business. There was no looking back after that.

He established the Transcom Group in 1981. It is now one of the country's largest conglomerates, with operations in the areas of manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics, beverages, media, consumer, food, and insurance.

Latifur was a member of executive board of ICC-Paris, VP of ICC-Bangladesh and member of Brac's governing body. He was a member of the Bangladesh Better Business Forum and Advisory Committee on World Trade Organisation.

He was also president of the MCCI, Dhaka for seven terms and of Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

Latifur was also chairman of the Bangladesh government's Trade Body Reforms Committee and a member of Bangladesh Bank's executive board.

The business icon was an honouree of "Oslo Business for Peace Award 2012" and was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. He was also honoured with the "Saarc Outstanding Leader" award and Lifetime Achievement Award.

Latifur Rahman married Shahnaz Rahman. They have three daughters Simeen Hossain, Shahzreh Huq, (late) Shazneen Rahman and son (late) Arshad Waliur Rahman.

Teachers go on work abstention indefinitely

FROM PAGE 12

Following the briefing, DU authorities, in a notice yesterday, announced the suspension of all exams until further notice citing "unavoidable circumstances".

As part of the work abstention programme, protesting teachers at their respective universities will observe an hour-long sit-in every afternoon to speak to the media and provide updates about the programme.

They had earlier threatened the action in case the government did not meet the demand.

Now, teachers in all 35 public universities, including Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said they will join the work abstention programme starting today.

"The decision to implement the new pension scheme was taken without first discussing it with us -- the teachers who are the primary stakeholders. This is discriminatory and unacceptable," said Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

Prof Habibur Rahman, president of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, said, "Our demand is based on the fact that those who join as teachers in July will face problems in the future. We've clarified our stance by holding a press conference during the movement. But the government did not respond to our demands."

Earlier, FBUTA, citing a recently published gazette, said teachers who will be appointed in public universities from July 1 will fall under the new pension scheme instead of the current pension facilities offered by the universities.

They fear that many meritorious students will not join the teaching profession if the new scheme, which they termed "discriminatory", is implemented.

They have been demanding the cancellation of the gazette in this regard through several peaceful protests since May 26.

Speaking on the issue, Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury said the ministry could not make any decisions on the Universal Pension Scheme as it is a matter of government policy and falls outside the ministry's jurisdiction.

"We cannot comment for or against a government policy. This policy applies to all autonomous institutions, not just universities," he told reporters at the International Mother Language Institute.

The minister, however, said that they are aware of the ongoing movement of the university teachers and that a dialogue is ongoing with the protesters to resolve the issue.

Bellingham, Kane

FROM PAGE 12

Gareth Southgate's reign as England boss.

Kane then headed in just a minute into extra-time to set up a quarter-final meeting with Switzerland on Saturday.

"That's the desire and the attitude from the boys. It looked tough for a second there but you keep going... Jude does what Jude does and what an unbelievable goal," Kane said.

Southgate looked certain to fall on his sword after steadfastly refusing to make changes to a side that stumbled through as winners of Group C despite scoring just two goals in three games.

Kobbie Mainoo was introduced for his first competitive start in Southgate's only change and he paid the price with another lacklustre display lacking in any speed or invention for long spells.

The one saving grace of England's performances in the group stage was that a makeshift defence had held up well, conceding just once in three games.

However, they were torn to pieces early on by a Slovakia side ranked 45th in the world.

England did not heed a couple of warnings as David Hancko and Lukas Haraslin were wasteful with big chances.

Slovakia finally punished their more illustrious opponents when David Strelec was given acres of room to turn and play in Schranz, who confidently stroked past Jordan Pickford for his third goal of the tournament.

Despite his lack of experience, Mainoo was one of the few players who threatened to spark England into life as the Manchester United midfielder's effort was deflected wide.

The half-time whistle was met with a chorus of boos but Southgate still stuck to his guns and did not make a change until 25 minutes to go.

England did at least improve on a dismal first half and had the ball in the net within five minutes of the restart.

Phil Foden turned in Kieran Trippier's cross but was caught offside after a VAR review.

Slovakia should have doubled their lead shortly afterwards when England gave away possession and Strelec saw Pickford well off his line but failed to hit the target from the halfway line.

Southgate's hand was finally forced on 66 minutes by an injury to Trippier.

With Luke Shaw not match-fit, Bukayo Saka was forced to deputise at left-back to make room for the introduction of Cole Palmer.

England's chances seemed to have gone when Kane headed wide a golden opportunity and Declan Rice smashed the post with a long-range pot shot.

However, there was an incredible twist as Bellingham acrobatically turned home Guehi's flick-on from a throw-in in the final moments of added-on time.

Kane hailed the goal as "one of the best in our country's history, I reckon".

The Brentford striker headed Eberechi Eze's mishit shot back across goal for Kane to power home his second goal of the tournament.

French far right wins

FROM PAGE 12

The final turnout in 2022 was just 47.5 percent.

The July 7 second round will see run-off votes take place in seats where there was no absolute majority, allowing the final composition of the National Assembly to take shape.

With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year and energy and food prices much higher, support for the anti-immigration and eurosceptic RN party has surged despite Macron's pledges to prevent its ascent.

The two-round vote could put the far-right in power in France for the first time since the Nazi occupation in World War II and give 28-year-old RN party chief Jordan Bardella, a protege of its longtime leader Marine Le Pen, the chance to form a government.

This would create a tense period of "cohabitation" with Macron, who has vowed to serve out his term until 2027. Bardella has said he will only form a government if the RN wins an absolute majority in the elections.

In the southern city of Marseille, Nabil Agueni said he had skipped the European elections but voted on yesterday.

UK ELECTION

Govt warns of Russian interference

AFP, *London*

Britain's deputy prime minister warned yesterday that the country's upcoming general election faces threats from hostile actors such as Russia seeking to influence the UK's democratic process.

The country will go to polls on Thursday, in an election expected to oust governing right-wing Conservatives and put opposition Labour party in power.

His comments came after the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported that it had uncovered five Facebook pages spreading the same pro-Kremlin talking points.

Some of them encouraged support for the hard-right Reform UK party led by Brexiteer Nigel Farage.

"There is a threat in all elections, and indeed we see it in this election from hostile state actors seeking to influence the outcome of the election campaign," Oliver Dowden told Sky News.

A Palestinian woman bakes unleavened bread in a makeshift oven while sitting on the rubble of buildings destroyed in the Israeli bombardment, as some residents return to the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Russia downs 36 Ukraine-launched drones

Claims two more east Ukrainian villages

REUTERS

Russia's air defence systems destroyed 36 drones that Ukraine launched overnight targeting several regions in Russia's southwest, the Russian defence ministry said yesterday.

Fifteen drones were destroyed over the Kursk region that borders Ukraine and nine over the Lipetsk region, several hundred kilometres south of Moscow, the defence ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.

Four drones were destroyed each over the Voronezh and Bryansk regions in southwestern Russia and two each over the nearby Oryol and Belgorod regions.

The governors of the Lipetsk and Bryansk regions said on their Telegram channels that there were no injuries or extensive damage as a result of the attacks, reports Reuters.

Kyiv has said attacks on Russia's military, transport and energy infrastructure are in response to Moscow's attacks on Ukraine's territory since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday also claimed two more east Ukrainian villages as its forces have had the upper hand over Kyiv on the battlefield for months.

Moscow has claimed new villages in the east of Ukraine regularly for weeks, as outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces struggle to hold them back.

Delhi's heavy rains claim 11 lives

Flight operations stutter in the city's main airport

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

The death toll from this week's sudden heavy rain has climbed to 11 in New Delhi, including four citizens who drowned in submerged underpasses, the Times of India reported, while flight operations stuttered in the Indian capital.

New Delhi, which endured one of its worst heatwaves in history earlier this month, faced the biggest downpour in decades on June 28, with rainfall in a single day surpassing the city's average for the entire month.

The torrential rain caused a fatal roof collapse at one of the three terminals of Delhi's main airport, disrupted flights, flooded underpasses, and led to massive traffic jams, power and water outages in parts of the city.

Nearly 60 flights were cancelled from New Delhi's main airport in the last 24 hours. Operations were largely normal yesterday, with most flights from the affected terminal diverted to the other two, an airport official said.

Hospital generators to run out of fuel in 48 hrs

Warns Gaza health ministry as much of electricity infrastructure decimated by Israeli attacks

AGENCIES

Gaza's few functional hospitals and health facilities could lose power in 48 hours if they don't receive fuel, causing life-saving medical equipment to stop working.

"We appeal to all relevant, international and humanitarian institutions to intervene quickly to bring in the necessary fuel," the Hamas-run health ministry said in a statement.

With much of Gaza's electricity infrastructure decimated by Israeli attacks, hospitals are largely dependent on generators, powered by fuel, for life-saving operations.

Recurring fuel shortages have frequently caused hospitals to go dark, putting patients' lives at serious risk.

Meanwhile, explosions, air strikes and gunfire rattled northern and southern Gaza yesterday, the fourth day of an Israeli military operation that has uprooted tens of thousands of Palestinians.

Mohammed Harara, 30, said he and his family fled their home in Shujaiya with nothing, "due to the bombardment by Israeli planes, tanks and drones", reports AFP.

The United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA estimated that "about 60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced" from the area this week.

At least 1,15,000 Palestinians from Gaza have fled to Egypt during the Israeli bombardment.

The number includes several thousand sick and wounded Palestinians who were medically evacuated, Al Jazeera reports according to The Washington Post, who cited the Palestinian embassy in Cairo.

The rest reached Egypt with assistance from foreign embassies or through a private Egyptian travel agency, which charges large sums to coordinate their exit, The Post added.

"Most remain in limbo, with no legal status and nowhere else to go," it reports. "They are members of a new diaspora of Palestinians, a people already haunted by memories of displacement."

In a separate development, Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry has issued a statement expressing the kingdom's condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli decision to "expand blatant settlement activity in the West Bank", Al Jazeera reports.

The ministry said Saudi Arabia "firmly rejects the continuous Israeli violations of international law and resolutions of international legitimacy".

The Israeli action poses "severe consequences", given the "lack of international accountability mechanisms," the statement said, adding that "these transgressions undercut the prospects for peace and exacerbate conflicts, destabilising regional and international security and stability".

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's plans to recognise five illegal settler outposts in the occupied West Bank.

In addition to recognising the outposts, Smotrich's plan removes civilian powers related to construction and zoning in one-fifth of the occupied West Bank, in what is known as "Area B".

'Asian version of Nato'

North Korea condemns drills by US, Japan, South Korea

REUTERS, *Seoul*

North Korea criticised a joint military exercise by South Korea, Japan and the United States held this month, state media said yesterday, saying such drills show the relationship among three countries has developed into "the Asian version of Nato".

On Thursday, the three countries began large-scale joint military drills called "Freedom Edge" involving navy destroyers, fighter jets and the nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt.

Pyongyang will not ignore strengthening of a military bloc led by US and its allies and will protect regional peace with an aggressive response, North Korea's foreign ministry said. It also said Washington was continuing its effort to link up South Korea and Japan to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato).

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Central bank denies UN report on weapons transactions

REUTERS

Myanmar's central bank denied a UN report that the military government can still access money and weapons for its war against anti-coup forces, saying financial institutions under bank's supervision followed prescribed procedures.

The Central Bank of Myanmar "expressed our strong objection to the UN Special Rapporteur's report", it said in a statement published in a junta newspaper on Saturday. "The UN report severely harms the interests of Myanmar civilians and the relationship between Myanmar and other countries."

The rapporteur on Myanmar's human rights, Tom Andrews, reported on Wednesday that while international efforts to isolate the junta appear to have dented its ability to buy military equipment, it still imported $253 million worth of weapons, dual-use technologies, manufacturing equipment and other materials in the 12 months to March.

The report said Myanmar had the help of international banks, including those from Southeast Asian neighbour Thailand, for its purchases.

Facing its biggest challenge since its 2021 coup against Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's government, Myanmar's military is caught up in multiple, low-intensity conflicts and grappling to stabilise a crumbling economy.

Militants turning to apps

FROM PAGE 1

Some of these groups have over 500 members or followers, who are possibly looking for an opportunity to stage a subversive act, they add.

"Our research suggests that only 10 percent of the militants on bail have been de-radicalised ... The militants on bail are supposed to appear at the respective police stations every month. We do not have the capacity to monitor each of them, but we are trying our best," says CTTC chief Asaduzzaman.

In the Middle East, Al Hafs Al Koraisi took IS leadership on August 3 last year. In separate messages in September last year and on January 7 this year, Hafs asked all the IS-inspired militants to organise and conduct subversive activities, officers say.

Subsequently, there have been a number of IS attacks killing hundreds in Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan, they add.

Inspired by the messages, Neo JMB members who have been inactive since the countrywide anti-militancy drive in 2016 and 2017 are beginning to organise.

According to law enforcers, 69 militants, including top leaders, were killed in the raids over those two years.

Neo JMB was earlier found involved in the Holey Artisan café attack in Gulshan that left 22 people dead, including foreigners and two policemen.

After the Holey Artisan Cafe attack, CTTC arrested 200 suspected members of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), 128 of Neo JMB, 230 of Ansar Al Islam, 15 of Huji-B, 120 of Hizb ut-Tahrir, 41 of Imam Mahmuder Kafela, 18 of Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, and 22 of other militant outfits.

"We are keeping an eye on the suspects now out on bail," says SK Imran Hossain, additional deputy commissioner of the CTTC.

NEW LEADERSHIP

According to an intelligence report, the new Neo JMB chief Maulana Abu Bakar is believed to be hiding somewhere in the Middle East.

He spent a period in Afghanistan, and was earlier involved with Harkat Ul Jihad Al Islami Bangladesh, reads an intelligence report.

Bakar got the charge after Abul Abbas Al Bangali, also known as Mahadi Hasan Jon, was arrested in Turkey based on CTTC's intelligence a year ago.

Bakar has tasked some of the followers to buy foreign firearms by collecting funds, says the report.

Besides, the outfit is planning to hack into the cable TV network in different parts of the country and "broadcast" content asking viewers to join it.

It also has plans to bring all its members under a single platform, form separate cells under a chain of command, and reduce its "gap" with other Islamist groups.

Rahmat Ullah Choudhury, deputy commissioner at CTTC unit, says, "There is a very thin line between the Islamist terrorist outfits like Neo JMB or Ansar Al Islam ABT and the so-called Islamist parties. The ideological spectrum of all Islamist parties overlap and they may come to a common platform in the near future."

In its last attack, the outfit on May 17, 2021, exploded a strong IED in front of a police traffic control room in Narayanganj. The members are using Threema, Wickr Me, and Telegram for communication to avoid surveillance, the report reads.

CTTC unit chief Asaduzzaman said, "There is no specific threat. The extremists do not have the capacity to carry out an attack like the Holey Artisan. But they have many sympathisers and supporters online."

Cybercriminals

FROM PAGE 1

to register the consignment with the NBR server, said customs officials involved in the investigation.

However, the importer and Zakaria denied their involvement in the incident.

Chattogram Customs House Commissioner Mohammad Fyzur Rahman has sent a primary report on the breach of the server to the NBR chairman with a recommendation that an investigation committee consisting of IT experts be formed to identify the "cybercriminal gang".

The report said cigarettes were imported from Thailand with a declaration of importing water purifiers. The consignment was registered with the server at 11:45pm on May 20 by using the ID of Zakaria. The data on the consignment was accessed again by the same user at midnight on May 21 to complete the clearing process.

According to officials, an authorised individual can access the NBR server only from a specific IP address. Once the individual uses his user ID to log into the server, an OTP (one time password) is sent his mobile phone for verification. This is done to restrict any unauthorised access to the server.

However, in this particular case, the "gang" accessed the server from a different IP addresses and no OTP was sent to the mobile phone of the official concerned, said investigators.

Customs Commissioner Mohammad Fyzur Rahman said, "The NBR had taken some steps after a large numbers of consignments were cleared from the port by using the IDs of customs officials to evade tax. Use of the particular IP and sending OTP to mobile phone are among those.

"After the latest incident of breaching the server, it seems that those measures are not enough," he told The Daily Star.

Mamunor Rahman, manager (supply) of Hamco Corporation, told The Daily Star, "We are not sure who used our company's name to import the consignment of cigarettes. We have requested the customs officials to probe the incident to identify the culprits."

The use of the login credentials of customs officials to release imported goods is not a new phenomenon.

Over the last three years, at least 38 imported consignments of goods were released illegally by using the IDs of at least eight revenue officials.

Customs Commissioner Fyzur said, "I hope if an investigation committee consisting of experts is formed in this regard, we will get the real picture."

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আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন ইউনিট (পিআইইউ) এর জন্য আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহে অভিজ্ঞ ঠিকাদার/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১.	মন্ত্রণালয়	:	প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়
০২.	সংস্থা	:	জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো
০৩.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	:	প্রকল্প পরিচালকের দপ্তর "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো ৮৯/২, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা-১০০০
০৪.	সেবা / কাজের বিবরণ	:	আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে মোট ০৯ (নয়) জন [প্রকৌশলী (সিভিল)-২টি, প্রকৌশলী (ইলেকট্রিক্যাল)-১টি, ডাটা এন্ট্রি অপারেটর-১টি, গাড়ী চালক-৩টি এবং অফিস সহায়ক-২টি পদে] জনবলের সেবা গ্রহণের লক্ষে সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ।
০৫.	অর্থের উৎস	:	জিওবি (উন্নয়ন)
০৬.	দরপত্র আহবানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর ও তারিখ	:	৪৯.০১.০০০০.৩২৪.১১.০০১.২৪.১১৯ তারিখ: ০১.০৭.২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।
০৭.	দরপত্রের ধরন / পদ্ধতি	:	একস্তর একখাম পদ্ধতিতে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
০৮.	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	:	(ক) জনবল সরবরাহের বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (খ) হাল নাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (গ) হাল নাগাদ আয়কর সনদ (২০২৩-২০২৪) (ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ (ঙ) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদ ও গত ০৬ মাসের ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট (চ) সরকারী/আধা সরকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানে জনবল সরবরাহের ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা।
০৯.	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	:	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক/সোনালী ব্যাংকে ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে ১-৬৫৩১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ কোডে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।
১০.	দরপত্রের জামানত এর পরিমাণ	:	৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকা। (যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংকের হতে প্রকল্প পরিচালক, "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প এ নামে পে-অর্ডার)
১১.	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	:	প্রকল্প পরিচালকের দপ্তর "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো, ৮৯/২, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা।
১২.	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	:	০২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১৫/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৩.	দরপত্র দলিল দাখিল এবং খোলার সময় ও স্থান	:	১৬/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত এবং একই দিন খোলার সময় বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। প্রকল্প পরিচালকের দপ্তর "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো, ৮৯/২, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা
১৪.	জনবল সরবরাহের সময়	:	০১/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।
১৫.	চুক্তির মেয়াদ	:	০১ (এক) বছর (সন্তোষজনক সেবা সরবরাহ সাপেক্ষে বছর বছর নবায়নযোগ্য)।
১৬.	দরপত্র দলিল সংগ্রহ / ক্রয়ের পদ্ধতি	:	প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারী কর্তৃক সীল ও স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাডে আবেদন এবং চালানের ফটোকপিসহ দরপত্র দলিল ক্রয় করা যাবে। চালানের মূলকপি দরপত্রের সংগে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৭.	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর পদবি ও ঠিকানা	:	প্রকল্প পরিচালক (যুগ্ম সচিব) "উপজেলা পর্যায়ে ৫০টি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প জনশক্তি কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যুরো, ৮৯/২, কাকরাইল, ঢাকা
১৮.	সংরক্ষণ ক্ষমতা	:	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনো কারন দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

০১.০৭.২৪
(মোঃ আখতারুজ্জামান)
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (যুগ্ম সচিব)

GD-1055

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A facility encouraging malfeasance

Provision granting amnesty for black money holders is a disgrace

We condemn the parliament's decision to once again approve a provision allowing black money holders to legalise undisclosed wealth without any scrutiny by paying a 15 percent tax, despite protests over the past few weeks. The provision is set to come into effect from July 1. While the country's highest income tax rate stands at 25 percent, allowing black money holders—many of them accumulating their wealth through corrupt means—to legalise it at a much reduced rate is truly befuddling. Experts, anti-graft watchdogs and even some lawmakers had strongly opposed the move which would send a wrong message to both individuals amassing black money and honest taxpayers.

The message is simple: the law is set in such a way that it favours black money holders over honest taxpayers. The former will no doubt be encouraged by it. And when those who earn their money legally are made to pay higher taxes compared to those who do so illegally, why should they, too, not try to game the system? Because the Awami League government has regularised this budget provision over the years, citing scenarios that defy logic, honest taxpayers (belonging to the higher tax slabs) may be forgiven for thinking they would be better off by not filing regular taxes, and making use of this provision later to pay a reduced tax. When laws are designed to create such discrepancies and encourage immoralities, it is not difficult to understand the moral standards of those arguing for these laws.

Given how widespread corruption has become in the country, the provision would come as a huge relief for the corrupt. They would be assured to know that despite massive public outcries, many in key positions are still willing to bend the rules in their favour. Not only that, they are even willing to undermine Article 20(2) of the constitution to do so. Except in 2020-21 (during Covid-19), the amount of black money whitened through this process has been a drop in the ocean compared to the estimated size of our black economy. The data clearly debunks the government's narrative that providing such a facility is going to bring significant amounts of black money into the mainstream. But even if it did, why would lawmakers accept money made from drug dealing, human trafficking, or other criminal activities being legalised under a special provision in the first place?

Having provided this facility repeatedly, has the government succeeded in reducing the size of the shadow economy? Has it improved its tax system or revenue collection as advertised? Has it managed to reduce corruption and strengthen rule of law? The answer to all these questions is a resounding "No". The government should, therefore, immediately withdraw the provision, and make sure black money holders—particularly those involved with criminal and corrupt activities—are held to account.

A monument to systemic negligence

Chattogram testing lab remains inoperative even after nine years

It is disheartening that Chattogram's Modern Food Testing Laboratory—a Tk 34.4 crore project funded by the Asian Development Bank—has remained non-operational despite its completion in 2015. The facility, intended to enhance food safety, began trial testing in January 2016. However, according to a report by this daily, the lack of a signing authority has rendered its results useless, as no official certifications of food safety can be made. This is a glaring testament to the systemic negligence and inefficiency that so often stymie the functionality of government facilities.

The laboratory, divided into two sections, is equipped to test a wide range of food items including milk, meat, vegetables, edible oil, etc. It's a pity that such an important and expensive facility would sit idle year after year just because no one in the administration cared to provide the support necessary to make it fully operational. Normally, the first order of business in any such project would be appointing an appropriate signing authority, since no actionable steps can be taken without one regardless of how dire its findings. The second priority would be having adequate and properly motivated manpower. Reportedly, out of the 24 officials initially appointed in the laboratory, only seven remain due to delays in regularising their jobs. So the question is, why would these basic issues remain unresolved even after nine years, and despite receiving operational approval in as far back as 2016?

Unfortunately, we have seen too many cases of vital technical or medical projects languishing after completion of construction to consider the Chattogram case as an isolated one. In fact, the government has a rather unenviable reputation when it comes to operationalising such public-interest initiatives. Among the issues that new projects usually suffer from are staff shortages, lack of equipment, lack of power supply, coordination issues among the relevant institutions, etc.—all of which can be attributed to bureaucratic inertia and mismanagement. The gap between the completion of projects and their actual operationalisation can be overwhelming.

We, therefore, urge the government to remove all barriers to the seamless operation of the food testing laboratory in Chattogram so that it can serve its intended purpose. As well as the problems mentioned above, another issue delaying its operation is that the Chattogram City Corporation has yet to assume control of the lab despite this transition being scheduled post-2021. All this should be addressed urgently.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

8 years of Holy Artisan terrorist attack

On this day in 2016, five militants with firearms, machetes, and grenades stormed the Holy Artisan Bakery, an upscale eatery in Dhaka's Gulshan area, and held the diners hostage before killing 22 people, including three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese, nine Italians, and one Indian.

Can the latest school census data help curb dropout?

Dr Manzoor Ahmed
is professor emeritus at BRAC University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN), adviser to the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), and associate editor of the International Journal of Educational Development. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

MANZOOR AHMED

The Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2023 report published by the Directorate of Primary Education provides an account of children attending and completing primary education and of institutions at this level. It says little about what students take from primary schools by way of knowledge, skills and values that can make a difference for the next stages of their education and life.

Rumana Ali MP, state minister of primary and mass education, said in a preface to the recently published report that insights from it would help undertake "targeted actions and strategic measures" to enhance the "educational journey and achievements of every Bangladeshi child." Shah Rezwan Hayat, director-general of primary education, added that the insights and recommendations of the report would serve as a "fundamental platform for fostering informed discussions and collaborative actions."

What are the insights offered by the report, and what are the recommendations? There are two pieces of advice: about improving the quality of data for the report itself, and about improving primary education outcomes. Let's look briefly at them.

As the report notes, a post-enumeration quality check of the APSC data, undertaken by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), showed that there was an estimated error of 3.44 percent in coverage of institutions in the school census. This means that over 4,000 primary-level institutions may have been missed out by the census.

More importantly, the quality check also showed that there was a measurement discrepancy of five percent (plus or minus) between the school census data and the post-enumeration check. The report claims that a probability of five percent error was "negligible" and the results "seemed to be good and acceptable" for policy measures. Actually, the under-coverage of institutions and the error margin do cast doubt on the validity of the findings as the basis for corrective actions and policy measures.

For example, the drop in student enrolment by about 8.5 lakh from the previous year is under 0.5 percent of total enrolment, well within the five percent plus or minus margin. It is also noted in the report that accuracy regarding the data from kindergartens and private schools has been challenging and no data has been collected from Qawmi madrasas. These institutions together are likely to be enrolling one-third of the primary-level students. The declining birth rate in recent years also reduces the number of children seeking primary education enrolment.

The latest Annual Primary School Census report points to problems, but does not provide a full and reliable picture. FILE PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

The report mentions that better methodology and tools such as the Integrated Primary Education Information Management System (IPEIMS) may have helped to correct past data biases, and that the improved tools as well as verification through post-enumeration check should be applied to maintain data quality. These are reasonable advice and deserve serious attention to come out with reliable educational input data regarding students, teachers, and institutions.

At the same time, it is necessary to remember that by its very nature and intended purpose, the APSC lacks outcome data regarding how much and what students learn. The annual school census is far from a comprehensive and holistic picture of primary education.

So, should we not be concerned about dropout and exclusion of children from school? Yes, we should, and the APSC points to problems but does not provide a full and reliable picture. We should also ask what light the school census throws on improving primary-level performance and student-learning outcomes.

Drawing conclusions from the collected input data about institutions, students, and teachers, the report suggests a number of action steps. These are based more on general discourse on education equity, quality and inclusion issues, rather than extracted specifically from the census findings. They include: targeted interventions to engage all primary school-going children more effectively in education; expanding access to pre-primary education for equitable participation across genders; strengthening special needs education with improved resources and teacher training; community engagement; and professional development opportunities for teachers.

These are sound general advice with which few would disagree. But how can these be acted upon with practical strategies, plans, and actions? Along with the input data from the APSC (which needs to be more inclusive and accurate), we also need to have reliable and inclusive outcome information in the form of learning achievements of students, derived from practical learning assessment tools.

In fact, the National Student Assessment exercise that takes place periodically (roughly every two years) since 2011 can be seen as such an instrument. The last NSA report for 2022 was released in June 2023. It revealed that almost half of the students in Classes 3 and 5 had below grade-level competencies in Bangla, and only a third of the students achieved expected grade-level competencies in mathematics. These were results largely similar to those seen from the NSA in 2017 and earlier rounds. In other words, more than half of children who attend and complete primary grades do not achieve the expected basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and the situation has not improved over the years. By contrast, the primary school completion examination (now discontinued) and Class 5 annual examination routinely showed pass rates of over 95 percent.

It has been noticed that there is a greater involvement of education officials and external development partners, much fanfare and public discussion associated with the annual APSC reports than with the less regular NSA reports. The policymakers seem to be more interested in inputs than outcomes, and there is an antipathy towards connecting the two.

Periodic assessment of learning and annual reporting on inputs have not been undertaken systematically at the secondary level, which is under the jurisdiction of a different ministry. But available evidence suggests that learning outcomes at secondary level could not be any better. A reason, it may be plausibly argued, is that poor foundational learning of children at primary level has knock-on effects on later stages of education.

A pragmatic, relatively simple and easily implementable assessment of learning known as Annual State of Education Report (ASER) has been pioneered in India by the NGO Pratham, and replicated in Pakistan, Nepal and a number of African countries. An NSA or ASER model, with adaptation as necessary, developed and applied systematically to school education can be a way to better understand the interplay of learning inputs and learning results. Thus, policy and action can be better guided and implemented to ensure basic education for all children with equity, quality, and inclusion.

As argued by this writer and others, taking the sustainable development goal for education (SDG4) and the education imperatives for scaling the heights of a higher-middle-income country status seriously means that basic K-12 school education must be ensured for all children.

We cannot continue to keep primary and secondary education in discrete boxes and try to plan and manage these separately just because the education bureaucracy has been set up in a certain way. Denial of basic education to more than half of the children should not continue.

Bangladesh on the renewable energy race track

RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

When deciding where to source clothing from, an increasingly important factor will be energy use as fashion brands and retailers look to reduce carbon emissions in supply chains.

A country's energy mix may even one day override all other issues given the climate crisis we face. Here I look at progress made by five garment exporting countries—China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Turkey—in their transitions to renewable energy sources.

China

China, the world's largest energy consumer, has made significant strides in renewable energy development. The country's energy mix is still dominated by coal, accounting for more than 50 percent of its energy consumption in 2021.

However, China is the global leader in renewable energy capacity, with extensive investments in solar, wind, and hydropower. As of 2023, China has over 500 GW of solar and wind capacity combined, with ambitious plans to reach 1,200 GW by 2030.

Hydropower also plays a significant role, contributing about 20 percent to the national grid. The nation has committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. Government policies, substantial subsidies, and advances in technology have propelled China's rapid growth in renewables.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh's energy mix is heavily reliant on natural gas, which accounted for about 62 percent of its total energy consumption in FY 2021-2022. Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in solar home systems, with over five million installations serving rural households. Despite this, renewables contribute only around three percent to the national grid as of 2023.

This has to improve if we are to remain internationally competitive. Our customers will demand that it does. To this end, the government has set a target to generate 10 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2030, but achieving this goal requires significant investments and policy support. The energy mix also includes imported oil and coal.

Vietnam

Vietnam, the third largest exporter of clothing after China and Bangladesh, has a diverse energy mix, with coal being the predominant source, accounting for more than 40 percent of the total energy consumption in 2023. Hydropower is also significant as well as natural gas and oil.

Vietnam has seen a dramatic increase in its renewable energy capacity, particularly in solar and wind power, thanks to favourable government policies, including feed-in tariffs and tax incentives. The wind energy sector is also growing, with projects like the 99.2 MW Bac Lieu wind farm. Vietnam aims to have 30 percent of its electricity generated from renewables by 2030.

Pakistan

Pakistan's current energy mix is dominated by fossil fuels, with natural gas, oil, and coal making up the majority as of 2023. The renewable energy sector is still in its early stages, but the country has significant potential, particularly in wind and solar power.

As of 2023, renewable energy accounts for about six percent of Pakistan's total energy mix, with plans to increase this share to 30 percent by 2030. Key projects include the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park and various wind farms in the Sindh province.

Government initiatives and international support have been crucial in advancing these projects. However, Pakistan faces challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, financial constraints, and a need for more robust policy frameworks to attract private investment.

Turkey

Turkey's energy mix is quite diverse, with natural gas (27 percent), coal (25 percent), and oil (29 percent) being the primary sources of energy in 2022. Renewables including wind, solar power and hydro also makes significant contributions.

The country has implemented various incentives, including feed-in tariffs and purchase guarantees, to encourage investment in renewable energy.

However, the transition is challenged by economic instability and fluctuating policy environments, which can impact investor confidence.

Overall, the renewable energy transition in China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Turkey highlights diverse paths and challenges. China's leadership in capacity and investment sets a global benchmark, while Vietnam's rapid adoption showcases the potential of favourable policies and incentives.

Pakistan's journey emphasises the need for policy and financial frameworks, and Turkey's balanced approach reflects a strategy of building energy security through renewables.

But what about Bangladesh? We must improve the supply of renewable energy available to our industrial base. Our government, regional authorities, garment manufacturers and international fashion brands must collaborate on this issue to better understand the current state of our energy mix, decide how it can be shifted heavily in favour of renewable energy and then work out what this will cost—and, most importantly, how it will be funded.

Bangladesh has a chance to lead on this issue, but China, Pakistan, Turkey, Vietnam and other garment producing countries will also be looking to boost their own renewable energy use. The race is on.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

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Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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01711623906

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4TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF LATIFUR RAHMAN

Remembering the flagbearer of independent journalism

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

Latifur Rahman—Shamim or Shamim Bhai to all—was an unlikely person to become a flagbearer of independent journalism. But once he did, he was most unswerving about it.

Before *The Daily Star*, he never showed any sign of wanting to get involved in this complicated and highly sensitive industry. Credit to draw him towards the media goes, as far as I know, to his one-time business partner and friend, Mr AS Mahmud (Mahmud Bhai to me) who convinced him about the importance of this crucial industry. It was my privilege to enjoy the latter's affection through my elder brother, Mahbub Anam, who was his professional colleague in the oil sector from pre-Bangladesh days. It was Mahmud Bhai who organised my first meeting with Shamim Bhai at the Dhaka Club in 1988-89. I really don't know if I had made any significant impression on him, but it seemed enough for him to continue to meet and carry on the discussion for investing in a new English language newspaper. He was a no-nonsense person and thought about whether I would really leave my tenured UN job—at that time posted in Bangkok, Thailand—to plunge into the uncharted waters of Bangladeshi media, which in the 1990s had very few new investors. I think it was our meeting at my apartment in the Thai capital in January 1990 that convinced him that my determination was for real. From then on, our friendship grew and we soon became partners in giving journalism in Bangladesh a new life, with SM Ali, our founding editor, at its helm.

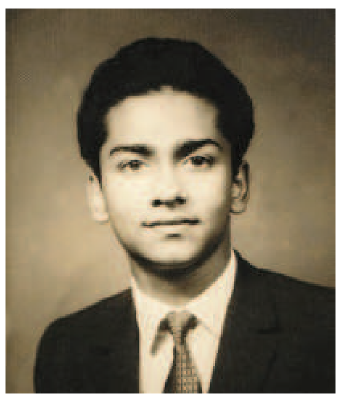

PHOTO: COURTESY

A young Latifur Rahman.

It was in the initial board meetings of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of *The Daily Star*, that the true commitment of Shamim Bhai to independent journalism became apparent. Both Ali Bhai—a very famous and highly respected journalist and editor in the Asia-Pacific region—and I were most thrilled by the rules of the game that Shamim Bhai was enunciating, along with other founding directors, to run the newspaper. Before Ali Bhai or I could suggest it, Shamim Bhai persuaded other directors to collectively declare that the role of the board would be to formulate the overall policy and only monitor the financial aspect of the paper. The full journalistic control of *The Daily Star* would be totally in the hands of its editor-publisher. Nothing could energise us more.

It would be fair to think that it was as a mark of respect for Ali Bhai that the board of Mediaworld took such a hands-off approach. But when I was made its editor-publisher, following the sad demise of Ali Bhai in 1993, within two and half years of our founding, the same respect and independence was shown to me, proving that Mediaworld board's approach was institutional and not personal.

It was this institutional approach that was the hallmark of Shamim Bhai. *The Daily Star* must become an institution and everything must function systematically—this was the supreme message of the board. I can say with utmost pride that *The Daily Star* has a board which is among the most enlightened anywhere in terms of giving the utmost respect to the institution of the editor and allowing the management a free hand in running the newspaper. That is how we started, and that is how it remains till date.

Both Ali Bhai—a very famous and highly respected journalist and editor in the Asia-Pacific region—and I were most thrilled by the rules of the game that Shamim Bhai was enunciating, along with other founding directors, to run the newspaper. Before Ali Bhai or I could suggest it, Shamim Bhai persuaded other directors to collectively declare that the role of the board would be to formulate the overall policy and only monitor the financial aspect of the paper. The full journalistic control of The Daily Star would be totally in the hands of its editor-publisher. Nothing could energise us more.

There are many examples, but two would suffice to tell the whole story of Latifur Rahman's commitment to independent journalism.

Once, Shamim Bhai was contesting to become the president of (Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries) FBCCI. His opponent was Yussuf Abdullah Harun. Throughout the campaign, the paper, of which he was a vital leader, gave equal coverage to both. We interviewed both, wrote on both, but never tilted on either side. I went one step further. In every coverage, his opponent's item featured before his. As a contestant, he definitely must have wanted more coverage. But as a newspaper owner, he knew that the public would be watching and judging us as to how we handled the coverage. He never said a word to me about it. That is how objective he had the quality to be.

Latifur Rahman at a reception after he was honoured with the Oslo Business for Peace Award in 2012, with Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.
PHOTO: COURTESY

There was another occasion when a fellow businessman complained to him about some coverage by *The Daily Star* about corruption, especially wilful loan default and laundering of that money. Shamim Bhai advised him to contact the editor. "I don't run the paper, the editor does," he said. The businessman was shocked and exclaimed, "You own the paper and the editor runs it. How can that be possible?" That was Latifur Rahman.

When Matiur Rahman (Mati Bhai) and I approached him with the suggestion to launch a Bangla newspaper, he immediately agreed and found in Mati Bhai the perfect editor to go forward with it. All his values about journalism that he started with in *The Daily Star*, he implemented with equal gusto in *Prothom Alo*. He realised that an English newspaper was necessary, but a Bangla one would reach a far greater audience with the message of independent journalism. He greatly appreciated the extra efforts that Mati Bhai made and encouraged him to take newer initiatives like Prothoma publications, etc.

He would never miss the annual staff meetings of the two papers, especially of *Prothom Alo*. While appreciating the paper's magnificent performance and congratulating the staff and the editor for it, he would never fail to goad them to aspire for greater circulation, quality and business. When the paper reached a circulation of five lakh, he said, "Why not aim for 10 lakh?" That sort of ambition would require huge additional investment, but Shamim Bhai never shied away from it. When *Prothom Alo*'s digital version became the biggest Bangla news portal in the world, outstripping *Anandabazar Patrika* of Kolkata of that position, his happiness showed no end. He was usually not very expressive, but on that occasion, it crossed the usual bounds.

There was an occasion when Transcom was about to own a well-known TV channel. Mati Bhai and I were assisting Shamim Bhai. At the very end of months-long negotiations, it came out that there was no official channel to pay the satellite fee and the channel paid it through "unofficial means." Shamim Bhai would have none of it. He said he would never accept that as a practice. We again marvelled at his ethical stance and wholeheartedly supported him.

Following every board meeting, he would join many of the senior colleagues of the paper and spend hours talking with them about any issue that would come up, but never forgetting to inquire about their personal and family situations. Once, a photographer of *Prothom Alo* suffered a life-threatening accident; Shamim Bhai arranged for him to be airlifted to Singapore and personally paid all his expenses till he recovered. This endeared him forever to all of us.

Today, as we commemorate Latifur Rahman on his fourth death anniversary, we at *The Daily Star* sorely miss his presence. We miss his warmth and his personal touch in going forward in the cause of independent journalism. He will be remembered for, among many other things, his sterling contribution in helping the emergence and continued success of the two most trusted and respected newspapers in Bangladesh.

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8 years since Chotoo, 4 years since Nana Bhai

Zaraif Ayaat Hossain,
grandson of Latifur Rahman and elder brother of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, is head of strategy and transformation at Transcom Group.

ZARAIF AYAAT HOSSAIN

To write a piece on July 1 in remembrance of my loved ones is a challenge. The same day belongs to two of them, and maybe that's exactly what they'd want. My clever younger brother wouldn't have had it any other way but to be remembered on the same day as his Nana Bhai for eternity.

Remembering both Chotoo and Nana Bhai today, I think about what a 20-year-old could possibly have in common with his grandfather. It turns out, quite a lot. A calming presence that made everyone feel at home. A quiet confidence that exuded incredible strength, without ever being loud. A tenacious sense of right and wrong. Their refusal to back down when faced with adversity.

One day, when Faraaz and I were kids, we went to see Nana Bhai and Nanu Ma the evening before the beginning of a new school year. That night, he told us the story of his first day of boarding school at St Edmunds. On a cold morning in Shillong, he landed up in school as the new kid, when a student a year senior to him decided to pick on him. The senior student, according to Nana Bhai, was "acting funny" and so he had to do something to stand up for himself. He gave this senior a strong shove to back off, and that's when he established himself as the kid nobody should bully. He told us this story to teach us that we must find the strength to fight back even in our most vulnerable state.

That young Latifur Rahman would then lead a life with the same spirit. Standing up for himself, his family and protecting his loved ones.

Faraaz would go on to stand up to fiends of a greater magnitude as a young man. On July 1, 2016, Faraaz found himself confronted by armed terrorists. With his life in danger, he chose to fight, to protect, to not cower to evil.

Remembering both Chotoo and Nana Bhai today, I think about what a 20-year-old could possibly have in common with his grandfather. It turns out, quite a lot. A calming presence that made everyone feel at home. A quiet confidence that exuded incredible strength, without ever being loud. A tenacious sense of right and wrong. Their refusal to back down when faced with adversity.

Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain with his grandparents Latifur Rahman and Shahnaz Rahman after graduating from American International School Dhaka in 2014.
PHOTO: COURTESY

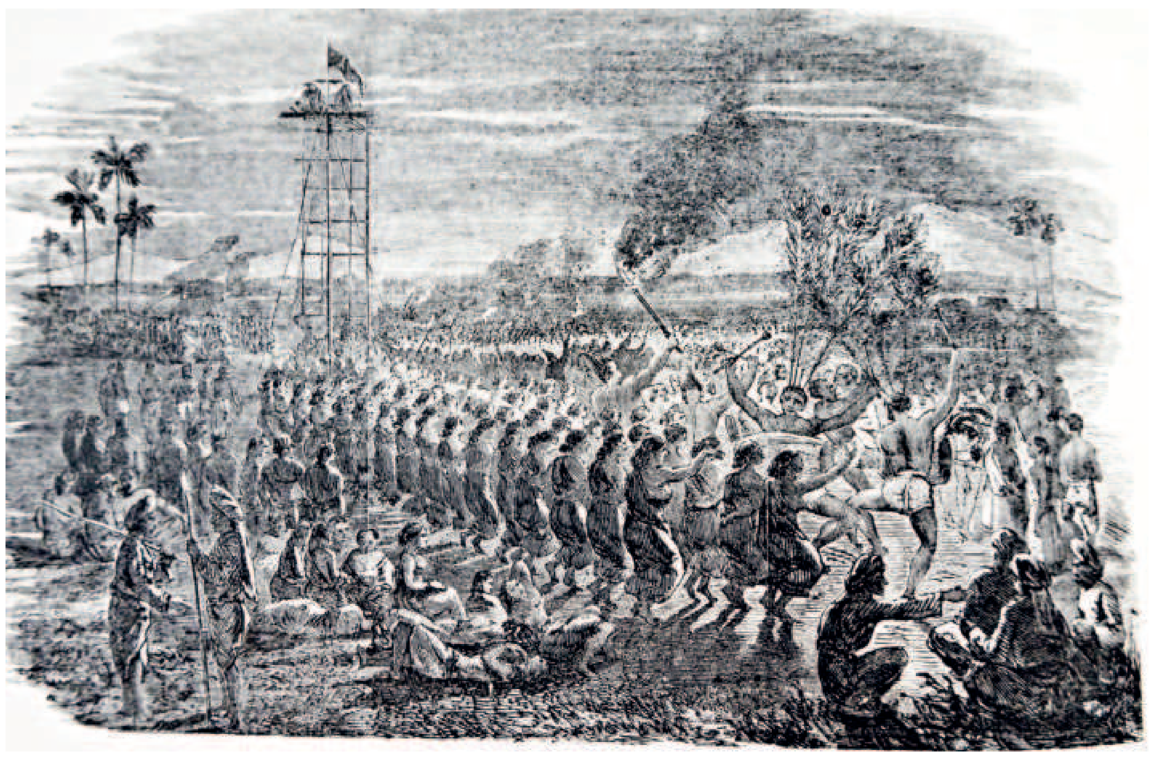
On July 1, to remember Nana Bhai and Chotoo is to keep standing by the same righteous values they both lived by. To remain steadfast in doing good while weathering malicious storms, undue pressure and dire circumstances. To honour them is to keep standing up the way they did.

Mr Latifur Rahman, business icon, industrialist, founder chairman of Transcom Group. Faraaz Hossain, the boy who heroically sacrificed his life during the terrorist attack at Holey Artisan Bakery. But to me, to my family, they'll always be Nana Bhai and Chotoo. Nana Bhai as a grandfather, a husband, a father, and Chotoo as a brother, a son, a grandson. Our beloved Latifur Rahman and Faraaz Hossain remind us to keep fighting for what is right.

Remembering both our guardian angels together on this day, the ultimate remembrance of both Nana Bhai and Chotoo is to live with the courage they would want to see in us. I pray their light shines brighter than ever and that the strength they give never fades.

To our family, friends, loved ones, and well-wishers, our deepest gratitude to you on behalf of our family for always standing by us.

Arrows against muskets
THE SANTAL HUL



A British artist's depiction of a Santal ceremony, one of the few depictions made of the Santals before the Hul, which hints at their rich communal traditions. IMAGE SOURCES: **ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS**

The Hul was and is not just important to Santals alone. It was an event of importance in India's colonial history. The rebellion which consumed the Santal country in 1855 was (after the great mutiny-rebellion of 1857) the single largest rebellion faced by British India's rulers until the great independence movement began in the late nineteenth century.

PETER STANLEY

Exactly 169 years ago, in the jungles of what is now the Indian state of Jharkhand, Bengal Army sepoys fired the final shots in what became known as the 'Hul', or uprising, of 1855. The last of about two thousand Santal fighters died in the Hul's last, anonymous clashes. For six months Santal bands had roamed the jungles of Bengal, burning, plundering and murdering those who had oppressed them. The Hul remains the central event in the recorded history of the Santal people of India and Bangladesh, the subject of songs, poems and stories – and later novels and even films, a heroic episode more celebrated than analysed.

Though of great importance to the Santals, the Hul has been the subject of just a handful of books, though many anthropologists refer to it in explaining how Santal culture has evolved, especially in relation to the nations of which they are a part, of India and Bangladesh. In 2022, my own book on the uprising appeared – *Hul! Hul!: the Suppression of the Santal Uprising, Bengal 1855*, published in India by Bloomsbury: its first *military* history. I tried to explain the failure of the Hul by drawing upon an historical source never before used by its historians – the vast and detailed records of the Bengal Army.

I consulted the existing sources (including precious Santal accounts of the Hul), visited some of the sites where the Hul occurred and especially read the huge number of detailed accounts of the rising as it is revealed in unpublished British records. That gave me a new and challenging view of it. Was I merely repeating British accounts? I don't think so: read on.

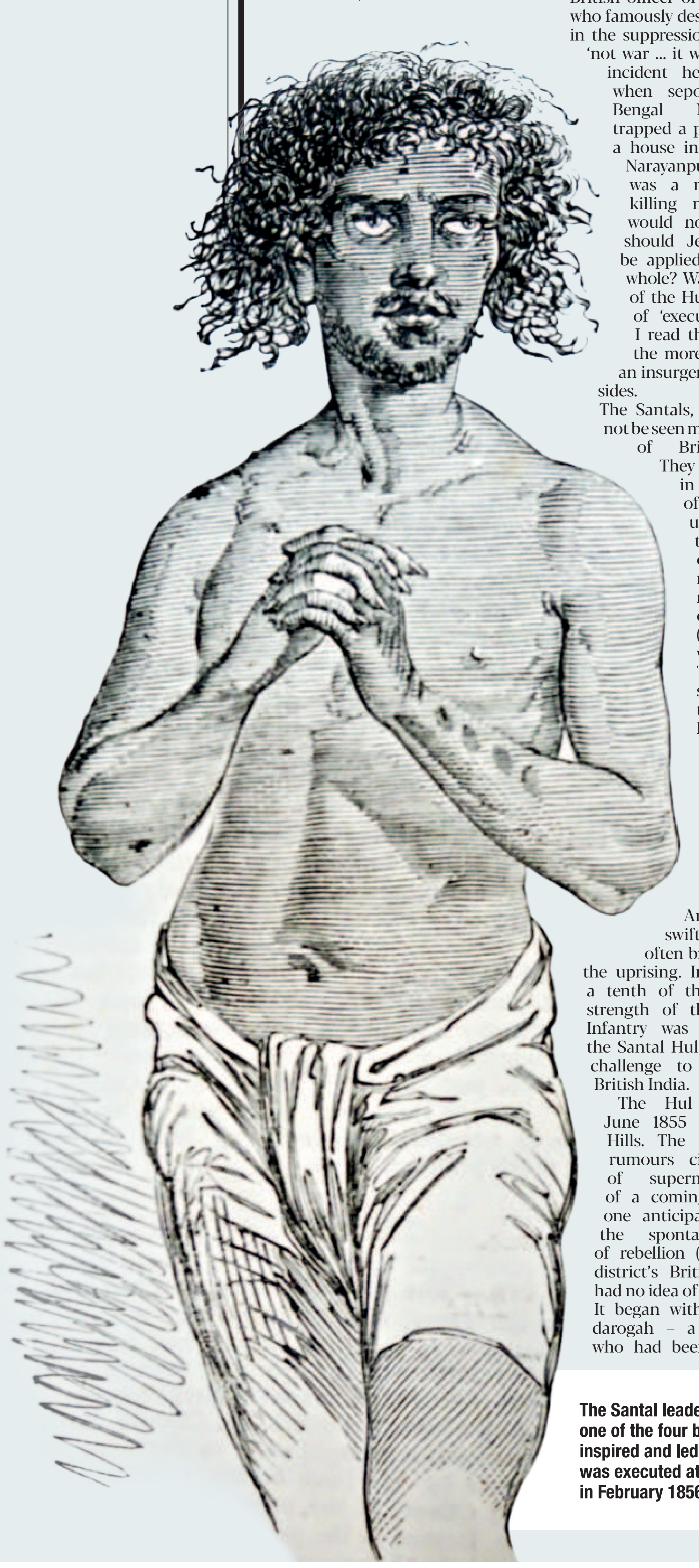
But what right, you might ask, did I, an Australian historian, have to write about an event of such importance to Santal people – especially when I have not a word of Santali? I must admit that my research might seem to be surprising; even offensive. I can only reply that I think that the Hul deserves to be accorded the respect of being treated like the major conflict it clearly was. The Hul was and remains important to Santals, and Santal authors should be writing about the Hul, drawing upon the communal and cultural sources only they can obtain. I offer a perspective that can only help to illuminate Santal historical experience.

But the Hul was and is not just important to Santals alone. It was an event of importance in India's colonial history. The rebellion which consumed the Santal country in 1855 was (after the great mutiny-rebellion of 1857) the single largest rebellion faced by British India's rulers until the great independence movement began in the late nineteenth century.

In describing the Hul, many authors quote Vincent Jervis, a British officer of the Bengal Army, who famously described an incident in the suppression of the rising as 'not war ... it was execution'. The incident he was describing, when sepoys of the 56th Bengal Native Infantry trapped a party of Santals in a house in Narainpore (now Narayanpur, West Bengal), was a matter of simply killing men who simply would not surrender. But should Jervis's description be applied to the Hul as a whole? Was the suppression of the Hul merely a matter of 'execution'? The more I read the British records, the more I saw the Hul as an insurgency fought by both sides.

The Santals, I realised, should not be seen merely as the victims of British repression. They rose in rebellion in the monsoon of 1855, finally unable to stand the oppression of the landlords, merchants and moneylenders who oppressed them (most of whom were Bengalis). They rebelled not so much against the rule of the East India Company (though they were disillusioned at how poorly its officials protected them from exploitation) but it was the forces of the East India Company's Bengal Army which acted swiftly, efficiently and often brutally to suppress the uprising. Indeed, more than a tenth of the entire infantry strength of the Bengal Native Infantry was deployed against the Santal Hul: this was a major challenge to the stability of British India.

The Hul began late in June 1855 in the Rajmahal Hills. The hot weather had rumours circulated, reports of supernatural portents of a coming apocalypse. No one anticipated the scale of the spontaneous outbreak of rebellion (certainly not the district's British officials, who had no idea of Santal grievances). It began with the killing of a darogah – a police official – who had been notable for his cruelty against Santals. The killing sparked a mass movement, in which thousands of Santals joined.



The Santal leader, Sidhu Manji, one of the four brothers who inspired and led the Hul, who was executed at Bhugnadihee in February 1856.

Columns of Santals moved out of the Rajmahal hills, killing the merchants, zamindars and petty rajahs who had oppressed them. Reports of atrocities they committed – a measure of their desperation and despair – reached the British authorities, who reacted swiftly. Within a week, sepoy regiments began marching toward the disturbed region.

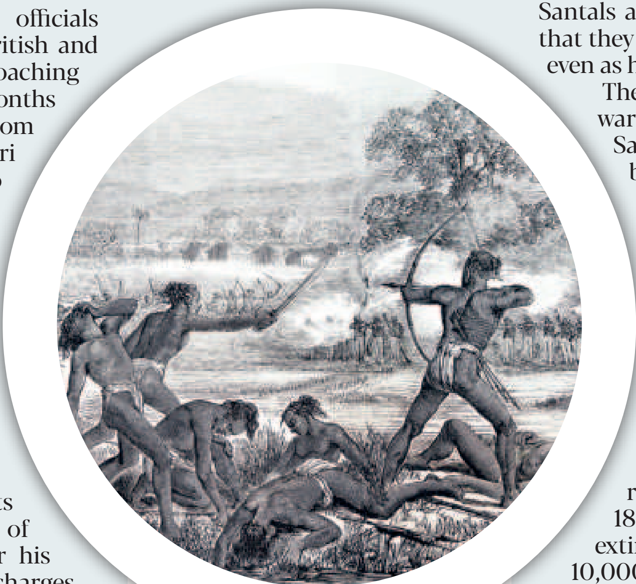
At first, the Santals experienced military success. At Peer Pointee, just south of the Ganges, on 16 July, they routed a force of Hill Rangers sent from Bagulpur. Inspired by the charismatic brothers of Bugnadihee (today Bugnadee, Jharkhand), especially the Santal heroes Sidhu and Kanhu, they believed that sepoys' musket balls would turn to water. Some British officials panicked and refugees, British and Bengali, fled from the approaching Santal bands. For several months a huge swathe of Bengal, from Bagalpur in Birhar to Suri in West Bengal, and east to the Bagiruti River, was out of British control.

Soon, though, the Bengal Army exerted its power. The 7th Bengal Native Infantry marched from Berhampore and as early as 15 July attacked a large Santal force at Moheshpore (now Mahespur, Jharkhand). Sepoys arrived on elephants (provided by the Nawab of Morshedabad, anxious for his security) and met Santal charges with musket volleys, a fight in which perhaps 200 Santals died. In that battle three of the Bhugnadihee brothers were wounded, bravely leading their followers. Sepoy columns advanced into the Santal country from Suri in the south, Bagalpur in the north and from Berhampore to the east. While for a month or so the two clashed almost accidentally, each side then developed a sort of strategy.

Lacking coherent leadership, the Santal bands roamed around the region, looting and living off villages, driving off tens of thousands of refugees, many Bengalis. Gradually, they moved towards the south-west, seeking to cross the Grand Trunk Road towards their ancestral lands in Chota Nagpore. When British movements frustrated this impulse, diehard Santals gathered in rugged jungle-clad hills on the borders of what were then Bhagalpur and Beerbhoom districts, holding out even as they suffered from starvation and disease.

After initial indecision and even panic, the British strategy blocked Santal movements by holding chains of military posts, combined with aggressive forays (which they called 'dours') under energetic younger officers, and then in November and December declared martial law and launched a concerted 'drive' to destroy and disperse the last Santal bands.

The Hul saw many fights between small sepoy forces and large Santal bands, the names of which have usually never been published in English sources, though Santal songs and stories may record them. These included the six-day Santal siege of the post at Koomerabad (Kumrabad, now covered by the waters of a dam on the Mayurakshi River), and the fight at Bissohuwa, somewhere in eastern Jharkhand. There, on 1 August the two sides clashed, at a place I could not identify, but the fight was described by the British officers, and drawn by a surveyor accompanying the force. The officer wrote of Santals who 'arose as if by magic', charging the sepoys even as they fired volleys at them. Many other skirmishes occurred at nameless places. Though often the only accounts of them were written by the British officers – never before published – they give valuable insights into the Santals' experience of rebellion, including making clear why so many risked so much for their communities.



The fight at Bissohuwa, fought on 1 August 1855 and drawn by a British officer whose admiration for the Santals was expressed by depicting it from the Santal perspective, and in distinctly heroic terms.

The Santals acted out of desperation, hampered by many serious shortcomings: they had no warrior tradition or military organisation or political program; their only arms were hunting weapons – bows and arrows. Crucially, they had no accepted commanders, besides the four brothers of Bhugnadihee, whose charismatic leadership inspired the outbreak of the Hul but proved unable to control it.

While the Hul failed largely because the Santal bands abandoned their villages and fields and increasingly suffered from disease and starvation in huge, improvised jungle camps, Santals learned how to fight an insurgency as they went. They used their assets well – they knew their own country and were able to move more swiftly than the slow-moving sepoy columns, moving at the speed of their elephant transport. While at first trusting in sorcery, Santal leaders learned how to direct their bands to stand and fight, even using bows and arrows against musket volleys. They learned the tactics of jungle insurgency: these brave men were not simply the victims of 'execution'.

The Bengal Army 'Field Forces' which responded to the Hul also learned. Sepoys learned how to move and live in the jungle, adopting 'light infantry' tactics, search-and-destroy patrols, bringing in cavalry and even using rockets in pursuing Santal bands. They used river steamers and Bengal's first railway to move troops, supplies and intelligence around the region. British records show that they saw the Santals as an enemy whose courage they came to respect. A British civilian who witnessed Santals attacking wrote admiringly that they 'never dodged but stood' – even as he shot at them.

The Hul was a war, and a 'dirty' war at that. For every report of Santal 'savagery' – they took bloody revenge on those who had oppressed them – there was a report of the troops' 'severity'. Eventually, after the end of the monsoon, columns of sepoys conducted 'drives', advancing across the Santals' lands, breaking up their bands and killing or capturing those still resisting. By the end of 1855 the rebellion had been extinguished, at a cost of about 10,000 Santal lives, most dead of hunger and illness: many women and children.

Although the rebellion failed, it did bring change for the Santals. Recognising that a tribal people needed protection, the Company created the Santal Parganas, governed by British officials whose paternal care contrasted with the indifference that had provoked the Hul. They ruled through the very village leaders who had been instrumental in the Hul.

The Hul was largely forgotten by India's British rulers – they published almost nothing about it. But the Santals never forgot, creating a rich seam of songs, stories and poems about it. In due course, as India's freedom movement grew, Indian nationalist historians re-interpreted the Hul as a rebellion against British rule, one suppressed by 'British' troops. In fact, the Santals rebelled against the oppression of Bengalis, the Hull suppressed overwhelmingly by Indian troops – under British command.

Regardless of how it may be viewed, the Hul deserves to be better known, and not just among Santals. My book *Hul! Hul!* offers a new view of the Santal uprising, inevitably largely from the perspective of those who fought against it. But even the British records shed new light on the Santals' bravery, ingenuity and resolution in fighting to defend their interests as a people.

Prof. Peter Stanley *of UNSW Canberra is one of Australia's most distinguished military historians.*

What to WATCH

T Sports
Euro
Round of 16
France vs Belgium
Live from 10:00 pm
Portugal vs Slovenia
Live from 1:00 am
(Tuesday)

Star Sports Select HD1
Wimbledon
First round
Live from 4:00 pm

Reliance on gamechanger Bumrah key in India's triumph

AGENCIES

Jasprit Bumrah was one of the main architects of India's T20 World Cup triumph and he capped off his tournament as the player of the tournament after the Men in Blue won the final by seven runs against South Africa on Saturday.

Bumrah's campaign will go down in history as one of the greatest individual displays ever seen in the event's history.

Collecting 15 wickets at an average of 8.26, Bumrah finished with an astonishing economy of just 4.17, by far and away the best rate of those to bowl a minimum of 20 overs at the tournament. He joins teammate Virat Kohli (a two-time winner) as India players to claim the Player of the Tournament award.

"I honestly think he's the best seam bowler who has played white ball cricket," former England captain Michael Vaughan told Cricbuzz yesterday.

"If you can tell me a better seam bowler. I know Wasim Akram was special and there have been many others to mention but I just think he's got this amazing action ability and he's got the pace, he's got all the different skill sets and he does it under pressure day in and day out. It's not just two or three times at the World Cup. It's pretty much every single game."

Vaughan put it neatly as Bumrah delivered outstanding displays of his acumen throughout the tournament and propelled his reputation to newer heights. He was immaculate in all three phases of play. He bowled unplayable deliveries with the new ball, disrupted the opposition's momentum in the middle overs, nailed yorkers as well as slowers to knock the wind out of the opposition's sails in the latter stages, and was skipper Rohit Sharma's go-to option whenever India were in a bothersome position.

One could hardly point out an occasion when a batter tried to take Bumrah on as most, if not all, tried to see off his overs and look for scoring opportunities elsewhere.

His economy rates of 4.07 in the Powerplay, 4.75 in the middle overs, and 3.78 at the death were also instrumental in Bumrah winning phases of play. And that assurance he brought gave Rohit and India the belief of winning games from any situation.

Legendary trio's FAREWELL TO REMEMBER

SPORTS REPORTER

"The nice guy who finished first" is the title of a biography on Rahul Dravid, an obvious attempt at wordplay in reference to Dravid's reputation as cricket's ultimate nice guy who went on to become one of the greatest batters India has ever produced.

However, before June 29, 2024, this title was essentially propagating a lie. While Dravid had risen to incredible heights in his playing career, 'The Wall' never truly came 'first' as he was never a world champion.

As a coach, he shepherded India's Under-19 team to a World Cup trophy in 2019, and after taking over the reins of the senior team in 2021, India played two finals in 2023 – the World Test Championship and the ICC ODI World Cup – but once again, his side slipped up.

Up against South Africa, the final of the just-concluded Men's T20 World Cup was Dravid's final chance to be involved in a World Cup triumph for India in any capacity for the foreseeable future, as the 51-year-old had already announced that he would be leaving the post after the tournament.

Meanwhile, for Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, two modern-day greats of India and world cricket, the final was their chance to bid adieu to the shortest format as world champions. Both knew what it felt like to lift a World Cup, with Rohit being part of India's triumph in the maiden edition of the T20 World Cup in 2007 and Kohli lifting Sachin Tendulkar on his shoulders after they won the final of the ODI World Cup in 2011 in front of an enraptured home crowd in Mumbai.

But after tasting the ultimate success so early in their respective careers, the duo had to endure the agony of getting close but eventually falling short in ICC tournaments for over a decade. Rohit and Kohli, aged 37 and 35 respectively, are nearing the swansong of their respective careers and, while they had already done more than enough to cement their positions as icons of Indian cricket, failure to drive their team to a world championship as leading figures remained a blemish in both of their careers.

The desperation to win a World Cup trophy was evident, as Rohit wanted his batters to move past the circumspect approach that brought their downfall in previous T20 World Cups and lead by example at the top. Especially, his assault against Australia in the Super Eight, a swashbuckling 92 off 41 balls, set the stage for Australia's eventual elimination, removing the biggest thorn to India's charge for the title.

Kohli, on the other hand, had a terrible tournament leading up to the final. But even though he couldn't get among the runs, he continued opening the innings for India, not dropping down to his favourite one-down position where he averages almost 54 in T20Is. Kohli conceding his superstar status for the betterment of the team is one example of how motivated The Men in Blue were to make sure this time they return home with the trophy.

In the end, Rohit's bold stance and Kohli's sacrifice bore fruit as they both have now hung up their boots in T20Is as World Cup winners. Meanwhile, the place where Dravid had experienced his biggest failure, when India got eliminated from the group stage of the 2007 ODI World Cup in the Caribbean under his leadership, has become the place where he finally became a world champion.

WIMBLEDON prepares for new era

REUTERS

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz and world number one Jannik Sinner will take their simmering rivalry at the top of the men's game to Wimbledon, where the two young guns will look to prolong seven-times winner Novak Djokovic's trophy drought in 2024.

Even before the tournament begins, however, Djokovic's quest for a record 25th Grand Slam title is under a cloud with the Serb building match fitness after undergoing knee surgery three weeks ago for an injury that prematurely ended his French Open.

Fellow 37-year-old and former champion Andy Murray is also in a race to be ready for what is likely his Wimbledon swansong after the injury-plagued Briton went under the knife last week for a back issue.

With Roger Federer retired and Rafa Nadal skipping Wimbledon to focus on next month's Paris Olympics, the potential pullout of Djokovic would ensure the first Wimbledon without any of the Big Three since 1998.

All eyes would then be on Alcaraz and Sinner as they usher in a new era at Wimbledon.

"I don't feel more pressure about playing a tournament that not one of the Big Three is playing in," Alcaraz said last week before Djokovic arrived in London on Sunday to give fans hope.

Swiatek looks for a breakthrough

For all her achievements over the last few seasons, Iga Swiatek remains largely unproven on grasscourts, but the Pole will have a golden opportunity to claim a maiden Wimbledon title with her rivals hampered by injuries and illness before the Grand Slam.

The five-times major champion has been an unstoppable force since inheriting the world number one spot, although none of the 22 titles have come on the sport's slickest surface.

But fresh from her fourth French Open title amid a 19-match winning streak stretching back to May, the 23-year-old will head to the All England Club primed to go past the quarter-finals for the first time and prove herself as an all-court player.

Even though the Cristiano Ronaldo-led Portugal looked confident in training, they have been a lot patchy on the field as Roberto Martinez's side fell to a shock 2-0 defeat to debutants Georgia in their final Euro 2024 group game. They progressed as group champions regardless. However, as they face Slovenia in a Round of 16 game in Frankfurt on Monday, they will hope for a lot more potency up front, especially from star man Ronaldo who is yet to score in this edition of the tournament.

PHOTO: X

Misfiring France & Belgium on collision course

AGENCIES

By this stage of the European Championship, favourites France and contenders Belgium would have wanted to be well into their stride and hitting their straps as they enter the knockout stages.

Instead, the neighbours go spluttering into the last 16 and into a head-on collision in Duesseldorf on Monday after both failed to finish top of their first-round group.

France's much-vaunted attack is suffering from a crisis of confidence and coach Didier Deschamps, usually a steady hand guiding the squad, looks unsure of what his next move will be.

Belgium will have had some motivation sucked out of their cause following an astonishingly hostile reaction from their own supporters after they limped into the next stage of the tournament in Germany.

Despite Wednesday's draw with Ukraine assuring them progress, they were subjected to loud barracking from their fans and have since closed ranks.

Captain Kevin De Bruyne did not take kindly to the abuse. His attitude and demeanour will set the tone for the rest of the Belgian side as they look to leave behind them the limp performances from the group stage.

De Bruyne did, however, later mention that they would "need the fans against France". It is understandable as Belgium will be looking for revenge against the French, who beat the Belgians in the 2018 World Cup semifinal to hand their so-called "golden generation" a bitter experience.

For that to happen, Romelu Lukaku would need to find his scoring touch after a number of missed opportunities in the tournament. His record 85 goals for Belgium does not include any from Euro 2024, and overall he has a poor scoring record at major tournaments.

Few would have envisaged a French forward line failing to score in open play in their opening three matches at the tournament.

One of their two goals was a penalty from Kylian Mbappe and the other an own goal from Austria in their opening game.

Deschamps must now decide whether to restore Antoine Griezmann to the line-up and pair him up front with Mbappe.

Griezmann has been a long-time mainstay for Deschamps but was dropped for their last game, a 1-1 draw with Poland, which allowed Austria to emerge as unexpected winners of Group D, which also included the Netherlands.

As things stand, the oldest and most frequent opponents will hope for getting everything right, both tactically and selection wise, in order to get their rhythm back through this crucial encounter.

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Latifur Rahman's 4th death anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fourth death anniversary of Latifur Rahman, founder chairman and CEO of Transcom Group, a well-known and highly respected business house in Bangladesh.

Soft-spoken and humble, the visionary and ethical businessman passed away in his sleep on this day at his paternal home in Cumilla after suffering from lung-related illness for a long time.

His passing coincided with the death anniversary of his grandson Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. Faraaz, a student of Emory University in Atlanta, US, was brutally killed by

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

A MIGHTY DOWNPOUR BECKONS…A swarm of dark clouds drape the vast, open sky over the Kirtankhola near the Dapdapia bridge in Barishal Sadar upazila. Moderate to heavy rain drenched much of the country, including Barishal, yesterday, thanks to a monsoon low-pressure system over the Bay.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

35 PUBLIC UNIVS

Teachers go on work abstention indefinitely

Demand reinstatement of pension benefits

DU CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers across the country will go on an indefinite work abstention starting today as the government has not heeded their demand to reinstate previous pension facilities in place of the Universal Pension Scheme.

Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association, announced the programme yesterday afternoon when teachers were observing a full-day work abstention programme at Dhaka University's Arts building.

"The work abstention programme will continue until our demand is met. Classes, exams, and other academic and administrative activities will remain suspended during the movement," Nizamul said while briefing the media.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

CHAOS OVER FLIGHTS TO KL

What steps were taken against those responsible?

Enquires HC about migrant workers who failed to go to Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what steps have been taken against people responsible for the mismanagement that led to Bangladeshi jobseekers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31 this year.

The court asked Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy and Assistant Attorney General Selim Azad to enquire about the steps taken by the authorities concerned and place the information before it in a week.

The bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon passed the order during a hearing of a writ petition.

Seeking necessary directives, Supreme Court lawyers Md Tanvir Ahmed and Biplab Kumar Poddar filed the petition

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN FRANCE

French far right wins first round: exit polls

AFP, *Paris*

France's far right won the first round of pivotal legislative elections yesterday with the centrist forces of President Emmanuel Macron coming in only third behind the left after the highest turnout in over four decades, estimates said.

But it remained unclear if the far-right National Rally (RN) party of Marine Le Pen would win an absolute majority of seats in the new National Assembly lower house in the July 7 second round and claim the post of prime minister.

Macron had stunned the nation and baffled even some allies by calling snap polls after the RN trounced his centrist forces in European Parliament elections this month.

That gamble risks backfiring, with Macron's alliance now expected to win a far smaller minority contingent in parliament, making the president a far less powerful figure for the remaining three years of his term.

Projections from prominent French polling firms gave the RN 34.5 percent of the vote, compared to 28.5-29.1 percent for the left-wing New Popular Front alliance, and 20.5-21.5 percent for Macron's centrist camp.

The polling agencies projected this would give the RN a majority of seats in the 577-seat National Assembly after the second round and a possible absolute majority.

In a statement, Macron called for a "broad" alliance against the far right in the second round.

Julien Martin, a 38-year-old architect, who voted in the southwestern city of Bordeaux, said: "These are not easy elections, the results are very uncertain, and the repercussions could be serious for society."

With the French facing their most polarising choices in recent history, turnout soared. The Elabe organisation projecting a final turnout of 67.5 percent, the highest participation in a regular format legislative election in France since 1981.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

NBR official transferred amid graft scandal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faisal

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has transferred tax official Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal to Bogura amid allegations of ill-gotten wealth against him.

His transfer to inspection range-1, Bogura is effective immediately, the NBR said in a notice yesterday.

Meanwhile, Faisal's previous position as NBR's first secretary (tax legal and enforcement) will filled by Additional Commissioner Md Moniruzzaman, the notice added.

The move comes after a Dhaka court ordered the authorities to confiscate the moveable

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli forces push deeper into Gaza

43 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Gaza*

Israeli forces yesterday advanced further into the Shejaia neighbourhood of northern Gaza and also pushed deeper into western and central Rafah in the south, killing at least six Palestinians and destroying several homes, residents said.

Israeli tanks, which moved back into Shejaia four days ago, fired shells towards several houses, leaving families trapped inside and unable to leave, the residents said.

Speaking at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeated his position that there was no substitute for achieving victory in the offensive against Hamas.

"We are committed to fighting until we achieve all of our objectives: Eliminating Hamas, returning all of our hostages, ensuring that Gaza never again constitutes a threat to Israel and returning our residents securely to their homes in the south and the north," he said.

The Israeli military said forces operating in Shejaia had over the past day killed several Palestinian gunmen, located weapons, and struck military infrastructure. On Saturday it announced the death of two Israeli soldiers in northern Gaza.

The armed wing of Hamas and the allied Islamic Jihad reported fierce fighting in both Shejaia and Rafah, saying their fighters had fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs against Israeli forces operating there.

More than eight months into Israel's air and ground offensive in Gaza, Hamas fighters continue to stage attacks on Israeli forces, operating in areas that the Israeli army said it had gained control over months ago.

Bellingham, Kane rescue England

AFP, *Gelsenkirchen*

England escaped an embarrassing Round of 16 exit at Euro 2024 thanks to Jude Bellingham's overhead kick before Harry Kane struck in extra-time for a 2-1 win over Slovakia on Sunday to set up a quarterfinal clash against Switzerland.

The Three Lions have been hyped as one of the favourites to end a 58-year wait for major tournament glory but looked set to go out with a whimper to Ivan Schranz's 25th-minute goal.

However, Bellingham's moment of inspiration five minutes into six added on in stoppage time breathed new life into

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England midfielder Jude Bellingham celebrates with striker Harry Kane after scoring his side's first goal in a 2-1 win over Slovakia in a Round of 16 fixture of the European Championships in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday. Bellingham netted through an overhead kick in the 95th minute of regulation time to level the score at 1-1, and Kane headed home in the first minute of extra-time to give England the advantage that sealed the win for the Three Lions.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

'Corrupt officials must be fired, not just transferred'

Momen says their assets should be auctioned off

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The corrupt individuals should be dismissed from their jobs, said former foreign minister AK Abdul Momen, adding that they are enemies of the people and the country.

"Transferring the officials accused of corruption cannot be an effective punishment. Rather, there should be an actual account of the assets of the person accused of corruption; the assets need to be confiscated and auctioned off and the individual promptly sacked," he wrote on Facebook yesterday

"Remember, the government job is their biggest and most powerful asset," wrote the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Asked about his Facebook post, Momen said corruption had been so pervasive that it was a matter of shame for the country.

The laws are framed in a way so as to not hold government officials accountable. A section of government officials don't serve the people unless they are bribed, he said.

All government officials need to report their income and expenses every year, he said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Rain brings fresh dengue concerns

P3

'French far-right win a lesson for progressives'

P7

More women in construction sector should be our next goal

P8

Will BCB's WC' discussions' make any difference?

P11

Pension protest brings public univs to halt

Faculty, staff strike over new pension scheme; students hold quota demo

STAR REPORT

Teachers went on an indefinite strike over pension benefits yesterday, paralysing public universities across the country.

Also, students at Dhaka and Jahangirnagar universities took to the streets, demanding quotas for government jobs be abolished.

The teachers' strike began yesterday with the academics demanding abolition of the new Prottoy Universal Pension Scheme.

No classes, exams, or admission-related activities were done, most classrooms and libraries were locked, and barely any university buses left the sheds at the 35 universities where teachers and staffers were on strike.

As yesterday was also the first day of a three-day strike by the Inter-University Officers' Federation over pensions, no administrative work was done.

"We will not return to the classrooms until the demands are met," Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association, told a rally on campus.

The protests follow a government decision to implement Prottoy pension scheme for recruits joining on or after July 1 the autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations and their subordinate institutions.

Under the scheme, 10 percent of the monthly basic salary of an employee, up to Tk 5,000, will be deducted and given to their pension fund. The organisation will contribute the same amount to the fund, and interest will be added to it. There will be no one-time gratuity for the retiring employee.

At present, no money is deducted from the salary.

The current system includes a 5 percent annual increment in pension and allows encashment of earned leave -- provisions that are unclear or missing in the new scheme.

A finance ministry official said pension schemes like these are common across the world, adding that single-handedly paying the pension was a burden for the government.

After the government announced the scheme in May, teachers associations termed it "discriminatory" and called for its abolition.

The teachers have also been demanding a new pay scale and the inclusion of professors in the "super" grade.

There are over 16,000 teachers and 34,382 staff at 50 public universities that have nearly 300,000 lakh students.

At Dhaka University, the teacher's association shunned the institution's 103rd founding anniversary celebrations yesterday.

DU teacher Nizamul Hoque, secretary general of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association, said the pension scheme robbed them of their sense of jubilation.

Addressing a rally, Prof Chandra Nath Podder said the new scheme was imposed without consulting the teachers.

The situation was similar at BUET, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar and other universities.

At Rajshahi University, teachers demonstrated in front of the Senate Bhaban and the staff association near the administrative building.

At a rally on an otherwise empty Jagannath University campus, Prof Shaikh Masrick Hasan said there should be no disparity between current and future teachers.

Meanwhile, some DU students marched on campus demonstrating against the reinstatement of quota in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

'PROTTOY' PENSION SCHEME

- Existing employees will not be affected
- Monthly pension, not one-time payment
- Will deduct employees' 10pc basic salary
- The scheme is tax-free

RAINY DAY GAMES! … Children dabble in a game of football through the puddles that formed in a school playground after rain in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. The photo was taken at Thukra Ramkrishnapur Pashchimpara Government High School yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

SCHOOL EXAM MARKS

65pc for written part, 35pc for practical

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The National Curriculum Coordination Committee (NCCC) finalised the evaluation process in summative assessment under the new curriculum at a meeting yesterday.

Summative assessments are used to evaluate a student's learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of an academic year.

Sixty-five percent of the evaluation will now be based on the written part and 35 percent on practical activities.

The NCCC, a high-level committee responsible for the curriculum's final approval, made the decision at the meeting with officials from the secondary, madrasa, and technical education boards. Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury was in the chair.

Confirming the development, Prof Md Moshiuzzaman, acting chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), said, "The evaluation method has been finalised with some minor changes to our initial proposals."

PHASE-WISE IMPLEMENTATION

The phase-wise implementation of the new curriculum started on January 1, 2023. Currently, it is followed in classes one, two, three, six, seven, eight, and nine. It will be adopted in classes four,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

GOVT OFFICIALS

HC directive sought for disclosure of assets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In light of media reports about certain government officials amassing property, a Supreme Court lawyer filed a writ petition with the High Court yesterday, requesting that the government take steps to disclose the movable and immovable properties owned by public servants serving in civil capacities, as well as their family members.

Advocate Subir Nandi Das submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC, also appealing to the court to direct the authorities concerned with the government to adopt guidelines or policies or to enact proper legislation to prevent the accumulation of illegal wealth (movable or immovable) through corruption by the public servants serving in civil capacities and their family members.

RAJBARI-TUNGIPARA

A lone train operating on Tk 2,110cr line!

No feasibility study done for the project; 4 stations non-operational

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway had taken up a project in 2010 to bring Tungipara of Gopalganj under the railway network without carrying out any feasibility study.

The project was completed in 2018, more than five years behind schedule, for Tk 2,110 crore. The cost was almost double the initial estimates. But the BR now operates only one passenger train on Gopalganj-Rajbari-Rajshahi route.

The railway authorities also could not make four

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Star BUSINESS

Remittance hit about $24b in FY24

After hovering around the $21-billion mark for the previous two fiscal years, total remittances sent home by Bangladesh's migrant workers reached nearly $24 billion in the just concluded fiscal year of 2023-24, providing some breathing space amid the forex crunch.

As per the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank, remittance inflow stood at $23.91 billion in FY24, rising by 10.66 percent compared to the year prior.

STORY ON B1

The Dhalai river has burst its banks after heavy rains, inundating villages in Telikhal union of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila. In 12 hours from 6:00am yesterday, at least 156 millimeters of rainfall was recorded in the district, and vast swathes of land lining different rivers went under water. PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Sylhet, Sunamganj brace for another spell of flood

STAR REPORT

People of Sylhet and Sunamganj are facing flood for the third time this year due to heavy rainfall in the region and upstream India.

The water of the Surma, Jadukata, Kushiyara and Sari rivers are flowing above danger level at different points at the time of filing the report.

Around a hundred villages in the low-lying areas of Sylhet's Kanaighat, Zakiganj and Jaintiapur upazila; and Sunamganj's Tahirpur, Chhatak, Dowarabazar and Sadar upazila are submerged.

In the next 48 hours, heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected in the North, North-eastern and adjoining upstream parts of the country, said a bulletin of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre yesterday.

"As a result, the water level of the rivers in North and Northeastern regions may rise rapidly in a particular time," said the bulletin released at 9:00am yesterday.

Rain and thundershowers are expected over the next five days, said another bulletin from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department yesterday.

Earlier on Sunday, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) warned of a short-term flood in Sylhet.

The Surma River was flowing 102 centimetres above the danger level in Kanaighat Upazila at 6:00 pm yesterday, while the Kushiyara River was flowing 28cm above at Zakiganj's Amolshid and 88 cm above the danger level at Fenchuganj upazila at the same time, according to the WDB in Sylhet.

Meanwhile, the Sari River in Sylhet's Jaintiapur's

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

MY DHAKA

5 POPULAR EATERIES
in and around DU campus

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

On July 1, 2024, Dhaka University celebrated its 103rd anniversary. University life is an experience in itself. Besides the education and the bonds of friendship people share, a notable aspect that shines in every person's heart is campus food.

We spoke to a few students and DU graduates about their favourite campus eateries and here's what we found.

Campus Shadow

The tiny shop is well known for its lemonade, but the best item there is the luchi-daal, which is only served in the afternoon. The luchi is always served hot, straight from the fryer! If you walk by Mall Chattar in the afternoon, the aroma will certainly lure you towards this simple place.

TSC

"Praner Mela" (carnival of life) -- is the phrase used to describe TSC. If you ever had the opportunity to be here for any occasion, you would know that it's a befitting name.

One of the reasons for the popularity of TSC is the affordable food it offers. Whether it's the khichuri or the chicken with rice, students line up all the same. Besides lunch, breakfast and snacks are also served here and the place is almost always jam-packed. Taking a sip of their lemon tea while strumming a guitar is a common sight here.

Hakim Chattar

Standing beside the central library, Hakim Chattar is more popular for its location than the food. The usual khichuri, soup, and snacks such as shingara and pakora make up the menu here. And of course, there is tea.

It is hard to find a time when this place is not crowded. Many students prefer to come here from the central library for a quick bite. On other occasions, it's just a convenient place to sit for a quick meal under the shade of the trees.

Mama Hotel

It is difficult to find someone who studies at Dhaka University but has not been to Mama Hotel. Located just outside of the DU campus, the hotel is always bustling with students. The owners have formed a bond with the students and make them feel welcome. As a result, whether it's a special meal with beef, brain, shrimp, or just a regular dinner with a dash of jhal fry, bhorta, and bhaji -- students of DU rush to Mama Hotel whenever they feel like having a feast.

Charukala Gate

This particular eatery is a temporary shop that only operates in the afternoon. At the Charukala gate, one can find fried chicken. Every day, people line up to get a taste of this snack. With a little bit of sauce, it is a decent offer, given the reasonable price. However, to treat yourself to a piece of this famous fried chicken, you will have to battle through a crowd.

Honourable Mentions

Of course, there are other options in the campus. IBA and FBS Canteen are two places that offer good food, but are overlooked because many feel that the food there is somewhat overpriced. There is also Royal Tehari -- a small shop at Nilkhet, which holds a special place in the heart of DU students, much like Mama Hotel.

Madhur Canteen is a legendary eatery, but the place is usually crowded for its political importance. As a result, students turn to DUCSU Cafeteria, which perhaps offers the most affordable food option on campus. And just across from DUCSU, DU Coffee Hut offers fast food and juices.

This list is by no means comprehensive, and there are several options scattered throughout campus. Everyone has their share of fond memories about them.

What's yours?

ACC finds 12 heads of Brahman cattle in Sadeeq Agro
Goat priced Tk 15 lakh found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Savar*

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday raided a farm of Sadeeq Agro in Savar's Bhakurta and found five Brahman cows and seven calves.

ACC Assistant Director Abul Kalam Azad, who led the drive, told reporters that they would investigate how the cattle were brought to the farm as there is a ban on importing such cattle.

He added that they found the goat worth Tk 15 lakh there, whose price is now the talk of the country.

Earlier in the day, the nine-member ACC team went to Central Cattle Breeding and Dairy Farm (CCBDF), Savar, to enquire about 18 Brahman cows that were seized and kept at the farm for rearing.

Sadeeq Agro imported them without permission three years ago.

CCBDF Director Monirul Islam told The Daily Star that three of the 18 cows died. Dairy Farmers' Association bought 15 cows from the fisheries and livestock ministry on condition of selling the meat at fair price during Ramadan.

Sadeeq Agro owner Imran Hossain is the president of the organisation.

Asked whether the cows were slaughtered, Monirul said they were not tasked with supervising it. "We handed over the cows to them as per documents."

ACC Assistant Director Azad said they would probe allegations against Imran of selling the same kind of cattle before Eid-ul-Azha. It would also be investigated whether any CCBDF official is involved in Sadeeq Agro.

Australia doubles foreign student visa fees

REUTERS, *Sydney*

Australia said yesterday it had more than doubled the visa fee for international students, the latest move by the government to rein in record migration that has intensified pressure on an already tight housing market.

From July 1, the international student visa fee has risen to A$1,600 ($1,068) from A$710, while visitor visa holders and students with temporary graduate visas are banned from applying onshore for a student visa.

A lone train operating on Tk 2,110cr line!

FROM PAGE 1

stations in this section operational due to a lack of manpower. Several buildings construed for the railway staffers at those stations still remain unused, leading to their decay.

The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) under the planning ministry made these observations in its recently published Impact Assessment Report on the project.

The project was taken up to revive a 75km old line and build a 32km new track at a cost of Tk 1,101.32 crore.

The IMED report said the contractors used oversised stones on the rail track, making the line risky. It also found that a lack of maintenance and unauthorised level crossings are increasing the risks of accidents.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman said taking up a project without a feasibility study is not a good example.

"It is not possible to know the traffic demand, best locations of stations and the best possible links with roads without a proper study. Investing such a huge amount in a project without a study is questionable," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

As the BR invested money without assessing the traffic demand, they are operating only one train now which is not bringing enough returns for their investment, said Hadiuzzaman, a professor of civil engineering at Buet.

The Tungipara Express, which was launched in 2019, operates from Gobra of Tungipara to Rajshahi via Rajbari.

The BR could have invested this money in other projects if a proper study was conducted beforehand, he said.

A proper study might have suggested that the project should be taken up a few years later, the expert observed.

THE PROJECT

The rail line from Kalukhali of Rajbari to Bhatiapara Ghat of Gopalganj was constructed in 1932 but the line became inoperative in 1997.

The government in 2010 approved a project to revive the 75.5km section and build 32.35km of lines between Kashiani and Gopalganj to bring Tungipara, the birthplace of the father of the nation, under the railway network.

The project was supposed to be completed by June 2013. But it was completed in December 2018 with 330 percent time extension and 91.61 percent cost escalation, shows IMED document.

The IMED report said that the project saw time and cost overruns as it was taken up without a feasibility study.

It also said that nine project directors oversaw the scheme and the frequent changes of PDs hindered its progress to some extent.

The IMED said the rail line is not being maintained properly. Five years have passed since the opening of the rail line, but the BR is yet to deploy waymen (track maintenance workers).

According to the report, three staff quarters were built at each of the five stations but those were degrading as those were unoccupied.

Also, four stations on Kashiani-Gopalganj-Tungipara route remain inoperative due to a lack of manpower.

The stones used on the rail line is 30 to 40 percent oversised and the amount of stones were not adequate, the report mentioned.

Contacted, BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali yesterday said he would not comment on the project as he was not the DG when it was taken up.

He said they have shortages of manpower, locomotives and carriages and that's why they cannot make all stations operational and operate more trains on the line.

Asked about the return on investment, he said, "It's true that we are not getting enough return on the investment now. But we will have the expected return when will be able to operate more trains. However, it may take some more time."

65pc for written part

FROM PAGE 1

five, and 10 in January 2025.

As per the new curriculum, students of pre-primary to grade three will not be assessed through exams. For higher classes, there will be exams along with continuous assessment.

DRAFTING AND APPROVAL

The NCTB drafted the assessment method in February. However, there were controversies and protests from guardians and teachers regarding written exams.

Following this, the education ministry formed a coordination committee for the evaluation system and curriculum.

The NCTB draft was further revised based on this committee's suggestions. The final draft was subsequently sent to the ministry for approval following the NCCC meeting, according to the NCTB.

KEY DECISIONS IN FINAL DRAFT

In National Curriculum Framework-2021, the NCTB outlined two broad forms of learning assessment: formative (continuous classroom-based assessment) and summative (at the end of an academic year).

Following a major change in the summative assessment, students will now have to sit for five-hour-long tests for each subject: four hours for "practical" activity and one for "theoretical" written test. There will be an interval in between.

According to the new assessment method, 65 percent will be on written tests while 35 on practical activity.

Meanwhile, SSC exams, which take place at the end of the 10th grade, will be conducted by the existing education boards at different exam centres, but the evaluation process will be under the new curriculum, according to the NTCB.

When publishing the report card of SSC, there will no longer use a GPA system. Instead, there will be seven scales to describe the level of competency, with "initial" at the bottom and "unique" at the top.

ADVANCEMENT FROM SSC TO HSC

From now on, SSC students will be allowed to advance to the HSC level even if they fail up to two subjects.

They will, however, receive a mark sheet showing their scores and will need to retake and pass the failed subjects in subsequent examinations to obtain full marks.

TECHNICAL, MADRASA EXAMS

On the other hand, public examinations in some specialised subjects under the Technical and Madrasa education boards will continue to use the old method for next few years, as decided in the NCCC meeting.

Prof Md Mamun Ul Haque, acting chairman of the Technical Education Board, said class nine students under this board will continue to take public exams in four specialised subjects using the old creative method due to the delay in making new textbooks for those subjects.

For the same reason, the Madrasa education board will be do the same.

Turkey arrests 67 after mob attacks Syrian properties

AFP, *Istanbul*

Turkish police were holding 67 people yesterday after a mob went on the rampage in a central Anatolian city after a Syrian man was accused of harassing a child.

A group of men targeted Syrian businesses and properties in Kayseri on Sunday evening, with videos on social media showing a grocery store being set on fire.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned the latest bout of violence against Turkey's large community of Syrian refugees.

"No matter who they are, setting streets and people's houses on fire is unacceptable," he said, warning that hate speech should not be used for political gains.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the Syrian national, identified only by his initials as I.A., was caught by Turkish citizens and delivered to the police.

Pension protest

FROM PAGE 1

recruitments for government jobs.

Jahangirnagar University students kept the Dhaka-Aricha highway blocked for several minutes.

The High Court on June 5 ordered a 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children in government jobs.

Explain VAT claims against S Alam firms: HC to NBR

FROM PAGE 12

Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, without hearing the two companies -- should not be declared illegal.

The respondents – the commissioner and deputy commissioners of the Chattogram commissionerate; and revenue officer of Customs, Excise & VAT, Karnaphuli Circle, Taltola Chowki, Patia, Chattogram -- were asked to come up with an explanation within 10 days

The court also asked them why the commissioner of the Chattogram commissionerate should not be asked to dispose of the matter by strictly following sections 73 and 85 of the Value Added Tax and Supplementary Duty Act, 2012.

The HC bench of Justice Zafar Ahmed and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir issued the rules after two writ petitions were filed by the two companies.

The bench also fixed July 15 to hold a hearing on the rules.

During yesterday's hearing, the companies' lawyer Ahsanul Karim told the bench that his clients on June 4 sought time from the commissionerate for their senior counsel to appear for hearings.

He said his clients were not heard before the adjudication orders were issued. The commissioner of the Chattogram commissionerate violated the principle of natural justice in passing the orders by not allowing his clients to defend themselves against allegations made in show-cause notices issued on October 4 and December 27 last year and on March 18 this year, the lawyer said.

Deputy Attorney General Nawroz MR Chowdhury representing the government told the court that the companies were given time on several occasions over the last one year to submit their statements before the commissioner to uphold the principle of natural justice.

But they had not done it. They cannot be given unlimited time under the relevant law, he said.

At one stage, Deputy Attorney General Samarebdranath Biswas told the HC that the companies' intention was not to pay the VAT.

Lawyer for the companies, Ahsanul said his clients never said that they would not pay the VAT.

According to an audit by the VAT wing of the National Board of Revenue, the companies have unpaid VAT and consequent penalties of over Tk 7,000 crore. They evaded VAT by presenting lower purchase and sales data in VAT returns and other means between 2019 and 2022.

The audit was subsequently reviewed by a five-member committee led by an additional commissioner of Chattogram VAT Commissionerate, which also arrived at the same conclusion.

The two companies denied any wrongdoing.

A worker removes debris from a supermarket damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Dnipro, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

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Pubali Bank achieved highest credit rating 'AAA' which indicates the highest credit quality with lowest expectation of credit risk

Total 11,450 Bangladeshis in foreign jails

Hasan Mahmud tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 11,450 Bangladeshis including migrant workers are in jails in 31 countries, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told parliament yesterday.

The foreign minister who is visiting Saudi Arabia, came up with the statistics while replying to a query from the ruling Awami League MP from reserved seats for women, Farida Yasmin.

In a scripted answer, the foreign minister said, according to information provided by different missions abroad, the highest number of incarcerated Bangladeshis are in Saudi Arabia (5,746).

Meanwhile, Portugal, Japan and Belgium have the lowest number of jailed Bangladeshis -- two each.

He said 1,579 Bangladeshis are languishing in Indian jails,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

হলি আর্টিজানে নিহতদের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন
Homage to the Victims of Holey Artisan Bakery

HOMAGE TO HOLEY ARTISAN VICTIMS

Top right, Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro (left) pays tribute to the victims of the Holey Artisan café attack on its eighth anniversary. Japanese envoy Iwama Kiminori stands in solemn silence as a mark of profound respect towards the victims. Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma placing a wreath at the makeshift monument on the occasion. On July 1, 2016, five militants with firearms, machetes, and grenades stormed the bakery and held the diners hostage before killing three Bangladeshis, nine Italians, seven Japanese and one Indian. The photos were taken on the restaurant premises yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Transfer, dismissal, retirement not enough

Says TIB on addressing graft

UNB, *Dhaka*

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has criticised the government's approach to handling corruption within public service, arguing that measures such as transfer, dismissal, and compulsory retirement are inadequate deterrents and may inadvertently foster a culture of impunity.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, emphasised the necessity of holding corrupt public servants accountable through proper legal proceedings rather than mere administrative actions.

He expressed concern over recent cases where officials accused of corruption within agencies like the National Board of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

> **When Narendra Modi came to power, BNP leaders woke up early morning and appeared before the Indian High Commission with sweets and flowers. This is what BNP is.**
>
> **OBAIDUL QUADER**
> Awami League general secretary

> **They [Awami League leaders] have always tried to fool people by resorting to lies. The MoUs mean they will make Bangladesh dependent on India within a short time.**
>
> **MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR**
> BNP secretary general

Rain brings fresh dengue concerns

44 dead, 3,651 hospitalised this year; experts say situation to worsen in July

HELEMUL ALAM

So far, the country has already recorded 44 deaths and 3,651 hospitalisations from dengue this year. With ongoing intermittent rains, experts fear the situation could worsen if immediate actions are not taken.

Data from the Directorate General of Health Services reveals a worrying trend: last year, dengue cases skyrocketed from 5,956 in June to 43,854 in July.

"With the monsoon rains, dengue cases will start rising now, typically peaking this month," said Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist from Jahangirnagar University.

He said rain water is accumulating on rooftops and at balconies of many buildings and also on the streets of Dhaka, creating ideal breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes.

"We are getting a huge number of Aedes mosquito larvae in and around houses at Goran, Khilgaon, Mugda, Manda, Rasulpur, Maniknagar, Sayedabad, Jatrabari, Jurain, Donia, and Postagola areas," he added.

Public health expert Mushtaq Hossain stressed the importance of proper solid waste management nationwide to combat Aedes mosquitoes. "Cleaning water containers alone is not enough. Garbage must be buried to prevent rainwater accumulation, which can also become mosquito breeding sites," he said.

He emphasised the need for a nationwide cleaning drive to tackle the dengue outbreak and other health issues.

Community engagement is crucial, with the government leading and providing resources, Mushtaq said.

He also called for a reformed healthcare management system to reduce dengue fatalities, proposing a three-tiered approach: primary, secondary, and hospital care.

The primary healthcare approach for dengue patients involves establishing local healthcare facilities in every city wards to provide initial diagnosis and treatment, enabling early detection and reducing the burden on hospitals, he explained.

He also pointed out the lack of manpower, medicines, and diagnostic facilities at village and upazila levels, which hampers early dengue detection and treatment.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BNP misleading people on Dhaka-Delhi deals: Arafat

UNB, *Dhaka*

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mohammad Ali Arafat, accused the BNP of spreading misinformation regarding the recent agreement between Bangladesh and India.

"Without understanding all aspects of the agreement with India and without realising it, BNP is spreading misinformation and lies, and by distorting these facts, it is confusing people," he said while addressing reporters at a press briefing yesterday.

The recent agreement between Bangladesh and India is not a new foreign policy for either country but advantageous for both, he said.

Arafat said BNP's claims that the agreement posed a threat to Bangladesh's security due to the transit of Indian trains through the country were unfounded.

He said the agreement explicitly prohibits the transportation of "red traffic", including weapons, explosives, and other hazardous materials.

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400 people get free health check-ups

Faraaz Hossain Foundation, SKF Pharmaceuticals hold medical camp in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

More than 400 people with various health complications got a chance to consult specialised doctors free of cost at a health camp in Moulvibazar yesterday.

The daylong health camp was jointly organised by Faaraz Hossain Foundation and SKF Pharmaceuticals Limited at Manumukh PT Bahumukhi High School of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

Mother and Child Private Hospital and Diagnostic Center in Moulvibazar has provided support in conducting the medical camp, said organisers.

Since morning, there were long queues of people at the camp where the doctors provided services.

Husain Ahmed, 49, said, "I've been suffering from high blood pressure for a long time... but due to poverty I could not afford treatment. But today, I could consult a doctor and got medicine from them free of charge.

ফ্রি মেডিকেল ক্যাম্প

Feroza Begum, 65, who has been suffering from asthma, echoed the same.

The camp was held commemorating Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain.

Faraaz has become an epitome of supreme sacrifice for the cause of humanity. His refusal to leave his friends during the militant attack at Gulshan's Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1, 2016 was not only an act of bravery that the world saluted but also set the burning example of what a pristine youthful mind can do when it comes to choosing the right path at the expense of mere mortality.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 2

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

প্রিমিয়ার ব্যাংক
সেবাই প্রথম
বৃহত্তর নতুন পরিসরে
ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং
শাখা, মহাখালী
পুরাতন ঠিকানা
ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং শাখা, মহাখালী
হোল্ডিং-৯৯ (নিচ, ২য় ও ৩য় তলা)
০৮ মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২।
নতুন ঠিকানা
ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং শাখা, মহাখালী
দি প্রিমিয়ার ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
এমএস সেন্টার (নিচ ও ২য় তলা)
০৮ মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২।
মোবাইল: +৮৮০ ১৮১৯-২৩৯৬২২
কার্যক্রম শুরুঃ ৩০ জুন ২০২৪, রবিবার
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New roads put

FROM PAGE 5

kind of permission," said Nesar Uddin Ahmed Monju, a ward councillor in North Kattali area.

Contacted, officials of Department of Agricultural Extension said the use of arable lands for commercial activities is on the rise in the region in absence of a dedicated law to protect agricultural land.

Mohammed Nasir Uddin, additional director of Chattogram regional office of DAE, said, "We do not have any legal power to prevent farmlands from being used for non-agricultural purposes. We just give permission on condition that the establishment cannot be built on cropland."

Nasir Uddin, however, claimed that they did not approve the structures built on croplands on both sides of the Outer Ring Road.

Total 11,450

FROM PAGE 3

508 in Türkiye, 420 in Oman, 415 in Qatar, 414 in Greece, 404 in the UAE, 385 in South Africa, 358 in Myanmar, 219 in Malaysia, 217 in Iraq, 191 in China, 122 in Hong Kong, 100 in Jordan, 81 in Italy, 70 in the Maldives, 66 in Singapore, 49 in Indonesia, 28 in Lebanon, 19 in Spain, 16 in Brunei, nine in Libya, six each in Egypt and Korea, five in Algeria, four in Thailand, and four in Mozambique.

Replying to another query from AL MP HM Badiuzzaman, the foreign minister said, in recent times, no Bangladeshi was arrested and imprisoned for entering the Indian border by mistake.

শিল্প প্লট ভাড়া হবে
৩৩ পোস্তগোলা শিল্প এলাকায় ৩০০ KW বিদ্যুৎ লাইন, সাবস্টেশন, গভীর নলকূপ সুবিধা ৪০% দোতলা বিল্ডিং সহ ১০ কাঠা জায়গার উপর সম্পূর্ণ সেট করা।
01711 544192

Sixty-year-old craftsman Md Khalil Hawalder sits on a sidewalk and repairs broken umbrellas. Incessant rain over the last few days has left his business booming, allowing Khalil to earn around Tk 1,000-1,500 daily. The photo was taken on Fazlul Haque Avenue in Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

School waterlogged for six months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Persistent waterlogging is disrupting academic activities of nearly 200 students at Khatua Kumri Government Primary School in Sherpur Sadar upazila.

The school's premises and playground stay inundated for nearly six months every year, almost the entirety of monsoon and every time it rains during summer.

The students cannot participate in sports due to the submerged school ground.

Meanwhile, the stagnant water, overrun by water hyacinths, has become a perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

During a recent visit, this correspondent observed stagnant water on the compound. Students were wading through ankle-high water to reach their classes.

"We can't play on our school ground as it remains waterlogged for months," said Shakil, a student.

Guardians have expressed concerns that their children are falling behind in co-curricular activities compared to their peers.

Akteruzzaman, headteacher of the school, said, "We tried to dig a drain to let the water recede, but could not do so due to objections from neighbouring land owners. We made a written request to the upazila primary education officer on June 6 for necessary measures to this end."

Akram Hossain, upazila primary education officer of Sherpur Sadar, said he has received an application from the school's headteacher and necessary steps will be taken soon.

UZ chairman sent to jail in murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

A Jamalpur court yesterday sent Raihan Rahmatullah Rimu, chairman of Madarganj Upazila Parishad, to prison in the murder case of fertiliser trader Nowsher Ali in the district.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Masud Parvez passed the order.

According to the state lawyer, on the evening of April 25, 2020, fertiliser trader Nowsher Ali was injured in an attack by some miscreants at Balijuri market in Madarganj upazila.

He later died while undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital.

When Rimu's name came up in the police investigation report, he secured bail for six weeks from the High Court. Upon the expiry of his bail period, he sought bail again from the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court yesterday.

However, the judge sent him to jail after rejecting his bail plea.

Dhaka for taskforce to stop workers' harassment in KSA

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has proposed forming a task force to ensure transparency in recruitment and stop harassment of migrant workers by vested quarters in Saudi Arabia.

The proposal was made during the second political consultation between Dhaka and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia yesterday.

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud led the Bangladesh side, while his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud led the other side, according to a foreign ministry statement.

Hasan Mahmud requested Saudi authorities to provide special scope for Bangladeshi businessmen to register their businesses there. He also requested special privileges for importing oil from Saudi Arabia.

They discussed strengthening bilateral and political relations and intensifying bilateral and multilateral coordination on issues of common concern, alongside regional and global development.

They stressed the need for the Bangladesh-Saudi Arabia Joint Business Council to step up its activities to strengthen commercial relations between the two countries.

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia also explored enhanced investment in economic zones and offshore banking.

At the meeting, the Saudi foreign minister assured cooperation regarding Rohingya repatriation, while both sides emphasised united efforts from the Muslim world to stop Israel's brutality in Gaza.

The upcoming visit of the Saudi crown prince to Bangladesh was also discussed at the meeting.

They decided to adopt a joint action plan for the proper celebration of the golden jubilee of Saudi-Bangladesh diplomatic relations next year and to elevate the meeting of Bangladesh-Saudi Arab Joint Commission to a ministerial level.

নাগরিক কল সেন্টার
হেল্পলাইন নম্বর: ১৬১০৫

Rajshahi City Corporation
Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi.
erajshahi.portal.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No.46.12.0000.006.14.273.2020. 1012

Date: 30.06.2024

e-Tender Notice
(IFT-08/2023-24)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following works:

S L	Tender ID	Name of Works	Tender Document last selling Time and Date
1	1000638	(A) Construction of Landscaping work at Guljerbag lake Nurur Dhalan pond. (B) Renovation work of Sonadighi Pond.	12:30PM on 29-July-2024
2	1000639	Consturction of Boundary Wall & Retaining wall of Asphalt Plant City Hat.	
3	1000640	Construction of Rajshahi Medical College Boundary Wall from Kolabagan Mosjid to Rajib Chattar (Salvage Tk. 88880.40).	
4	1000641	Construction of Rajshahi Medical College Boundary Wall from Rajib Chattor to Ghora Chattar (Salvage Tk. 133320.60).	
5	1000642	Construction & re-construction of carpeting roads, cement concrete roads, tertiary drains and road dividers in ward no. 6, 7, 17, 18 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage: Tk. 656452.86).	
6	1000643	Construction of carpeting road, tertirary drain, footpath, road divider, railing, retaining wall from Kathalbaria More to Hi-Tech Park via Jahanara Zaman Stadium (Salvage Tk. 600986.79).	
7	1000644	Construction of Divider Railing from Talaimary Mour to Katakhali City Gate.	
8	1000645	Construction of railing beside the drain from Choddopai to Shampur.	
9	1000646	Construction of footpath near Lalonshah Park and inside Rajshahi Medical College and foundation of rides at Shaheed AHM Kamaruzzaman Central Park and Sheikh Russel Shishu Park.	
10	1000647	Construction of carpeting road, footpath, divider railing from Fultola mour to Dashmari school mour.	
11	1000648	Construction of carpeting road, footpath, divider railing from Dashmari school mour to Mizaner mour.	
12	1000649	Development work of Shaheed AHM Kamaruzzaman Central Park.	
13	1000651	Construction of CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 7 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 386799.00).	
14	1000650	Construction of Carpeting road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 9 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 643602.56).	
15	1000652	Construction of CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 11 of Rajshahi City Corporation.	
16	1000653	Construction of Carpeting road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 12 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 1061422.43)	
17	1000654	Construction of Carpeting road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 13 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 435471.64).	
18	1000655	Construction of CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 20 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 607207.36).	
19	1000656	Construction of Carpeting road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 22 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Part-A) (Salvage Tk. 158291.76).	
20	1000657	Construction of CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 22 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Part-B) (Salvage Tk. 50788.80).	
21	1000658	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 23 of Rajshahi City Corporation.	
22	1000659	Construction of CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 24 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 908548.15).	
23	1000670	Construction of carpeting road, CC road and tertiary drain in Ward No. 25 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 554021.16).	
24	1000668	Construction of Tertiary Drain, Carpeting Road, CC Road, Retaining Wall in Ward No. 29 of Rajshahi City Corporation.	
25	1000845	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road & Tertiary Drain in Ward No. 30 of Rajshahi City Corporation.	
26	1000671	Construction of CC road & Tertiary Drain in Ward No. 17 & 21 of Rajshahi City Corporation (Salvage Tk. 226623.60).	
27	1000669	Construction of CC road in Ward No. 16 of Rajshahi City Corporation.	
28	1001012	Construction of carpeting road, RCC drain & footpath from Sapura Gorasthan to Sapura wood mill via Miapara Battala mour.	
29	1001504	(a) Construction of Asphalt Carpeting Road from Raipara Bypass Mour Councillor Office to Raipara Primary School Dhalan Mour at Ward no 01. (b) Construction of Asphalt Carpeting Road with RCC Drain from Hojor Mour to Chockpara Sanju Shop at Ward no 26.	
30	1001505	Construction of two storied CDC Cluster (Shimul Cluster) & Market beside UposaharSatelite Town high School at ward no 14.	
31	1000839	Painting Nagar Bhaban Building.	
32	1000840	Renovation work of toilet in Nagar Bhaban Building.	
33	1000843	Development & electrification work of Shaheed AHM Kamaruzzaman Nursing Institute.	
34	1000841	(A) Renovation of parking garage and public toilet at Shalbagan garage. (B) Supply & addition of necessary fittings to internal toilets & gardens of Rani Nagar City Hospital.	

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are abailable in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

30.6.24
(Md. Noor Islam)
Chief Engineer & Project Director
Rajshahi City Corporation
Tel. 0247812020
E-mail : nislamtushar@gmail.com

GD-1063

Transfer, dismissal

FROM PAGE 3

Revenue and the police were either transferred or forced into retirement.

"While administrative actions like transfer or retirement might appear promising, they do not sufficiently address the root causes of corruption," Iftekharuzzaman stated.

"In fact, such measures can perpetuate a cycle where corruption goes unchecked due to a lack of rigorous legal consequences," he said.

"The widespread acceptance of minimal punishment for corruption allegations sends a damaging message," he alleged. "It suggests that certain individuals are above the law, which undermines public trust and erodes the foundation of ethical governance," he noted.

Addressing the role of political leaders in combating corruption, Dr Iftekharuzzaman called for a holistic approach that goes beyond rhetoric.

He urged political parties to take responsibility for the systemic issues that enable corruption to flourish, including political patronage and institutional collusion.

"Institutionalised corruption cannot be tackled effectively if political leaders evade accountability," the TIB chief asserted.

"To rebuild public trust and uphold ethical standards, we need concrete actions that demonstrate a genuine commitment to transparency and accountability," he said.

TIB called upon the government to ensure that officials accused of corruption face rigorous investigation and trial, aligning with the standard legal procedures applicable to all citizens.

BNP misleading

FROM PAGE 3

"BNP claims that if Indian trains run through Bangladesh, it will pose a security risk to Bangladesh. This is not correct. Clause 3 of the agreement clearly states that 'red traffic,' including weapons, explosives, and dangerous items, will not be transported. Clause 4 of the agreement also states that the movement of goods and people between Bangladesh and India will be governed by the national laws, regulations, and administrative rules of the respective countries," he said.

Arafat also criticised BNP's leadership, accusing them of hindering regional connectivity initiatives and neglecting opportunities for economic progress, such as rejecting the submarine cable and obstructing the gas supply from Myanmar through India.

Arafat urged all to discern the facts and cautioned against falling prey to misinformation campaigns, stressing the importance of informed public discourse on matters of national interest.

Rain brings fresh

FROM PAGE 3

Secondary healthcare facilities should cater to at-risk patients, such as pregnant women, the elderly, and children, to reduce the burden on major hospitals and critical care units, he added.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman also warned that the current rain patterns will likely increase Aedes mosquito populations due to the abundance of breeding sites. He stressed the importance of destroying these sites.

Applying insecticides is less effective during inclement weather, so main focus should be on destroying breeding grounds," he explained.

প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
"খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অবকাঠামো ও একাডেমিক কার্যক্রম সম্প্রসারণ" প্রকল্প।
খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
খুলনা-৯২০৩, বাংলাদেশ।

Office of The Project Director
"Expansion of Infrastructure and Academic Activities of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology"
Khulna University of Engineering & Technology
Khulna-9203, Bangladesh.

Planning & Engineering Building (2nd Floor), Khulna-9203, Tel: +88041-769468-75, Ext. 8914; E-mail : pd-eiaa@kuet.ac.bd

Memo No.: KUET/EIAA/2024/07/2021

Date: 01/07/2024

E-Tender Notice

E-Tender will be invited in the National e-Gp System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/) for procurement of.

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Ref./Package No.	Description of Works	Online Tender Notice Publication date	Online Tender Closing date
01	997438	KUET/EIAA/2023-24/DW-5/IB	Construction of Institute Building-10 Storied at KUET Campus	01-July-2024	16-July-2024

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Gp Portal and no online/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-Gp system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-Gp system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-Gp system portal and from e-Gp help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

01.07.2024

(Dr. Md. Julfikar Hossain)
Project Director
Expansion of Infrastructure and Academic Activities of KUET
Khulna University of Engineering & Technology
Khulna-9203.

GD-1059

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ
ফোন:০২-৬৬৮৫৩৭৭/ফ্যাক্স:০৬৬৮১২৭১
ইমেইল: eegopal@rhd.gov.bd

ফেরীঘাট ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১	ইজারা কোটেশন নং	:	**০১/ইজারা/গোঃসঃবিঃ/২০২৩-২০২৪ (১০ম আহবান)**
০২	ইজারার বিবরণ	:	২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছর হতে ২০২৬-২০২৭ অর্থবছর পর্যন্ত (১ জুলাই ২০২৪ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৭) মেয়াদে গোপালগঞ্জ সড়ক বিভাগাধীন গোপালগঞ্জ জেলার সদর উপজেলার চরতালা-জয়নগর ঘাটে বিভিন্ন প্রকার যানবাহন পারাপারের নিমিত্তে যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের ইজারা প্রদান।
০৩	ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	:	১ জুলাই ২০২৪ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৭ পর্যন্ত = ৩ (তিন) বছর।
০৪	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য	:	টাঃ ৫০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
০৫	জামানতের টাকার পরিমাণ	:	উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/ পে-অর্ডার আকারে।
০৬	ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	১৫/০৭/২০২৪ তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৭	মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	১৬/০৭/২০২৪ তারিখ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৮	ইজারা ডাকে অংশ গ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	:	ভ্যাট ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারী / বেসরকারী / স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকাদার।
০৯	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন ক্রয়ের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে	:	বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, ঢাকা বিভাগ, সেগুন বাগিচা, ঢাকা / জেলা প্রশাসক, গোপালগঞ্জ / নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ / উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, ভাটিয়াপাড়া সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ।
১০	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	:	(ক) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ। (খ) জেলা প্রশাসক এর কার্যালয়, গোপালগঞ্জ।
১১	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	:	স্থান : নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ। তারিখ : ১৬/০৭/২০২৪ সময় : বেলা ২:৩০ ঘটিকা।
১২	ইজারা আহ্বানকারী যে কোন সময় যে কোন কোটেশন / সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।		

30.6.24
(মোঃ আজহারুল ইসলাম)
পরিচিতি নম্বর: ৬০২৩০৬
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী(চ.দা,), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ।

GD-1062

Now govt can appoint administrator for UPs

Local govt amendment bill passed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was passed in Parliament yesterday, introducing a provision for appointing administrators to union parishads after the elected representatives' five-year tenure expires.

LGRD Minister M Tazul Islam presented the bill, which was passed by voice vote. The new legislation stipulates that the government can appoint administrators for up to 120 days after the end of a Union Parishad's tenure.

With the proposed change, no Union Parishad chairman can remain in office beyond their term on any pretext. The current loophole allowing chairmen to stay in office past their term will be eliminated.

The post of UP secretary has been changed to "UP Administrative Officer" under the new law.

Under the new legislation, a competent officer or person will be appointed as an administrator to perform a Union Parishad's functions until a newly-elected council is formed.

This measure is expected to curb the practice of delaying elections through litigation.

The bill emphasises the Union Parishad's role in managing village courts and maintaining law and order, aiming to expand the effectiveness of village court activities.

475 workplace deaths in last six months

Says Safety, Rights Society data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 475 workers died in 420 accidents at various workplaces across the country in the first six months of 2024.

Safety and Rights Society released the data yesterday after conducting a survey based on news published in 15 national and 11 local newspapers.

In the same period in 2023, around 389 workers died in 287 accidents.

SRS has found that the highest number of workers were killed in the transport sector.

Of the total number, 250 transport workers died in this period, 74 died in service establishments (such as workshops, gas, electricity supply establishments), 66 in agricultural sector, 52 in construction, and 33 died in factories and other manufacturing institutes.

SRS Executive Director Sekender Ali Mina said Bangladesh's production and employment depend on the informal sector, where labour laws are largely unenforced, making it challenging to control workplace accidents.

Supervision by relevant authorities must be increased to control workplace accidents, he added.

New roads put agriculture at stake

120 hectares of cropland being used for commercial purposes

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Mohammed Sohel, 37, of Golichipa Para in the North Halishahar area of Chattogram city, is planning to work as a transport worker as the four-acre land he used to cultivate as a sharecropper has been turned into a truck terminal and cold storage depot.

"The land owner rented out the land for the truck terminal and coal storage depot, thereby compelling me to look for an alternative livelihood," he told this correspondent recently.

Sohel is not alone. Over a hundred farmers, whose lives solely depended on agriculture, were forced to change their profession after at least 120 hectares of arable land were turned into transport terminals, cattle farms, and factories.

These lands, located in North Kattali, North Pahartali, South Kattali, Halishahar, and Patenga areas, used to be cultivated to produce different crops, including tomato and watermelon, according to the metropolitan agriculture office in Chattogram.

After the construction of two link roads in the region to enhance connectivity, there has been a boost to business activities in the region, which in turn has made agriculture no longer attractive to landowners.

The 12.5-kilometre Port Link Road connecting Faujdarhat and Halishahar, which opened in 2007, paved the way for this transition.

Later, the 15.5km Outer Ring Road, which opened in 2021, connecting Faujdarhat and Patenga, further boosted connectivity and depleted agricultural land.

This correspondent recently visited several points of the Outer Ring Road and observed that many commercial structures have been built on the east side of the road.

"Earlier, after every seasonal harvest, the markets used to be flooded with an array of different crop varieties. But those days are no more," said Ataur Rahaman, 55, a vegetable vendor in Foillatoli Bazar under Halishahar area.

Jahangir Alam, a farmer from North Kattali, said, "Before these two roads were constructed, I used to earn my living by growing crops. Now, I am struggling to make ends meet after the agricultural lands were lost to commercial activities."

The six-acre land he used for cultivation now houses a workshop. At least 70 vehicles can be kept at the workshop at a time.

Elias Mistree, owner of the workshop, said, "After the road opened, most Chattogram Port-bound vehicles started using this road, which convinced me to set up the workshop here."

Any structure can be built on agricultural land after getting permission from the local ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation.

"However, most of those using their arable land for commercial activities do not come to us for any

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CHT PEACE ACCORD

Govt not making progress in its implementation

Says PCJSS report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Since the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord has not been properly implemented yet, the situation in CHT has worsened and become very sensitive, said Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) in its half-yearly report yesterday.

Despite being in power for 16 years now, the Awami League government has not paced forward with the accord's implementation process, said the report, adding, "At present, the government has put the implementation process to a total halt."

On December 2, 1997, the then AL government and PCJSS signed the CHT peace accord to solve the CHT crisis through political and peaceful means.

On April 30 this year, in the ninth meeting of CHT Accord Implementation and Monitoring Committee, it came up with evidential proof that the government did not undertake any initiative towards the implementation of the decisions adopted in the earlier meetings, the report also said.

From January to June this year, 107 incidents of rights violations were reported in CHT, while at least 5,448 Jumma people, including 5,000 men and women from the Bawm community, fell prey to human rights violations.

In such a way, the government has been turning the committee into a mere institution of nomenclature, it added.

The report further said the CHT has been experiencing human rights violations in various forms, such as suppression and oppression by administration and security forces, activities of armed terrorists, illegal land occupation, eviction and communal attacks, sexual harassment, violence, rape and killing, and development aggression.

From January to June this year, 107 incidents of rights violations were reported in CHT, while at least 5,448 Jumma people, including 5,000 men and women from the Bawm community, fell prey to human rights violations, it said.

The report said on April 23, a Rangamati court dismissed the case regarding the abduction of Kalpana Chakma.

After 28 years, the dismissal order of Kalpana Chakma's abduction case in the lower court has effectively granted impunity to the administration from its responsibility to uncover her whereabouts and the details of her kidnappers, the report added.

> **We do not have any legal power to prevent farmlands from being used for non-agricultural purposes. We just give permission on condition that the establishment cannot be built on cropland.**
>
> **MOHAMMED NASIR UDDIN,** Additional director of Ctg DAE

Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation
Rural and Peri-Urban Housing Finance Project-Second Phase
Foreign Financing and Project Unit, Head Office, Dhaka
Website: www.bhbfc.gov.bd

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(CONSULTANCY SERVICE- PROJECT FINANCIAL AUDITING SERVICE)

Country	: The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Project	: Rural and Peri-Urban Housing Finance Project-Second Phase
Sector	: Peri-Urban and Rural Environment and Infrastructure
Consulting Service	: Project Financial Auditing Services (Package S-03)
Mode of Financing	: Installment Sale Financing and OCR Loan
Financing No	: BGD-1087

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has applied for financing from the Islamic Development Bank toward the cost of the Rural and Peri-Urban Housing Finance Project-Second Phase, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consultant services.
2. The services include carrying out audit of the project in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISA) issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), having regard to relevant financing agreements and IsDB's particular reporting and procurement requirements. The audit covers the financial transactions of the project period from 01.07.2024 to 30.06.2029. The assignment is expected to be commenced in September, 2024. The estimated 20 person-months are expected to be required for this assignment.

   The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment *can be found at the following website:* ***www.bhbfc.gov.bd***
3. The Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC) as Executing Agency now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested Consultants must provide specific information which demonstrates that they are fully qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.).
4. The short listing criteria are as below:
   - i. The Consulting Firm should be eligible as per eligibility requirements contained in the IsDB's Guideline for the Procurement of Consultancy Services under IsDB Project Financing, April-2019 version, revised in February-2023**;**
   - ii. Must have a good reputation as a professional body and knowledge on financial management and audit requirements of IsDB and/or Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)specifically preparation of audit report with at least one project funded by MDBs or any international organizations;
   - iii. Must have at least 3 years specific experience on auditing in bank and financial institutions within last 10 years;
   - iv. Must have technical and managerial capability of the firm and staff, number of full time professional staffs required as per ToR. However, Key Experts will not be evaluated at the short-listing stage.
5. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to 1.12.1, and 1.12.2 paragraphs, Part 1, Chapter 1 (pages 15-16) of the IsDB's Guidelines for Procurement of Consultancy Services under Islamic Development Bank Project Financing, April 2019 version, revised in February 2023 (the "Procurement Guidelines"), setting forth IsDB's policy on conflict of interest.
6. Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.
7. An auditing consultancy firm will be selected from a short list of local/domestic companies based on the Least-Cost selection method set out in the Procurement Guidelines.
8. Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM.
9. Expressions of interest (EOIs) must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail) by no later than 02:00 PM **on 18 July, 2024.** Both the hard copy as well as electronic version of EOIs will be acceptable.

০১/০৭/২০২৪
(**Mohammed Nazrul Islam**)
Project Director
Rural and Peri-Urban Housing Finance Project-Second Phase
Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation
22 Purana Paltan (7th floor), Tel: +88-02-47120610
Website: www.bhbfc.gov.bd, E-mail:bhbfc.project.pmu@gmail.com

GD-1060

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Divisional Passport & Visa Office
E-7 Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
www.dip.gov.bd

Invitation for Enlistment

SL No.	Description	Detail
1.	Ministry/Division	Security Service Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
2.	Agency	Department of Immigration & Passports (DIP)
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
4.	Procuring Entity Code	N/A
5.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh
6..	Invitation for	Enlistment of Firm for the supply of Furniture, Electronics, stationary items, goods, Stamp & Seals and related service.
7.	Invitation Ref No.	58.01.00000.601.07.001.24-1153
8.	Date	30 /06/2024
KEY INFORMATION		
9.	Procurement Method	Limited Tendering Method.
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10.	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh (GOB)
11.	Development Partners	None
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12.	Office Code	N/A
13.	Office Name	Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
14.	Application Closing Date and Time	21/07/2024 at 01:00 pm (BST)
15.	**Name & Address**	
	Application Form Availability	Salma Akhi, Assistant Director, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.Room No-603. Telephone No- 02-58156425
	Receiving Application Form	Jagadish Chandra Taty, Deputy Assistant Director, Room No-303, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka. Telephone No- 02-58156425
INFORMATION FOR APPLICATION		
16.	Eligibility of Application	a) Vat Registration and TIN Certificate of the Suppliers. b) Up-to-date Trade License of Local Agent from City Corporation. c) Proprietorship/Partnership/Limited Company ie. Concerned Commercial Documents (Photocopy) of the Tenders. d) Money Receipt of purchase of Tender Documents. e) Proof of Solvency. f) Must confirm that has legal Capacity to enter into a contract under the authority with valid Power of Attorney. g) At least 3 years' experience certificate for the Supply of similar goods and related service.
17.	Brief Description of Goods or Works	a) Supply of Stationary items, b) Supply of office furniture and fixer. c) Supply of AC, Network items, Electronics goods and miscellaneous items.
SL No.	**Description**	**Detail**
18.	Brief Description of Related or Physical Services	N/A
19.	Price of Application Form	2000.00 BDT payable with treasury A-Chalan(Code No: 1610501-133252-1422328
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
20.	Name of Official Inviting Application	Director
21.	Designation of Official Inviting Application	Director
22.	Address of Official Inviting Application	Director, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
23.	Contact details of Official inviting Application	Telephone No- 02-58156425.
	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject any or all the Tenders without assigning any reason.	

30.06.2024
(Salma Akhi)
Assistant Director
For Director

GD- 1057

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

I am thankful for everything: JAYA AHSAN

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Just a day before her birthday, Jaya Ahsan returned to Dhaka after completing shooting in Kolkata for her upcoming film ***Dear Ma***. Yesterday, the National Award-winning actress celebrated the special occasion with her family.

Jaya's busy schedule rarely allows her the chance to spend time in the country and with her close ones. In conversation with The Daily Star, the actress spoke about her special day, current projects, and more.

"As soon as I returned home, the hour of celebrations began," she said. "I usually like to stay home on my birthdays, and spend quality time with my family."

From her colleagues in showbiz, friends, and fans, the internet boasted with good wishes for Jaya. "I was overwhelmed with all the love that everyone showered upon me. I am thankful for the lovely wishes and prayers, and for everything."

Her mother likes to cook special cuisine for Jaya's birthday every year. "My mother is always excited about my birthdays," smiles Jaya, "This year she made Hilsha Polao and it was heavenly! To tell you the truth, I was craving for this for a long time (laughs)."

Marking her birthday, the teaser of another project, titled ***OCD*** starring Jaya, was revealed. It is directed by Soukarya Ghosal. Jaya earlier worked with the director in ***Bhootpori*** , which was released in February. "The name of the film says a lot about itself, and for now, I can say that it will reveal many answers."

Talking about ***Dear Maa***, the actress shared, "The plot of ***Dear Maa*** is emotional and conveys a strong message. It is a very sweet story between a child and mother."

Directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, the film also features Chandan Roy Sanyal and Saswata Chatterjee. This film marks the second collaboration of Jaya and Aniruddha after their much-acclaimed Bollywood web-film ***Kadak Singh***. "Aniruddha *da*'s style of filmmaking is quite different and impressive. I have observed that while working with him in the previous project and he has put a lot of effort into this film as well. The audience will be able to witness it on the screen."

Jaya's experience of working in this film was great for her co-actors as well. "All of my co-artistes are power-packed performers, it was quite challenging to perform with them and enjoyable too."

The actress further added that she would be happier if the Bangladeshi audience could watch ***Dear Maa***. "Whenever my film releases in Kolkata, I always feel if Bangladeshi audience could enjoy this film too, I hope we will be able to make it possible in near future," concluded the actress.

From her colleagues in showbiz, friends, and fans, the internet boasted with good wishes for Jaya. "I was overwhelmed with all the love that everyone showered upon me. I am thankful for the lovely wishes and prayers, and for everything," the actress shared.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Vicky Zahed's horror-thriller 'Ekti Khola Janala' to premiere on Binge

Director Vicky Zahed, renowned for his psycho-thrillers like ***Redrum***, ***Punorjonmo*** series, returns with another similar instalment— this time blending horror into a short film, titled ***Ekti Khola Janala***.

The film stars Tasnia Farin and Sallha Khanam Nadia in the lead roles, both portraying the characters of nurses.

Vicky Zahed explains, "This is an international story adapted to the Bangladeshi context. It revolves around two nurses and the strange events they encounter one night. It's an attempt to create something different."

Ekti Khola Janala will premiere on the OTT platform Binge in the first week of July.

Actress Bobby faces charges of attempted murder and theft

Renowned actress Eamin Haque Bobby is embroiled in legal controversy after Muhammad Sakib Uddoja, AGM of YN Centre, filed a case against her, accusing her of theft and assault with the intent to murder.

The case was registered at Gulshan Police Station on June 23, confirmed by Gulshan Police Officer-in-Charge Mazharul Islam. He also mentioned that Bobby and the primary accused, Mirza Abul Bashar, have filed a countersuit. The investigation, led by Sub-Inspector Anwar Hossain, is currently underway.

The complaint also noted that the YN Centre suffered damages worth Tk 1,50,000 and thefts amounting to Tk 1,00,000, which are yet to be recovered.

COUNTRYWIDE

AMTALI UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX

Manpower shortage cripples health service

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Patients in Barguna's Amtali upazila are deprived of proper treatment facilities as the upazila health complex is plagued with various problems including shortage of doctors and other staff.

The upazila health complex serves as the lone government hospital for nearly 2.5 lakh residents of different unions under the upazila.

Only three doctors, including two medical officers, are currently serving at the 50-bed health complex.

At least 28 posts of doctors, out of 31 posts, are lying vacant for a long, hampering health service of thousands of people in the upazila.

Apart from the doctors, about 60 out of 90 posts of Class II staff, including statistician, cashier, store keeper, and 19 out of 33 posts of Class III employees, including ward boy, gardener, cook, security guard and cleaner are lying vacant for nearly three years, disrupting overall activities of the government hospital.

According to the hospital sources, though Dr Faizur Rahman, a resident medical officer joined the hospital on February 29 this year, he has remained absent at his workplace since the next day.

The hospital authorities served him two show-cause notices, asking him to explain the reason behind his absence, and withheld his salary, but he is yet join the health complex.

Local residents said as the upazila health and family planning officer (UHFPO) remains busy with different administrative works, it is quite difficult to manage so many outdoor, indoor and emergency patients with only two medical officers.

In case of any medical emergency, patients need to be taken to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital, about 35km away, or Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, which is about 75 km from Barguna's Amtali upazila, they added.

During a recent visit to the hospital this correspondent saw Rushia Begum from Haldia village, who came to the hospital with itching problem, was wondering what to do as there was no doctor at the hospital then.

"We are poor people and can't afford more money to go elsewhere for treatment," she said.

While talking, Amtali UHFPO Dr Chinmoy Howladar said they have informed their higher authorities on several occasions in this regard, but nothing has been done so far.

Contacted, Barguna Civil Surgeon Dr Pradeep Chandra Mandal said usually, doctors posted from distant areas do not want to stay at the remote upazila health complex for long.

৫০শয্যা বিশিষ্ট উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স
আমতলী, বরগুনা।

The 50-bed Amtali Upazila Health Complex in Barguna.

PHOTO: STAR

India replaces

FROM PAGE 12

adding that the first case logged under the new law was that of a motorcycle theft in the central city of Gwalior, registered 10 minutes after midnight.

"The laws were debated for three months ... It is not fair to give political colour to this big improvement happening after centuries. I ask the opposition parties to support this legislation," Shah said.

Opposition Congress party lawmaker P Chidambaram said the previous parliament session did not hold any "worthwhile debate" before passing the laws.

He said that there was only marginal improvement in the new laws, which could have been introduced as amendments to existing laws.

"The initial impact will be to throw the administration of criminal justice into disarray," he posted on X.

The Indian Express newspaper said in an editorial that criminal justice reform should not be "a one-time solution or one that just takes place in the books", and called for police reform and addressing gaps in judicial infrastructure.

Parties rush

FROM PAGE 12

was not greater, it was still a huge setback for Macron who had called the snap election after his ticket was trounced by the RN in the European Parliament election last month.

Whether the anti-immigrant, eurosceptic RN can form a government will depend now on how successfully other parties manage to thwart Le Pen by rallying round the best-placed rival candidates in hundreds of constituencies across France.

The corrupt will face music

FROM PAGE 12

Hasina said people should be reminded about Bangladesh opting out of the Trans-Asian Highway.

Talking about the BNP's "anti-India stance", she said it is their double standard.

When the BJP came to power in India, BNP leaders visited the Indian High Commission in Dhaka with sweets and flowers, but they are now talking against India, the PM said.

She said that former premier Khaleda Zia had forgotten to speak about the Teesta water-sharing treaty during her visit to India.

Hasina said the BNP came to power in 2001 promising that it would enter a gas deal with India although there was a shortage of gas in the country. "Why are they talking against India now?"

The PM said she will never do anything against the interest of the country.

She also questioned the source of income of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman who "leads a lavish life" in London.

Meanwhile, Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain said the government will show no sympathy to the corrupt people.

"Are all the officials in an office corrupt? There are only a few of them. But all the staffers feel embarrassed because of those few people," the cabinet secretary told reporters during a briefing after the cabinet meeting yesterday.

Mahbub said the administration is neither creating any obstacles to taking actions against the corrupt people nor questioning those actions.

"All the mechanisms of the government are always cooperating [with the authorities concerned] to take action against the corrupt people," he added.

The cabinet secretary said the cabinet approved a proposal for the formation of Padma Bridge Operation and Maintenance Company (PLC), reports UNB.

The 100 percent government-owned company will look after the operation and maintenance of the Padma Bridge, he said.

It will have a 14-member board of directors with representatives from different agencies, including Bridges Division and Finance Division.

Currently, Korea Expressway and China's Major Bridge Engineering Company are responsible for toll collection and maintenance of the bridge. The two companies were appointed for five years.

Sylhet, Sunamganj

FROM PAGE 1

Sarighat is 35 cm above the danger level.

In Sunamganj, at 12:00 pm, the Surma River was flowing 36cm above the danger level at Chhatak and 11 cm above in Sunamganj town, while the Jadukata in Tahirpur's Shaktiarkhola was flowing 70cm above the danger level.

Some 156 mm of rainfall was recorded in Sylhet town in 12 hours from 6:00am yesterday, according to the local Met office.

The Sylhet region faced the first phase of flood on May 30 due to heavy rainfall caused by cyclone Remal.

Before the flood waters could retreat, the region was struck by flash floods on the eve of the Eid-ul-Azha.

The fresh round of flash floods in Sylhet and Sunamganj is coming at a time when more than 20,000 are still taking refuge in shelters and over a million people are reeling from the previous phases of the flood.

Over in Rangpur, Teesta river was flowing 7cm above the danger level at Kaunia point at 12:00pm yesterday, according to WDB.

The rising water levels have inundated lower lands in the Gangachara, Kaunia and Pirgachha upazilas, causing suffering to residents.

Around 300 houses have been affected by flood since Sunday morning, said Abdullah Al Hadi, chairman of Laxmitari Union Parishad in Gangachara upazila.

Local WDB officials have issued a flash flood alert.

Teesta started flowing above the danger mark at Kaunia point from Monday due to the rainfall in the Indian upstream, said Rabiul Islam, the executive engineer of WDB in Rangpur.

The situation now depends on the rainfall over the next 24 hours, he added.

Nazrul Islam Hakkani, president of the Teesta Bachao Nadi Bachao Sangram Parishad, emphasised the need for implementing the Teesta Master Plan, including dredging and conservation, as a long-term solution to the recurring problem.

The Teesta causes property losses amounting to Tk 100,000 crore every year, he said.

Last week, Teesta was flowing 52cm above the danger mark.

[Our Correspondents from Sylhet and Rangpur contributed to the report]

France

FROM PAGE 12

2022 World Cup runners-up into a last-eight tie in Hamburg on Friday as they remain on course to become European champions for the third time.

"We are so proud to once again be in the quarter-finals. We are expected to get there but we must appreciate it and not think that is something that is just normal," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

France's back line was outstanding against Romelu Lukaku and his fellow attackers, and Belgium bow out after what will go down as a disappointing tournament for them.

"It's a shame," said captain Kevin De Bruyne. "We had a plan. We knew they were strong. It's a shame to concede a goal in the way we did."

The French were widely seen as the favourites to win this tournament before arriving in Germany, but they were below par during the group phase.

The broken nose suffered by Kylian Mbappe in their opening game against Austria did not help, and the uncertain form of Antoine Griezmann has been a problem too.

The Belgians were happy to sit deep and did not test Mike Maignan in the first half other than from an awkward De Bruyne free-kick which the France goalkeeper blocked with his knee.

France had lots of the ball, yet often looked untidy, imprecise and rather flat, with Griezmann appearing lost on the right wing.

The breakthrough almost came for Belgium an hour in as William Saliba lost possession on halfway and De Bruyne released Carrasco, who was about to pull the trigger when Theo Hernandez arrived to make a brilliant saving block.

French far-right win a 'lesson' for 'progressives'

Says UK's Labour leader Starmer

AFP, *London*

The far-right victory in the first round of France's general election is a sign for politicians to better respond to disaffected voters, UK Labour leader Keir Starmer said yesterday.

Starmer's centre-left party is firm favourite to seize power at the UK general election on Thursday, bucking the trend of a rightwards shift in Europe and elsewhere, and making him prime minister.

"The lesson I take from (the National Rally victory) is that we need to address the everyday concerns of so many people," he said as the UK election campaign entered its final few days.

"We have to take that head on and we have to show both Thursday in the United Kingdom and across Europe and the world that only progressives have the answers to the challenges that are facing us in this country and across Europe," he said.

"We have to make that progressive cause but we have to, in making that, understand why it is... that people do feel disaffected with politics," he added.

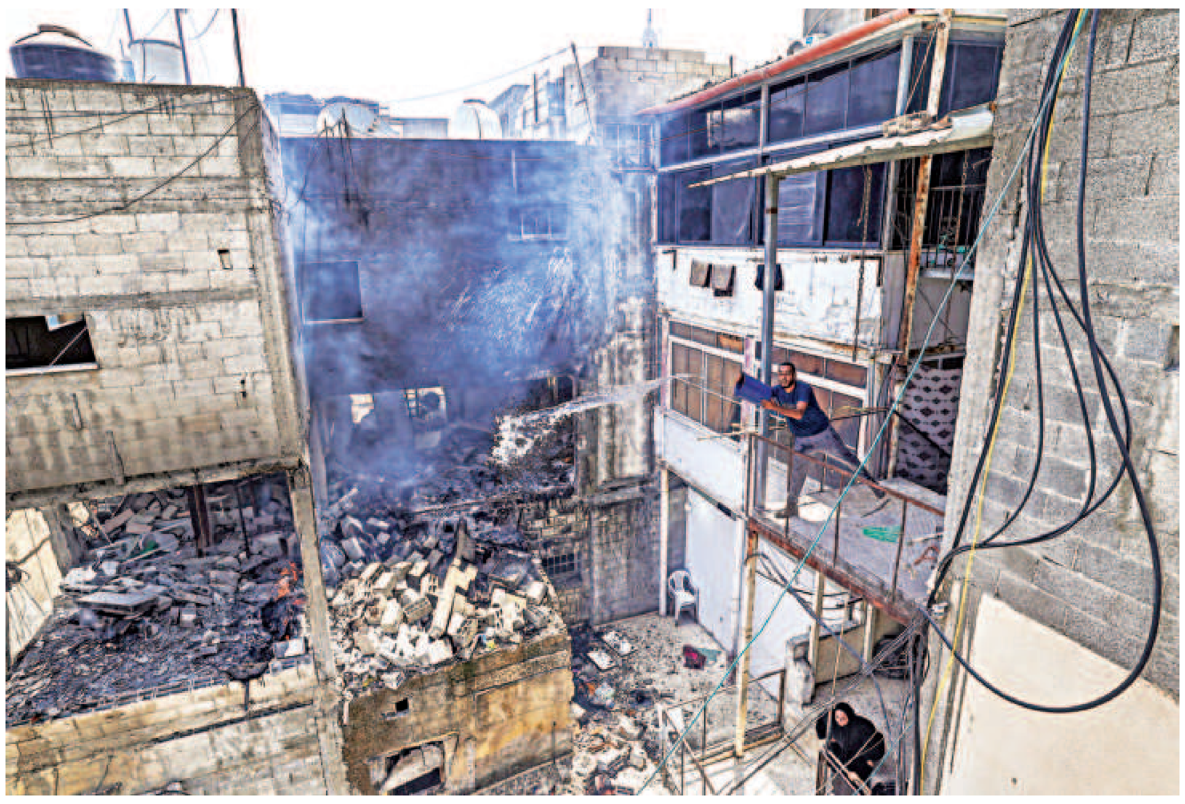

PHOTO: **AFP**

A man throws a bucket of water to dowse a fire in a building that was heavily damaged during an Israeli army raid on the Nur Shams camp for Palestinian refugees, east of Tulkarm in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Japanese official among 11 arrested for price gouging

REUTERS

Myanmar arrested four executives of supermarket chains, including an official of a Japanese joint venture, for selling rice at inflated prices, state media said yesterday, as the war-torn country's ruling junta struggles to stabilise its economy.

The impoverished Southeast Asian country has been in turmoil since its military deposed an elected civilian government in February 2021, sparking widespread protests that have morphed into a nationwide armed resistance.

Authorities said they arrested 11 people, including rice traders and officials of mills and retailers, accusing them of inflating prices by 31 percent to 70 percent from prescribed levels, the Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said.

In Tokyo, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Yoshimasa Hayashi, said police in Yangon were questioning a Japanese national. "The Japanese government intends to continue taking appropriate steps while urging local authorities for his early release," he told reporters.

US DOJ to criminally charge Boeing

Seek guilty plea, say sources

REUTERS

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) will criminally charge Boeing BA.N with fraud over two fatal crashes and ask the planemaker to plead guilty or face a trial, two people familiar with the matter said on Sunday.

The Justice Department planned to formally offer a plea agreement to Boeing later in the day, which includes a financial penalty and imposition of an independent monitor to audit the company's safety and compliance practices for three years, the sources said.

Palestinian prisoners face 'all kinds of torture'

Says Gaza hospital chief after release from Israeli detention centre

AFP, *Deir El-Balah*

The head of the Gaza Strip's biggest hospital said yesterday after being freed from more than seven months of detention that he had been "tortured" by Israel.

Al-Shifa hospital director Mohammed Abu Salmiya was among more than 50 Palestinians released and returned to Gaza for treatment, according to an Israeli minister and a medical source in the besieged territory.

Salmiya said he was put through "severe torture" during his detention, which left him with a broken thumb.

"Prisoners are subjected to all kinds of torture," he told a press conference. "Several inmates died in interrogation centres and were deprived of food and medicine."

"For two months no prisoner ate more than a loaf of bread a day," said Salmiya.

"Detainees were subjected to physical and psychological humiliation."

The medical chief said no charge had ever been made against him. Israeli forces detained Salmiya during one of a number of raids on Al-Shifa.

The hospital has largely been reduced to rubble by successive raids since Israel launched its assault on Gaza.

Salmiya and the other freed detainees crossed back into Gaza from Israel just east of Khan Yunis, a medical source at the Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah told AFP.

Spain SC denies amnesty for Catalan separatist

AFP, *Madrid*

Spain's top court yesterday refused to grant an amnesty to Catalan separatist leader Carles Puigdemont on a charge of misusing public funds, maintaining arrest warrants over his failed 2017 secession attempt.

Spanish MPs in May passed an amnesty law aimed at drawing a line under years of efforts to prosecute those involved in the botched secession bid.

Blocking the amnesty for Puigdemont could complicate life for Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who relied on Catalan parties to secure a new term in November.

UKRAINE DRONE ATTACKS

Russia border regions report power cuts

AFP, *Moscow*

Officials in Russian regions bordering Ukraine reported power cuts and water supply issues yesterday after deadly drone attacks by Kyiv.

The attacks and shelling on the border region of Belgorod over the past day killed a four-year-old girl and wounded seven people, regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Ukraine regularly targets Russian border regions with drones, claiming attacks on energy facilities and ammunition depots.

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PYTHON Programming
JavaScript JS
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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Why can't the NBR protect its server?

Its vulnerability to hacking has emerged as a serious security threat

The ease and frequency with which cybercriminals continue to breach the National Board of Revenue (NBR) server is disquieting. According to a report by this daily, a cybercriminal gang attempted to release a container of foreign cigarettes from Chattogram Port after breaching the NBR server with the login credentials of a customs official. Acting on a tip-off, officials seized the container loaded with 50 lakh sticks of cigarettes worth about Tk 5 crore. The breach of the server came to light on Saturday after an investigation into the incident.

Despite the successful intervention, what worries us is that the breach could have led to something far more sinister. It shows once again the vulnerability of the NBR server to hacking which is proving increasingly difficult to address. Reportedly, following previous incidents of server breach, the NBR took some steps like the use of particular login IP and sending OTP to mobile phones of officials with proper authorisations. However, the latest breach has demonstrated that these measures are not enough. Criminals somehow managed to use the login credentials of a deputy commissioner of Chattogram Customs House to register the consignment with the NBR server, and also to access the server from a different IP address, while no OTP was sent to the mobile phone of the official concerned.

Over the last few years, at least 38 imported consignments of goods were released illegally by using the IDs of at least eight revenue officials. Investigators said a cybercriminal gang was involved in those incidents; however, they failed to identify the gang. After a few such incidents in 2022, it was discovered that earlier measures taken by the NBR had been insufficient to prevent its servers from being breached. The institution itself admitted that its technological safeguards could not thwart them. Even though these concerns have been well-known, the fact that the authorities have been unable to address them since is unacceptable. Another major concern is that despite repeated breaches, the probe committees that have been formed failed to identify the perpetrators or answer many critical questions raised by the incidents.

The entire security system of the NBR seems to be way below par, and the danger that it poses to our national security is disturbing. Against this backdrop, the NBR should urgently stamp down on such breaches by strengthening the security of its servers. Customs officials and others should be more vigilant about cybercrimes. And considering the gravity of the threat posed by such crimes, the authorities should consider involving independent experts who can look into what's really happening and suggest solutions.

Protect Tengragiri forest at all costs

We can't afford to lose the 'second Sundarbans' to timber thieves

We are outraged to learn that another reserved forest is being plundered by timber thieves who are felling and stealing trees indiscriminately, with no visible steps to stop them. According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, an organised criminal gang has been stealing trees from the Tengragiri mangrove forest and setting the stumps on fire to destroy evidence, in the process causing damage to the trees that still remain standing. Locals complained that this has been going on for a long time, alleging that these thieves are working in cohort with forest officials.

The Tengragiri forest, situated along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, stretches from Taltali upazila of Barguna to Kuakata in Patuakhali, covering 13,644 acres of area, according to data from the Forest Department. In 1960, it was designated as a reserved forest based on a survey done in 1927. Home to an incredible biodiversity system, Tengragiri is the second largest mangrove forest in Bangladesh, and is thus known as the "second Sundarbans."

Such an invaluable gift of nature—which, much like the Sundarbans, acts as a natural barrier to calamities and protects the locals—already faces a host of threats to its survival, such as the rising sea level and increasing salinity due to global warming, erosion, etc. Its chances of survival are being further jeopardised because of the greed and recklessness of local influentials. A recent visit has revealed that 3,000 trees have been felled and stolen in the forest's Behular Char area. According to the *Prothom Alo* report, in March, a fire broke out there and burned as many as 10,000 trees, damaging a lot of others. What really puzzles us is that after the fire was reported, it took local forest officials 18 hours to reach the scene and bring the fire under control. Another fire incident happened in the Disirkilla area in April, but that was put out quickly enough, so the damage was minimal.

When asked about their failure to prevent tree robbery and frequent fire incidents, forest officials in Tengragiri cited lack of manpower and necessary resources. This seems to be their go-to excuse whenever there are reports of timber theft from reserved forests. We must ask: how difficult is it to ramp up the capacity of the Forest Department so that it can protect at-risk forest areas? Or is the concept of "reserved forest" lost on them? This lackadaisical attitude is totally unacceptable, especially considering Bangladesh's fast-depleting forest coverage. We urge the authorities to ensure that no further damage is done to what's left of our precious forests.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Civil Rights Act signed

On this day in 1964, US President Lyndon B Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, perhaps the most important US law on civil rights since Reconstruction (1865-77) and a hallmark of the American civil rights movement.

More women in construction sector should be our next goal

Dipa Das
is research associate at South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM).

Eshrat Sharmin
is senior research associate at SANEM.

DIPA DAS *and* **ESHRAT SHARMIN**

Bangladesh's economy has witnessed remarkable growth, solidifying it as one of the fastest growing economies worldwide. According to the Bangladesh Economic Review 2023, the construction sector significantly contributes to this growth—approximately 6.41 percent in 2023. Construction's share within the industry sector and growth is on the rise, with the growth rate increasing to 8.71 percent in FY2021-22, compared to 8.08 percent in FY2020-21.

As the construction sector expands, it demands more labour. According to the Labour Force Survey 2022, construction is the fifth largest industry in terms of employment in Bangladesh, with about 5.44 percent of the employed population working in this sector. A study conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) projects that the construction industry is expected to require approximately 90 lakh workers by 2030. But among the top five employment-generating industries, the construction sector ranks second to last in terms of female employment. Only 0.4 percent of women are employed in this sector, compared to 8.18 percent of men. With female labour force participation in Bangladesh increasing from 36.3 percent in 2016-17 to 42.7 percent in 2022, the expanding construction sector presents a significant opportunity to accommodate more female workers.

> **To increase female participation and to create a more inclusive environment in the construction industry, several essential actions should be taken to overcome the challenges.**

Additionally, with the country's LDC graduation and the anticipated decline in RMG exports, exploring sectors like construction is crucial for accommodating the expected structural shift in labour dynamics. The rise of automation and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technology highlights the need to focus on technology and skills-based occupations for women.

FILE PHOTO: **ADAM JONES/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**

The construction sector in Bangladesh is highly informal—78.42 percent of female workers here are employed under verbal agreements.

According to the Labour Force Survey 2016-17, females in the construction sector are primarily concentrated in lower tier jobs: 31.23 percent as civil engineering labourers, 22.15 percent as building construction workers, and 18.27 percent as bricklayers. Studies found that women also work in senior management and administrative roles, accounting for approximately 7.1 percent and 4.3 percent of total female employment in the sector, respectively. Across all occupations, most female workers are either unskilled (53 percent) or semi-skilled (17 percent). According to the findings in the Construction Industry Skills Council (CISC) Employers surveys in 2018 and 2020, female workers are considered less productive than males.

The construction sector is highly informal; 78.42 percent of female workers are employed as per verbal agreements. Only 0.3 percent of female employees have access to toilets and sanitation facilities, and 1.88 percent have maternity leave benefits. This sector is inherently hazardous due to the nature of its work, yet only one percent of female workers have access to safety gear. Additionally, just 0.78 percent receive transportation and food subsidies, and 0.66 percent benefit from daycare facilities.

Despite policies to boost women's participation in the labour force, there are no gender-specific policies in the construction sector. The Public Procurement Rule, 2008, and Occupational Health and Safety Policy, 2013 ensure workplace safety but lack gender provisions. The labour law addresses critical women's issues like hygiene, maternity leave, medical facilities, and working hours, but enforcement is challenging in informal sectors like construction.

Women are largely confined to unskilled jobs like brick-breaking and excavation due to a substantial skills gap and lack of access to training programmes. The sector's high informality—characterised by irregular recruitment, work hours, and payment methods—limits job stability. Additionally, mobility and transportation issues, coupled with inadequate on site infrastructure and security concerns, deter women from long term-roles. The work environment is often abusive, with frequent conduct violations, resistance to female leadership, and harassment. Unsafe conditions and inadequate accommodations, such as the lack of separate bathrooms and resting areas, further exacerbate these difficulties. Gender based violence, including sexual harassment and physical assault, remains a significant barrier, with limited avenues for complaint. Wage exploitation is prevalent, with female workers often paid less than their male counterparts for similar work. Societal norms and gender bias further discourage female participation, with industry stakeholders perceiving women as less productive and costlier due to additional safety and security needs. Barriers related to marriage, pregnancy, and care work, combined with a lack of role models and representation in workers' unions, further limit women's opportunities and perpetuate their marginalisation in the construction sector.

To increase female participation and to create a more inclusive environment in the construction industry, several essential actions should be taken to overcome the challenges. Firstly, establishing a comprehensive workforce database, gradually formalising the sector through structured recruitment, fair wages, standard work hours, proper implementation of well-defined health, safety, and compensation policies, and an institutional body addressing workplace abuse and harassment are crucial.

Secondly, promoting female participation through skills training incentives and creating a gender responsive ecosystem with standard wages, safety measures, maternity benefits, and flexible work hours are also extremely important. Ensuring that training programmes include 30 percent female participation as mandated by the government and declaring minimum wages for entry-level jobs should be considered.

Thirdly, streamlining the labour hiring processes for contractors and subcontractors, maintaining a worker database with national ID numbers to identify wage gaps, and adding specific clauses to labour laws addressing the construction sector-related concerns are vital. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs should play a significant role in this regard, with private actors and labour organisations advocating for workers' needs. Finally, state owned insurance companies should offer workers injury packages.

The construction sector has the potential to increase female workforce participation, ensuring gender parity and aligning with three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1, 5, and 8). Occupations in this sector are predominantly male-centric across all tiers, underscoring gender bias and stigma, necessitating considerable attention from the government and policymakers. Implementing the above recommendations can help make the construction sector a leading example of gender parity and inclusivity, driving sustainable development and economic progress in Bangladesh.

Celebrating the legacy of Prof Yunus

This is an excerpt of a speech given by Susanna B Afan, president of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, at the opening ceremony of the 14th Social Business Day on June 27, 2024.

In 1984, forty years ago, a then 44-year-old Muhammad Yunus was elected to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership for "his pioneering efforts in enabling rural men and women to become economically self-sufficient through sound group-managed credit. His work challenged misconceptions about the capabilities of the poor to save, collaborate, and effectively utilise loans."

Since its inception, the Grameen Bank has achieved remarkable success. Grameen Bank has grown to provide collateral-free loans to 7.5 million clients, 97 percent of whom are women, in more than 82,000 villages in Bangladesh.

Yunus's model has demonstrated that even the poorest individuals can enhance their lives with dignity and contribute to their country's economic growth.

Muhammad Yunus is globally recognised as "The Father of Microfinance."

In the Philippines, the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development-Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD-MRI) was established in 1986. To date, CARD-MRI has empowered millions of Filipinos. Nine million of them accessed microloans, 30 million are insured through microinsurance, and five million individuals have access to its health programmes. We are honoured to have Dr Aris Alip, the founder of CARD-MRI, in the audience with us today.

In 1994, in Indonesia, Dompet Dhuafa, a humanitarian institution, empowered millions of Indonesians through the principle and power of Zakat, a religious offering that is one of the pillars of Islam. Dompet Dhuafa's microloans have benefited 24 million people—more than the entire population of Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: **YUNUS CENTRE**

Susanna B Afan, president of Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, presents a portrait to Prof Muhammad Yunus to commemorate the 40th anniversary of him receiving the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

In Pakistan, Muhammad Amjad Saqib founded Akhuwat in 2001. His pioneering interest-free microfinance model is based on Islamic values and compassion, known as *Mawakhat*. Akhuwat has since grown into the world's largest interest-free microfinance organisation. To date, it has disbursed over $789 million in loans and lifted the lives of over 5.4 million people in Pakistan.

These are the movements inspired directly by the work of Muhammad Yunus and, as such, they too followed his footsteps.

In 2008, CARD-MRI received the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

In 2016, Dompet Dhuafa received the Magsaysay Prize.

In 2021, Muhammad Amjad Saqib also became a Magsaysay Laureate.

To date, there are countless other microfinance institutions globally that have followed Muhammad Yunus's model.

This is the collective impact that Professor Yunus started that merited him the Magsaysay Award. He has transformed the lives not only of millions of Bangladeshis but also billions of people around the world.

This is what the Ramon Magsaysay Award stands for—celebrating transformative, courageous leadership, selfless service, and the Greatness of Spirit of ordinary individuals and organisations that bring meaningful, lasting change.

Named after the seventh president of the Philippines, the Ramon Magsaysay Award honours individuals and organisations embodying commitment to the common man, reflecting President Magsaysay's life and leadership. To date, 348 women, men and organisations working across Asia have been conferred with what is now widely regarded as Asia's premier prize and highest honour. We have captured their inspiring stories in our 65th anniversary commemorative book series, simply called *GREATNESS OF SPIRIT: Stories of Love, Courage and Service.*

Forty years since Muhammad Yunus received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, a precursor to many of his other international accolades including the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, we continue to celebrate the undeniable impact of his work—billions of lives changed through the power of microfinance.

As a token of our appreciation and to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Muhammad Yunus receiving the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Foundation would like to present Muhammad Yunus, 1984 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Community Leadership, with his portrait. This portrait was specially commissioned for our 65th anniversary commemorative book series. This also serves as our birthday gift for his 84th birthday on June 28.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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How universal and egalitarian is the ‘universal’ pension scheme?

Dr Ala Uddin
is professor at the Department of Anthropology in Chittagong University.

ALA UDDIN

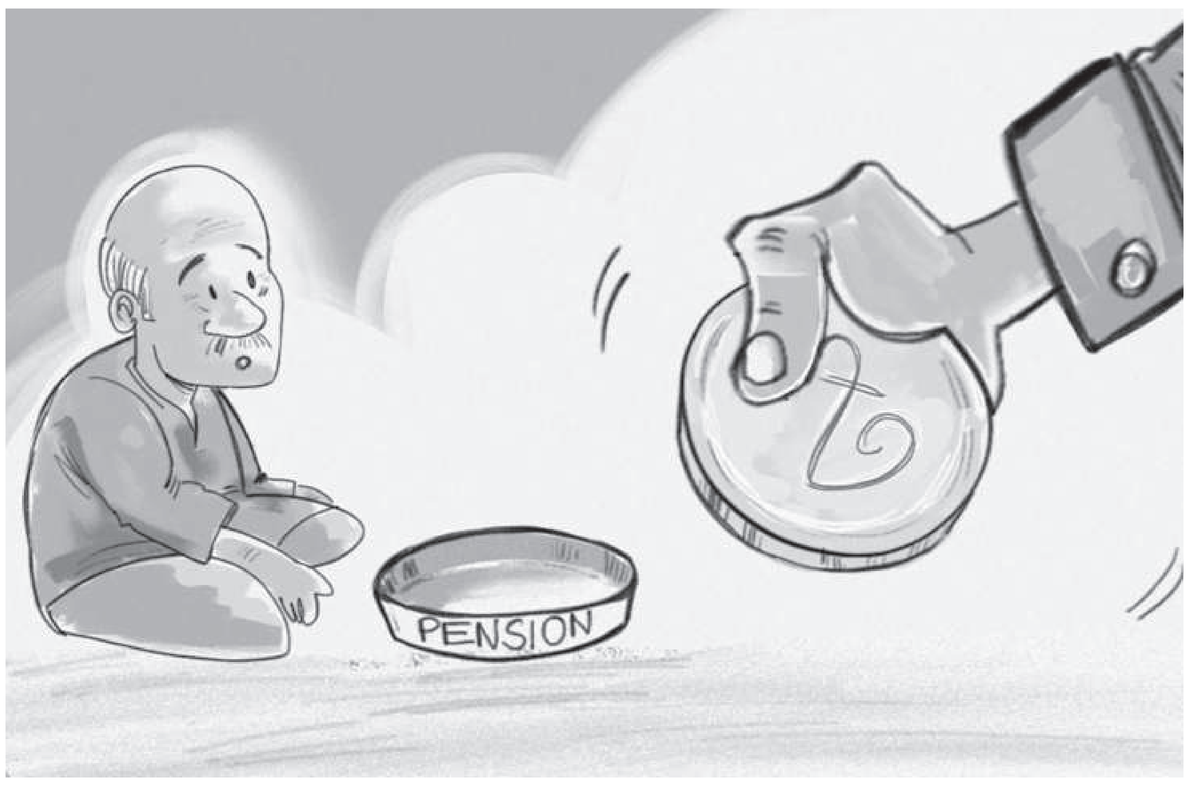
Although pension schemes are considered safe and respectable across the world, its process and significance are different in Bangladesh. Millions of government officials and their families depend on pensions to meet the expenses of the family at the end of their lives. But the process of receiving and collecting pension has never been honourable or easy. Recently, the government has taken some steps to improve this situation with its “universal pension scheme.” Although it created much enthusiasm at the beginning, the pension scheme has not proven to be universal and respectable for all. There are plenty of frustration, apprehension and discrimination in the initiative.

Firstly, the word “universal” means this pension scheme should be applicable for all citizens of Bangladesh. The artificial process of creating hierarchy between different professions is by no means universal; it is rather discriminatory. This is why the call to withdraw the notification has come from various levels, including teachers of public universities across the country.

The government has announced the universal pension scheme as an alternative to the existing system of providing post-retirement financial and social security to government employees. Whether it is people-friendly and how reasonable it is considering the financial capacity of people in this country are important questions, but what has disappointed and appalled everyone is that it is practically not universal. The scheme is not mandatory for some government bodies and sectors, especially bureaucrats. The outline of the new scheme and the notification says that those who will join the employment of self-governed, autonomous, state-owned, statutory or homogeneous organisations from July 2024 will be compulsorily added to the scheme. However, keeping certain professions out of its purview is not an indication of universality. To exclude the people of any profession from the scope of this scheme means either to deprive them, or to place them above all others.

The military, judiciary and bureaucracy have been exempted from this so-called “universal” scheme. While new employees joining the service of self-governed, autonomous and state-owned organisations after July 1 will be compulsorily covered under the “Prottoy” scheme of public pension, benefits—including pensions—will remain unchanged for military personnel, members of the judiciary, and bureaucrats. On the other hand, public university teachers will be deprived of pension benefits in the future if they do not register for public pension.

Questions arise as to why the authorities of autonomous institutions like universities were not consulted before this decision was made. During the budget proposal for FY2024-25, it was declared that the government officials will be included in a new pension scheme called “Sebak” from July 2025. Nothing has been mentioned about the benefits of this scheme, or its difference with Prottoy. The work on Sebak has not even started. But in the case of others, Prottoy is planned to be effective from July 1, 2024. Why was this discrepancy allowed? What was the basis of this dual policy?



FILE VISUAL: **REHNUMA PROSHOON**

The scheme has been rejected by public university teachers due to such discrimination. This disparity has greatly distressed the teaching community. The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association has already demanded that the government reconsider the pension scheme. Various university teachers’ associations have made it clear in their positions that this discriminatory scheme is in no way acceptable. They argue that as a result of this, talented individuals in the future will not feel compelled to become university teachers.

Universities will suffer if this discriminatory, bureaucrat-driven and special-purpose scheme is implemented. In such a situation, teachers today are concerned with their future.

Although there was great enthusiasm in the beginning, the pension scheme has fallen into a state of collapse due to bureaucracy, ambiguity, and discrimination. Where 10 crore people were expected to come under the pension scheme, only a little over 100,000 people have registered in the first 10 months. Due to the exclusion of some sectors, it is not only the teaching community but also the public who now have doubts about this pension scheme. Moreover, when this was first presented, it was said that this scheme would not be mandatory, and that after 8-10 years when people will understand its benefits, everyone will gradually register. What is the rationale for going back on that promise making it mandatory for new employees now?

The bottom line is that any laws and facilities of the country should be made applicable to all. At the same time, these systems cannot be imposed on people, they cannot be made applicable to some and not to others. Giving special importance to one group of people engaged in running the country and giving less importance to other, equally important sectors is not right.

The government has to be proactive in implementing policies according to the needs of the nation. In order to turn public universities into knowledge-based, research-oriented educational institutions, the government should play a leading role in establishing the dignity of university teachers in society. Increasing teachers’ salaries and other benefits is related to this. The government also has to play a necessary role in ensuring that the recruitment of teachers, appointment of vice-chancellors, and promotion of teachers, etc are done in a regular manner as per regulations. At the same time, university teachers, vice-chancellors and their associates should be brought under accountability even within the autonomy.

Likewise, the policy of demeaning and demoting teachers in public universities is totally incompatible with such a noble initiative as a universal pension scheme. We welcome this public welfare initiative of the government. But the initiative should not end up causing public anguish, fear, suspicion or discrimination.

JULIAN ASSANGE’S RELEASE

Exposing the craven media stable

Binoy Kampmark
was a Commonwealth scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Australia. He can be reached at bkampmark@gmail.com.

BINOY KAMPMARK

The WikiLeaks project was always going to put various noses out of joint in the journalistic profession. Soaked and blighted by sloth, easily bought, perennially envious, a good number of the Fourth Estate have always preferred to remain uncritical of power and sympathetic to its brutal exercise. For those reasons, the views of Thomas Carlyle, quoting the opinion of Edward Burke in his May 1840 lecture that “there were Three Estates in Parliament; but in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all” seem quaintly misplaced, certainly in a modern context.

The media response to the release of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange from his scandalous captivity after pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to obtain and disclose national defence information under the US Espionage Act of 1917 provides a fascinating insight into a ghastly, craven and sycophantic tendency all too common among the plodding hacks.

Take, for instance, any number of journalists working for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, official national broadcaster and devotee of the safe middle line. One, a breakfast news anchor for the network’s meandering twenty-four-hour service, has a rather blotted record of glee regarding the mistreatment of Assange over the years.

Michael Rowland, torturously insipid and ponderously humourless, had expressed his inexpressible joy when the Ecuadorian government cut off Assange’s access to the Internet while confined to the country’s London embassy. “A big gold star to Ecuador,” he chirped on March 28, 2018. Andrew Fowler, another journalist and far more seasoned on the rise of WikiLeaks, reproached Rowland on Twitter, as the X platform was then called. “Why would silencing a fellow journalist be supported?” For Rowland, the matter was as clear as day. “That remains a disputed opinion, Andrew. Publisher and activist yes. But you put yourself in a small camp calling him a journalist.”

These points matter, because they go to the central libelling strategy of the US government’s prosecution so casually embraced by mainstream outlets. In such a generated smokescreen, crimes can be concealed, and the revealers shown to be those of bad faith. Labels can be used to partition truth, if not obscure it altogether: a publisher-activist is to be regarded more dimly than the establishment approved journalist.

The point was rather well made by Antony Loewenstein, himself an independent journalist keen to ferret out the grainier details of abusive power. When interviewed by none other than Rowland himself, he explained, with unflagging patience, the reasons why Assange and Wikileaks are so reviled by the orthodox scribblers of the Fourth Estate. WikiLeaks, he stated with salience, had confronted power, not succumbed to it.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange gestures as he arrives in Canberra, Australia, on June 26, 2024.
FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Rowland could only reiterate the standard line that Assange had admitted guilt for a “very serious offence”, refusing to examine the reasons for doing so, or the implications of it. Again, the vulgar line that Assange had “put US lives at risk” with the WikiLeaks disclosures was trotted out like an ill-fed nag. Again, Loewenstein had to remind Rowland that there was no evidence that any lives had been exposed to harm, a point made in several studies on the subject from the Pentagon to the Australian Defence Department.

The tendency is pestilential. While more guarded in his current iteration as a professor of journalism, Peter Greste, formerly a journalist for Al Jazeera, was previously dismissive in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Assange’s contributions as he was brutally evicted from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. “To be clear, Julian Assange is no journalist, and WikiLeaks is not a news organisation.” An organisation boasting “the libertarian idea of radical transparency” was “a separate issue altogether from press freedom.”

While approving the publishing activities centred on the release of the Collateral Murder video showing the killing of civilians including two Reuters journalists by Apache helicopters, and the release of the Afghanistan War Logs, the Iraq War Logs and “Cablegate,” Greste fell for the canard that the publisher did not redact names in documents to “protect the innocent” by dumping “them all onto his website, free for anybody to go through, regardless of their contents or their impact they might have had.”

There is no mention of the decrypting key carelessly included in *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange’s War on Secrecy* by its bumbling authors David Leigh and Luke Harding, or the fact that the website Cryptome was the first to publish the unredacted files ahead of WikiLeaks. There is certainly no discussion of the extensive redacting efforts Assange had made, as many of his collaborators testify to, prior to the release in November 2010.

Writing on June 25 in The Conversation, Greste displays the emetic plumage of someone who has done an about face. “It is worth pausing for a moment to consider all Assange has been through, and to pop a bottle of champagne to celebrate his release,” he writes distastefully, also reflecting on his own carceral experiences in an Egyptian prison cell. He also claims that the role of WikiLeaks, in checking “the awesome power that governments wield”, should be celebrated, while stating, weakly, that he never believed that Assange should “have been charged with espionage.”

In such shifting views, we see wounded egos, cravenness, and the concerns about an estate whose walls had been breached by a usurping, industrious publisher. By all means use the spoils from Assange and his leakers, even while snorting about how they were obtained. Publish and write about them in the hope of getting a press award. Never, however, admit that Assange is himself a journalist with more journalism awards than many have had hot dinners. In this grotesque reality, we are now saddled with a terrifying precedent: the global application of a US espionage statute endangering journalists and publishers who would dare discuss and run material on Washington’s national security.

This article was originally published on CounterPunch on June 28, 2024.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 “Beat it!”
6 Stylishly uninhibited
11 Eucalyptus eater
12 “Hello” singer
13 “As You Like It” forest
14 Craze
15 Sword-making city
17 Harris and O’Neill
18 Hydrocarbon suffix
19 Ex-GI
22 Bright beam
23 Pageant toppers
24 Zodiac dozen
25 Senator Sanders
27 Gold unit
30 City of northern Italy
31 Gorilla, for one
32 Imitating
33 Lenin’s successor
35 Missteps
38 Key
39 Fork features
40 Flower girl, often
41 Bring to bear
42 Like some communities

DOWN
1 Axel performer
2 Solar halo
3 Boo — (“To Kill a Mockingbird” recluse)
4 Out of the wind
5 Making decrees
6 Toast spread
7 Writer Tarbell
8 Swiss city
9 Moves smoothly
10 Brewing need
16 Starts
20 Like some tigers
21 Cal. spans
24 Hit letters
25 Bungle
26 Galahad’s mother
27 Pavlova’s field
28 Individually
29 Signed a lease
30 Treat, as a turkey
34 Seoul setting
36 For each
37 Retired jet

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2-4

SUNDAY’S ANSWERS

P	A	C	E	R	■	S	A	W	U	P
A	L	A	M	O	■	O	P	E	R	A
T	I	M	I	D	■	T	O	N	G	S
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JANO JOINT ACTION FOR NUTRITION OUTCOME | The Daily Star

Bridging the nutrition gap

Integrating top-down budgeting and local nutrition plans

Joint Action for Nutrition Outcome (JANO) project, implemented by CARE Bangladesh, in association with The Daily Star organized a roundtable, titled "Assessing Public Expenditure in NPAN-2 & 8th FYP" on May 16, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Dr Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker, *Deputy Country Director-Program (Acting) CARE Bangladesh*

This study, commissioned by CARE, provides an opportunity to examine how public expenditure is being used for nutrition. The JANO project, a consortium with Plan International and ESDO, funded by the European Union and Austrian Development Cooperation, is implemented directly in Nilphamari and Rangpur districts and indirectly in seven sub-districts. The project focuses on nutrition governance and the rollout of the second National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN-2).

The modifications in the multi-sectoral approach applied through the current structure are some noteworthy changes. For example, the District Nutrition Coordination Committee and the Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committee, established by the government, ensure multi-sectoral engagement by involving different ministries at the district and sub-district levels. These committees follow the second national plan of action, guided by the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council. We aim to identify future directions, including the upcoming third national plan of action and the eighth five-year plan, through this process.

Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, *Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Director, SANEM*

A group of young researchers at South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), along with myself, worked on a report on NPAN-2 and the JANO project. Our study aims to analyse investment patterns, identify financial gaps, and pinpoint challenges in health financing and NPAN-2 implementation, focusing on the project.

The government has tried to address these challenges through planning documents, notably NPAN-2 (National Plan of Action for Nutrition 2016-2025). The JANO project, within the framework of NPAN-2, proposes a different type of planning based on local-level planning involving the Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC), Upazila Nutrition Coordination Committee (UNCC), and District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC). The aim is to enhance community involvement and supplement central budgeting and planning.

The Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) plays a crucial role in monitoring, evaluation, and policy guidance for the 3M (multisectoral, multistakeholder, and multi-level) strategy in NPAN-2, requiring competent human resources and consistent budget support. Our study observed that the 3M approach applied in the Nilphamari and Rangpur regions saw an overall improvement in nutrition-related budgets in areas under these core ministries, UNCC, UDCC, and other aspects. Extending the 3M approach to other contexts would lead to better outcomes.

However, the allocated budget is inadequate compared to global standards, likely needing to triple to align with best practices. Data shows that only seven of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare projects align with NPAN-2, and the nutrition budget allocation is very small. Additionally, the implementation rate is low, with 71 percent of the allocated budget utilised.

Of 21 nutrition-related projects under the Ministry of Food, 12 have been completed, one is ongoing, and eight show no progress. Out of the nine Ministry of Agriculture projects, two are completed, five are ongoing, and two show no progress. Nutritional budgetary allocation for these important ministries is only around 2.2 crore.

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives has 76 projects, with 31 completed, 29 showing no progress, and 16 ongoing. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) and the Ministry of Education also have nutrition-aligned projects, although their allocation is not very high. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has an impressive record, but data shows less than 50 percent utilisation in some ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of LGRD.

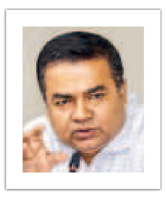
Comparing Bangladesh's nutrition profile, financial allocation, budgeting, and socio-economic status with countries like India, Nepal, Lao PDR, and Indonesia is essential to understand the current situation. Lao PDR spends significantly on nutrition-related activities. India has targeted programmes, such as the malnutrition-free initiative, covering 12 ministries and 4.8 lakh joint activities, while Nepal follows a need-based approach. Stunting is a major problem for Indonesia and Bangladesh, and Indonesia's approach to stunting reduction can be instructive.

The bottom-up approach advocated by NPAN-2 starts with the Community Support Groups (CSGs) and moves upward. However, budget disbursement in Bangladesh follows a top-down approach, limiting local autonomy. In Bangladesh, 98 percent of the budget is allocated to nutrition-sensitive programmes, with only 2 percent for nutrition-specific interventions.

Monitoring the political agenda of local representatives is also important, as political economy plays a key role. The desired partnerships and coordination between NGOs and the government are missing among NGOs and different ministries. There is also a lack of data, consistency, and flexibility in the budgeting process, which needs addressing.

Dr Syed Abdul Hamid, *Professor, Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka*

Bangladesh's nutrition policies, including NPAN and NPAN-2, outline necessary actions and budget allocations. However, implementation suffers from a lack of necessary financing and dedicated human resources. Coordination, overseen by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) at the district level and the union chairman, is hampered by their existing workload and the need for constant reminders. While infrastructure development is prioritised, human and social development—such as nutrition, health, and education—remains underfunded and overlooked. Addressing these issues requires increased offices, human resources, and a focus on the cultural and social importance of education, health, and nutrition.



Dr Shyamal Kumar Roy, *Division Chief (Lab.), IPHN*

In 1974, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emphasised improving nutrition by establishing the "Pushti Parishad Council." Effective implementation of the 3M approach through increased personnel at district, upazila, and union levels can drive significant progress. DCs cannot manage all tasks alone; dividing responsibilities and scheduling meetings efficiently is crucial. Currently, per capita expenditure in the health sector is low, and it is even lower in the nutrition sector. This needs to change. Adequate human resources and clear role definitions are essential. We need a proper budget to hire and assign people effectively.

Md Abdul Mozid, *UP Chairman, Kursha Union Parishad, Kaunia, Rangpur*

In Rangpur, traditional dishes like 'sholka' and 'shajne pata bharta' have gained recognition for their nutritional and medicinal benefits, thanks to JANO's initiatives. However, human resource constraints hinder the realization of our aspirations across all 21 villages under my purview despite our best efforts.

I urge policymakers to expand JANO's initiatives nationwide and consider additional support through dedicated departments or NGOs to address nutritional deficiencies effectively.

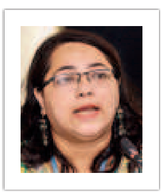
Dr Nusrat Zahan Mithen, *Deputy Director, Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC)*

A 2019 study with BNNC reviewed today confirms that recommendations from 2019 to 2024 remain consistent, indicating we are on track. To achieve our objectives efficiently, we must address issues such as data deficiencies and incorrect portals, and accelerate our efforts.

In Nilphamari and Rangpur, local income-generating activities related to nutrition have led to self-sufficiency, a model worth replicating nationwide. We must develop NPAN-3 through learning from NPAN-2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Nutrition should be a top priority for the government to achieve SDG, FYP, and NPAN-2 goals.
- Budgetary allocations for the nutrition sector should be increased, properly utilized, and aligned with local-level nutrition plans.
- Dedicated human resources should be employed, particularly at the local level, for the effective implementation of nutrition programmes.
- Engaging community members, from local pharmacists to religious leaders, to raise awareness about nutrition is crucial.
- Conducting nutrition expenditure tracking and promoting transparency among stakeholders are vital.
- Continuous monitoring and reliable data collection are vital for effective planning and resource allocation.
- Decision-making power must be decentralised to understand the needs at the grassroots level.
- New media should be explored to raise awareness.



Masuma Chowdhury, *Nutrition & Gender Specialist, FAO*

Despite our focus on nutrition, we have not put any emphasis on the health and well-being of farmers, who are the key figures when it comes to ensuring nutrition for the entire country. During my time at FAO, I observed a lack of budget allocation for farmers' well-being. This should have more focus in our planning and discussions. Previously, NGOs like UNICEF funded projects to measure children's well-being, but such funding has dwindled.

Dr Mohammad Mahmudul Hasan, *Programme Manager, BRAC*

Implementing a digital system that integrates nutrition and agriculture into a telecommunication toll-free hub would enable people to call with any queries related to these topics. Additionally, promoting lifestyle modification through awareness-building campaigns can effectively address nutrition-related issues.

Amit Dey, *Manager Food Security, Action Aid Bangladesh*

Instead of focusing on importing fertilisers, we should employ more resources to develop local sources, such as vermicompost. Subsidies primarily benefit fertiliser consumption, favouring wealthier farmers, despite the greater contribution of small farmers to nutrition-related fields.

Ineffective implementation due to capacity limitations within departments and ministries prioritises project completion over quality. Nutrition garden funds disproportionately benefit men despite our women's significant nutritional contributions. Shifting this mindset is crucial for enhancing our nation's nutritional landscape.

Syed Md. Nuruddin, *Advisor, CSE – PLAN International Bangladesh*

The loss in the nutritional sector in our country is substantial, amounting to almost BDT 2 Billion, according to WFPO. The well-being of individuals in society is more closely related to social dynamics and available resources than to institutional setups. We need to shift our investment towards social mobilisation, an area currently receiving minimal budget allocation. Knowledge dissemination fosters sustainability, and investing in this area now can maximise the benefits of our demographic dividend.

Professor Dr. AQM Shafiul Azam, *Director of Planning and Development, Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education (DSHE)*

The introduction of "health and well-being" in our curriculum aligns with the issue of nutrition and the prime minister's directive to create smart citizens for the future. It covers the issues of nutrition, health and soft life skills to lead a better life. "Better health, better education," is the motto we believe in. However, coordination among the nine ministries dedicated to this issue is lacking, leading to sporadic initiatives with incomplete follow-through. Currently, almost half of the budgetary allocation remains unutilised, despite the government's best intentions. We need to figure out a way to coordinate and create a chain effect with our work.

Md Shahidul Alam, *ndc, Director General (Additional Secretary), FPMU*

People from all walks of life must internalize the notion of good food and good health. On this, people with influence can be the examples of their healthy lifestyles for ordinary people to follow their footsteps besides creating awareness among them.

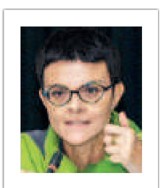
Our honourable prime minister has emphasised the need to increase investment in the food sector, build food banks, and raise awareness, especially youth engagement, to combat this crisis. The State is already working on 'Nutritious food for all'.

Quality over quantity in budget allocation is crucial, supplemented by private investments. Despite challenges, we have progressed significantly, ranking 81st in the 2023 hunger index, whereas our neighbouring India and Pakistan stand at 111th and 102nd respectively. Individual awareness of consumption and social event food protocols are essential. The government's food-based dietary guidelines could be a great source of information on consuming nutritious food. Cohesion among bodies and aligned goals, coupled with mindset shifts, are paramount for holistic progress.

Dr Hasan Shahriar Kabir, *Former Director General and Deputy Director of Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC)*

Our goal for NPAN-3 is to learn from NPAN-2's shortcomings and enhance those areas. Planning at the local level is crucial. Nutrition should be integrated into lifestyles at the union level, with a gender-sensitive approach to empower women, who are crucial to food security and nutrition. We can get a lot of people to volunteer for this issue owing to our culture of community-dependency.

We aim to implement a real-time tracking system for local budget allocation and spending, improving coordination among NGOs with a bottom-up approach. If we streamline the projects and operations of multiple NGOs with a bottom-up approach, we will get better outcomes. NPAN-3 will be people-oriented, focusing on community needs and past lessons to shape a better future.



Margherita Capalbi, *Programme Manager – Agriculture and Rural Development, Food and Nutrition Security, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh*

Having been in the country for three years, I believe there should be more collaboration among different governmental departments. This increased collaboration can enhance nutrition sensitivity, thanks to the efforts of all stakeholders involved. The Joint Action for Nutrition Outcome (JANO) has made significant contributions in this regard.

The nutrition community in the country is vibrant and growing. Implementing a mandatory reporting system for nutrition budgeting could be beneficial. Such a system would align with the recommendation for a public expenditure review, promoting transparency across departments and organisations.

Aamanur Rahman, Chief of Party, Thrive *Activity, CARE Bangladesh*

NPAN2 will expire in 2025, and we need to identify the key takeaways from this plan for NPAN3. The Country Investment Plan 3 will also expire in 2025, and we have emphasized the importance of a resilient, nutrition-sensitive food system in that plan as well. There are some key focus areas for NPAN3 and CRP that we can consider. Battling anemia and child obesity are two of the fifteen health indicators where Bangladesh is lagging, so we should prioritize these issues in the next plan.

There are inconsistencies in the costing of NPAN2, and we need to address those and determine the costing for NPAN3. Some food and nutrition-related work can be decentralized to the union level, with the central government providing policy-related support. In addition to projects, revenue channels, awareness building, and relevant human resources can be strengthened to achieve better outcomes. The budgetary allocation must reflect local-led demands. Lastly, mobilizing efforts to halve per capita out-of-pocket health expenditure from $64 to $30 by 2030 is imperative for goal attainment.

Tanjim Ferdous, *In-charge of NGO and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star*

Over the past two decades, media has significantly shaped health communication, notably in preventing diarrhoeal deaths through campaigns promoting oral saline use. We were successful in bringing social behavioural changes and raising awareness through media intervention and campaigns. However, over time, similar initiatives have decreased, necessitating renewed funding to revive them.

Mahbubur Rahman, Research Director (Production & Early Warning) at FPMU; Aniruddha Roy, Assistant Director at WAVE Foundation, Right to Food; Salahuddin A. Bablu, Business Editor at SA TV and Vice President of Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF); Dr. Sharmind Neelopal, Professor at the Department of Pharmacy, BRAC University; Saiqa Siraj, Country Director at Nutrition International; and Sekender Ali Mina, Joint Secretary Democratic at Budget Movement, also spoke at the event.

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Copa America
USA vs Uruguay
Live from 7:00 am
LPL
Galle vs Jaffna
Live from 3:30 pm
Euro
Romania vs Netherlands
Live from 10:00 pm
Austria vs Turkey
Live from 1:00 am
(Wednesday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
First round
Live from 4:00 pm

Will BCB's World Cup 'discussions' make any difference?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to sit down for a board meeting today to discuss the just-concluded T20 World Cup performances. Such meetings, however, have barely contributed to an improved show in global events.

Apart from World Cup performances, which are routine discussions following ICC or other major events, BCB will also discuss the appointment of an international contractor for a new stadium alongside other matters.

"There is also a standard procedure that after the Bangladesh team returns from playing any major ICC or ACC event, the performances are discussed," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told reporters yesterday regarding the meeting.

"It's a routine matter and there are also financial matters to discuss regarding the structure of Game Development and Ground and Facilities. Mainly those are the areas that are to be prioritized," he added.

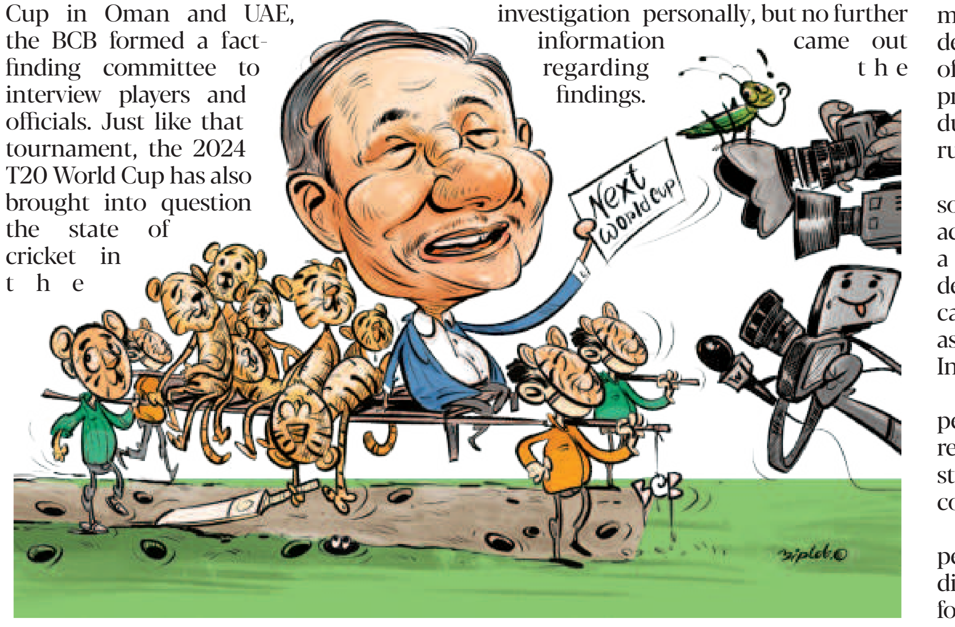
The board remains content that the Tigers were able to make it to the second round of the tournament, the Super Eight stage, beating Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Netherlands to secure their berth from a tough group. However, the Super Eights revealed the gap in quality the team has with the big sides in mega events.

Bangladesh did not show the approach required to take the attack to the stronger teams at the tournament, failing miserably against Australia and India before falling to Afghanistan in their final game, with the fragile batting sticking out like a sore thumb.

Such performances may be scrutinized and discussed internally. BCB, however, has not been able to ensure those investigations bore fruit. In 2021, after the debacle in the T20 World Cup in Oman and UAE, the BCB formed a fact-finding committee to interview players and officials. Just like that tournament, the 2024 T20 World Cup has also brought into question the state of cricket in the country.

Back then, BCB president Nazmul Hassan had said that the committee found nothing significant. He, in fact, had remarked, "What can you do if the players say there's nothing wrong with the coach?"

It showed that there is a need to find scapegoats because perhaps the then coach Russell Domingo was not to their liking. Nazmul had then curiously suggested that he would conduct an investigation personally, but no further information came out regarding the findings.



The 2023 ODI World Cup debacle will be remembered not only for poor performances but also because another investigation committee was formed, which interviewed many players and officials, but the findings were once again not made public. The result was null. In fact, BCB directors had also told this newspaper that they have not seen the investigation report.

There is a general notion that BCB may not get to the bottom of the batting debacle, or what caused the charges of coach Chandika Hathurusingha to prematurely give up on semifinals dream during the Afghanistan match for it might ruffle a few feathers of its own.

First and foremost, BCB must initiate some soul-searching to reflect and accept its own wrongdoings in forming a necessary pipeline, as evidence by the dearth of options in the Tigers' squad -- carrying an off-form batter in Afif Hossain as a travelling reserve -- in USA and West Indies around the past month.

As another discussion follows on performances, will BCB this time be relieved with having made the second stage, or will they form another probe committee just for the sake of it?

If the matters at hand related to performance are not discussed freely by the directors, ultimately, the seeds of success for the next world event will not be sown.

U19 coach Naveed looks beyond World Cup success

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) reappointed Naveed Nawaz -- the ICC Under-19 World Cup winning coach with Bangladesh -- last month for a second stint, hoping to develop new talents and form another successful batch.

In his first stint, Naveed nurtured a team that won the world title in South Africa in 2020 and youngsters like Towhid Hridoy and Shoriful Islam from that side have already made their mark in international cricket.

Given Bangladesh national team's current difficulty in producing results in ICC events, perhaps following the template that served the U19 team so well could be an option.

Naveed's U19 team played several matches in foreign conditions leading up to the World Cup and their preparation served them well in the tournament.

Thus, when Naveed, who arrived in Mirpur yesterday to officially take over, was asked whether the U19 template can be followed in the national team, he felt there was a case for it.

"I am sure [template can serve BCB]. All the planning that's going on, there is room for that," the Sri Lankan told The Daily Star following his press conference.

However, Naveed sees difficulty in devising a programme just like the U19s due to the ICC FTP calendar and sees value in the team touring abroad and allowing players to play franchise cricket in other countries.

"That's something [playing abroad or taking part in franchise cricket] that people have improvised with and thought about on what they want to do and which areas they want to develop," said Naveed, who rejoined the Bangladesh U19 team following his stint as Sri Lanka national team's assistant coach.

The U19 team's success in South Africa is arguably Bangladesh's greatest achievement in cricket. However, Naveed did not want to get buried under expectation.

"Me coming back after having won a World Cup in 2020, of course there is expectation. I think I have to focus on other things rather than something that passed four years ago. Tournaments are not won just because you have won it in the past," said Naveed at yesterday's press conference.

But above all, he spoke about the need to nurture talent, using leg-spinner Rishad Hossain as an example who couldn't make the cut in the U19 World Cup winning squad in 2020 but made a great impression in the recent ICC T20 World Cup.

"You got to work on technical and mental issues, you can't hold onto them [problems] for long. That's something BCB will be looking to do at in their HP and age-group programmes.

"Look at him [Rishad] now. It's important that U19 is running well but it's also important that we look after the bigger group of our players as well."

Ecuador braced for 'another final' against Argentina

REUTERS

Ecuador are preparing for "another final" at the Copa America after advancing to a quarterfinal match-up against defending champions Argentina, head coach Felix Sanchez said on Sunday.

Ecuador finished level with Mexico on four points after the teams drew 0-0 in Group B but Sanchez's side secured a place in the knockout stages thanks to their superior goal difference.

Venezuela advanced as group winners while Mexico and Jamaica were eliminated.

Argentina had a solid start to their title defence, with their forwards Lautaro Martinez and Julian Alvarez scoring all five of their goals in the group stage. With skipper Lionel Messi out injured in their final group game against Peru, Argentina faced no problem as Martinez's brace paved way for smooth sailing and showed the reigning world champions are productive even without their magician Messi.

"We know it is an unmatched opponent, and we know how tough it's going to be," Ecuador coach Sanchez was under illusions about the scale of the take they face in the last eight against Group A winners Argentina at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas on Friday.

"It is yet another final for us, and we will try to compete against the world's champion and the world's best team ... I believe that our team is going to be extremely motivated to play a good match."

Brazil await 'great test' in Colombia clash

REUTERS

Five-time World Cup champions Brazil and in-form Colombia meet in North California on Tuesday in a highly-anticipated Copa America clash with more than just the Group D lead on the line.

Colombia are arguably the hottest team in the Americas with an impressive streak of 10 consecutive wins and undefeated in their last 25 matches.

Their last defeat was over two years ago, a 1-0 loss to Argentina which effectively ended their 2022 World Cup qualification hopes.

Colombia fired manager Reinaldo Rueda and brought back Nestor Lorenzo, a former Argentine player who worked for several years as Jose Pekerman's assistant when he was in charge.

Lorenzo injected a new energy to a talented but ageing group, managing to bring out the best version of experienced players like James Rodriguez, Jhon Cordoba, and Johan Mojica who most thought were passed their prime.

The rise of Richard Rios, Jhon Arias, and Jefferson Lerma gave Colombia the balance they needed, their run including wins over Spain, and Germany and a dramatic fightback against Brazil when winger Luis Diaz scored a late brace to secure a shock win days after Colombian guerrillas freed his kidnapped father.

Playing an attractive style of attacking football with a relentless pace and physicality, Colombia started the Copa America by beating Paraguay and Costa Rica and topped the group with a draw against Brazil.

Beating the five-time world champions would send a statement that South America has a new force to be reckoned with.

"I know our fans are excited and who am I to give advices to people's emotions. We are also excited, so let's enjoy it," Lorenzo said after his team beat Costa Rica 3-0 on Friday.

Brazil are struggling after a heartbreaking penalty defeat by Croatia in the 2022 World Cup quarterfinals.

Under the guidance of new manager Dorival Junior, Brazil's Copa America debut was disappointing -- a goalless draw against Costa Rica that was their fifth straight competitive game without a win, their worst run in 23 years.

They bounced back with a 4-1 win over Paraguay thanks to a stellar performance by forward Vinicius Jr., who showed why he is a strong contender to win the Ballon d'Or after guiding Real Madrid to a LaLiga-Champions League double.

"Colombia are a stone in our shoe which we're going to try to get it out of our way in the next game," Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes told a press conference on Sunday.

"They have a lot of players who can decide things individually, they're a very physical team, good to play against. This is the Brazilian national team shirt we are talking about.

"It's going to be a great test for us, a great game that we want to win to finish first (in the group). That's what is required when you wear Brazil's shirt."

Wary Dutch look to recalibrate

REUTERS, *Hamburg*

The Netherlands might have emerged from a disappointing performance in the group phase of the European Championship with a favourable pairing but they will be wary of Romania when they meet on Tuesday in Munich in the round of 16.

The Dutch finished third in their group after losing to Austria in Berlin, but it could have turned out a lot worse after they avoided a potential meeting with England and got Romania in the first knockout round.

Romania are 40 spots below seventh-placed Netherlands in the FIFA rankings and have won only two of 19 games played in six Euros finals appearances.

Romania have also only won once in 14 past meetings against the Dutch, losing 10. Their sole success was a Euro 2008 qualifier, won 1-0 in Constanta.

There will be no inferiority complex, however, from Romania, who have little to lose and face a struggling Dutch side trying to find some sort of rhythm after tepid showings in Germany.

There has been much soul-searching from the Netherlands after their three games, with captain Virgil van Dijk making an astonishing admission that perhaps they had over-estimated their own ability.

Romania, who topped Group E with four points, made an impressive start with a 3-0 win over Ukraine but lost 2-0 to Belgium and topped the group despite drawing against Slovakia.

Defensive discipline is the cornerstone of coach Edward Iordanescu's on-field approach, and he has worked hard off-field, too, in order to create a positive team spirit and instil self-belief among his players.

The Dutch, whose defence were sloppy against Austria, will be wary of the quick counter-attack, with Denis Dragus the lone target man.

Romania are without left back Nicusor Bancu who is suspended after collecting two yellow cards.

Dutch coach Ronald Koeman's own concerns will be about his midfield where Joey Veerman was unceremoniously replaced after 35 minutes in the last game.

A return to the line-up for the speedy Jeremie Frimpong is likely but calls for a switch to a back five, as employed under Louis van Gaal at the World Cup in Qatar where they got to the last eight, were rejected by Van Dijk.

Forward Cody Gakpo has scored twice and Memphis Depay once in the tournament and substitute attacker Wout Weghorst has often proved to be the man for the big occasion when needed.

Playing in the back of Dutch minds, however, will be what happened three years ago at the last Euros when they were similarly fancied to beat the Czech Republic in the last 16 in Budapest but suffered an ignominious exit.

Winner of this tie will be facing either of Turkey or Austria, who will face off in the other round of 16 game today.

Imranur to sprint in Paris

SPORTS REPORTER

Sprinter Imranur Rahman has become the country's third athlete to participate in the upcoming Paris Olympic Games, slated to run from July 26 to August 11.

World Athletics, the international governing body, confirmed Rahman's participation through a wild card entry to the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) on Monday.

England-born Imranur, the country's record-holder fastest sprinter, will be embracing the world's highest competition -- the Olympics -- for the first time.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) first provided a wild card to rifle shooter Robiul Islam while recurve archer Sagor Islam secured a direct entry by reaching the semifinals during the Final Olympic Qualification tournament in Turkey.

Bangladesh Swimming Federation has requested a wild card for swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi.

If the IOC confirms the participation of Rafi, Bangladesh will have a four-member athlete team for the Paris Olympic.

Third seed Carlos Alcaraz endured an early test in his Wimbledon title defence yesterday but the Spaniard quelled the challenge of Estonian qualifier Mark Lajal in straight sets, 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 6-2, moving into the second round.

PHOTO: **AFP**

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The corrupt will face music

Says PM; cabinet okays proposal to form company to run Padma Bridge

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said corrupt people will have to shoulder the responsibilities of their deeds.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is an independent body and it will investigate into allegations of corruptions following its own process, she said.

Speaking to her cabinet colleagues during an unscheduled discussion after a cabinet meeting yesterday, Hasina said action would be taken against the corrupt people regardless of their identities, a cabinet member told The Daily Star quoting the PM.

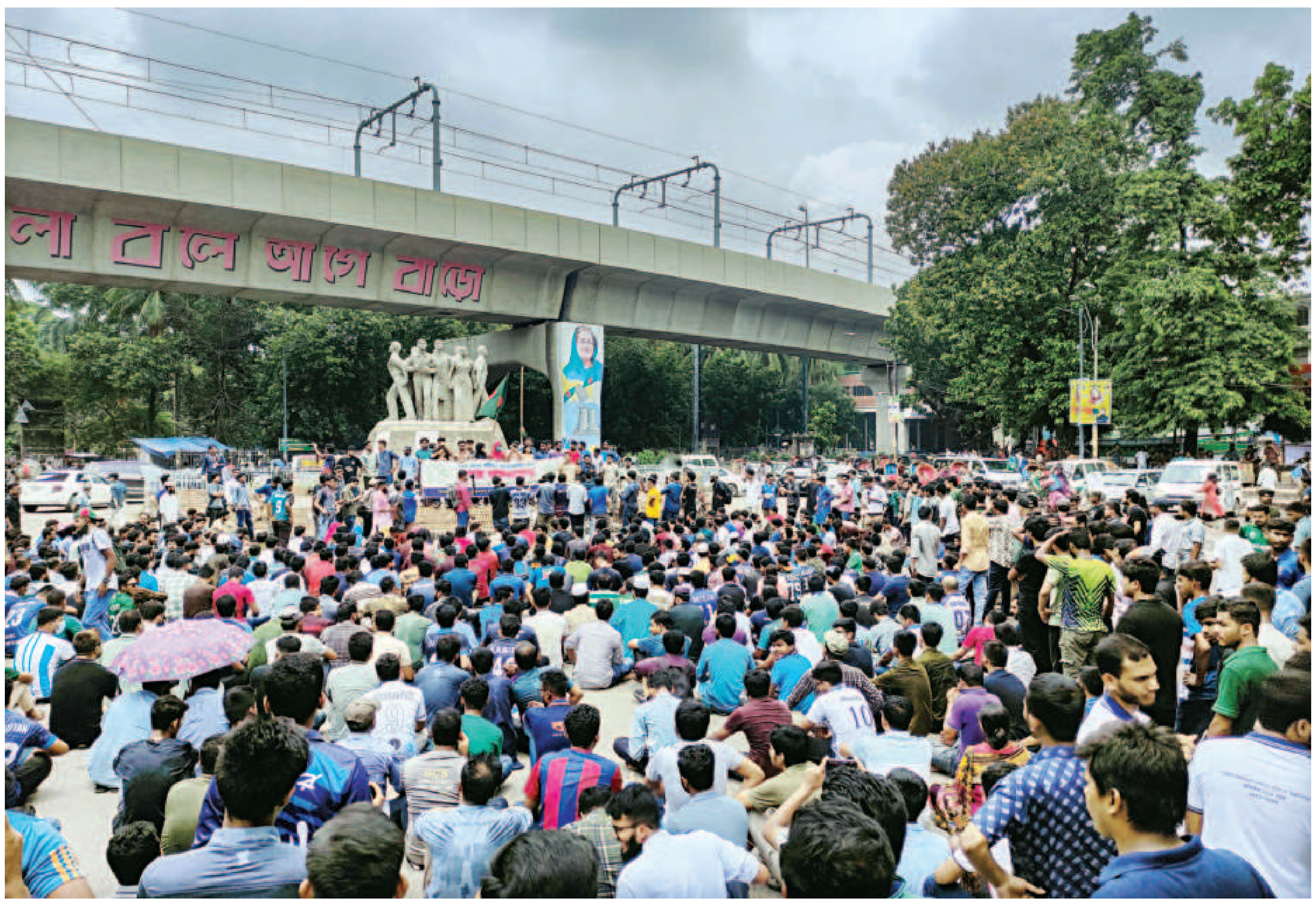
The meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office in the capital's Tejgaon.

Hasina directed the cabinet members to bring forward the wrongdoings of the previous BNP-led alliance government.

She said that people have forgotten those wrongdoings, including the 10-truck arms haul, the huge hauls of ammo and explosives in Bogura's Kahalu and Dupchanchia upazilas, and the recovery of arms in Cox's Bazar's Pekua.

The premier said it is time now to bring those incidents before the people.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Students of Dhaka University under the banner of "Students against Discrimination" stage a demonstration in TSC area yesterday demanding reinstatement of the 2018 government circular that scrapped the quota system in civil service. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Power supply from Adani plant resumes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electricity supply from a unit of the Adani power plant in India's Jharkhand resumed yesterday after 60 hours of disruption, according to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB).

Technical glitches halted power supply from the 1,496-megawatt coal-fired Adani plant on Friday morning.

PDB spokesperson Shameem Hasan told The Daily Star that the unit resumed its production around 7:45am.

"Now it is producing more than 500 megawatts of electricity," he said around 11:15am.

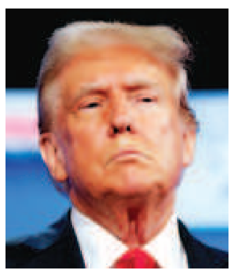
Earlier, the PDB officials said the Adani authorities found a leak in a valve of the circulating water pump of the plant, which is why they forcibly shut down the unit of the plant.

Another unit of the plant went into routine maintenance during the Eid holidays, which is supposed to resume this week.

Trump has immunity for official acts

US top court rules

REUTERS, *Washington*



The US Supreme Court yesterday found that Donald Trump cannot be prosecuted for official actions taken as president, but can for private acts, in a landmark ruling recognising for the first time any form of presidential immunity from prosecution.

The justices, in a 6-3 ruling written by Chief Justice John Roberts, threw out a lower court's decision rejecting Trump's claim of immunity from criminal charges involving his efforts to undo his 2020 election loss to Joe Biden.

The court's six conservative justices were in the majority and its three liberal justices dissented.

"We conclude that under our constitutional structure of separated powers, the nature of presidential power requires that former president have some immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts during his tenure in office," Roberts wrote.

"At least with respect to the president's exercise of his core constitutional powers, this immunity must be absolute. As for his remaining official actions, he is also entitled to immunity," Roberts added.

Roberts said Trump's case will be sent back to the lower courts for further review.

Explain VAT claims against S Alam firms: HC to NBR

AG office says firms don't want to pay VAT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of government's demand for unpaid VAT and the consequent fines of over Tk 7,000 crore from S Alam Vegetable Oil Ltd and S Alam Super Edible Oil Ltd.

On June 9, the Customs, VAT & Excise Commissionerate, Chattogram in its adjudication orders asked the two companies to pay Tk 3,538 crore in "evaded VAT", Tk 3,531 crore in fines, and interest on the amounts, to the state coffers within 15 work days. Customs said the value added tax was evaded in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2021-22.

Yesterday, the HC in two rules asked the respondents as to why the VAT determination orders -- issued by the commissioner of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Hamas ally fires rockets into Israel

Most launches intercepted; Israeli tanks advance in north, south of Gaza

REUTERS, *Gaza*

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad group fired a barrage of rockets into Israel yesterday, in an apparent show of force as Israeli tanks pressed their advance deeper into Gaza amid fierce fighting, residents and officials said.

The armed wing of Islamic Jihad, an Iranian-backed ally of Hamas, said its fighters fired rockets towards several Israeli settlements near the fence with Gaza in response to "the crimes of the Zionist enemy against our Palestinian people".

The volley of around 20 rockets caused no casualties, according to the Israeli military. Most launches were intercepted. But it showed the group still possess rocket capabilities almost nine months into Israel's offensive it says is aimed at neutralising threats against it.

» Arab mediators' efforts to secure truce stalled

» Israel conducts operation in Tulkarm in West Bank

In some parts of Gaza, Hamas fighters continue to stage attacks on Israeli forces in areas that the army had left months ago.

Yesterday, Israeli tanks deepened their incursions into the Shejaia suburb in eastern Gaza City for a fifth day, and tanks advanced further in western and central Rafah, in southern Gaza near the border with Egypt, residents said.

The Israeli military said it had killed a number of fighters in combat in Shejaia yesterday and found large amounts of weapons there.

Hamas said that, in Rafah, its fighters lured an Israeli force into a booby-trapped house in the east of the city and then blew it up, causing casualties.

Also in Rafah, the Israeli military said that an airstrike killed a Hamas fighter who fired an anti-tank missile at its troops.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,900 people have been killed during nearly nine months of offensive. The toll includes at least 23 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

FRENCH ELECTION

Parties rush to build anti-far right front

Second round of voting July 7

REUTERS, *Paris*

France's political parties rushed to build a united front aimed at blocking the path to government of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) yesterday, after it made historic gains to win the first round of a parliamentary election.

The RN and its allies won Sunday's round with 33 percent of the vote, followed by a left-wing bloc with 28 percent and well ahead of President Emmanuel Macron's centrists, who scored just 20 percent, official results from the interior ministry showed.

While financial markets rallied on relief the RN tally

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

France edge Belgium to move into quarters

AFP, *Düsseldorf*

Jan Vertonghen's late own goal took France into the quarter-finals of Euro 2024 on Monday as they edged Belgium 1-0 in a tense tie in Duesseldorf.

France had dominated the last-16 clash but their profligate finishing looked set to force extra time until they finally found a way through with five minutes left.

Substitute Randal Kolo Muani collected the ball inside the Belgian penalty area and hit a shot that was going wide until a deflection off the unfortunate Vertonghen took it past goalkeeper Koen Casteels.

The lucky break sent the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Super-sub forward Randal Kolo Muani screams in ecstasy after his strike led to a late own goal to help France scrape past Belgium with a 1-0 win in the teams' Euro 2024 last-16 encounter in Dusseldorf yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

India replaces colonial-era criminal laws

Critics say new laws could create confusion

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India replaced colonial-era criminal laws with new legislation yesterday, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government said would make the country more just, but the opposition said risked throwing the criminal justice system into disarray.

The new laws were approved by parliament in December in Modi's previous term with the government saying they aim to "give justice, not punishment". It says they were needed as colonial laws had been at the core of the criminal justice system for more than a century.

Among the key changes is replacement of the sedition law frequently used as a tool of suppression, after its enactment under British colonial rule to jail Indian freedom fighters.

Under the new laws - which replace the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure - sedition is replaced with a section on acts seen as "endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India".

"About 77 years after independence, our criminal justice system is becoming completely indigenous and will run on Indian ethos," India's Home (interior) Minister Amit Shah told reporters. "Instead of punishment, there will now be justice."

Criminal cases registered under the repealed laws before yesterday will continue to follow them, Shah said,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

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REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 161 | ASHAR 19, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 26, 1445 HIJRI | 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

Govt may let its employees trade in shares

Says draft amendment to government servants rules

BAHARAM KHAN

The public administration ministry is likely to allow government employees to trade in the share market, a reversal of a decades-old rule.

The ministry sent a draft amendment to the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, to the law ministry, which vetted and returned it, sources said.

Upon approval from relevant authorities, government employees will be able to buy or sell primary shares or bonds of any company registered with the share market. They, however, cannot indulge in such activities during office hours, according to the draft this correspondent has seen.

Under the existing rules, government officials are not allowed to engage in trading of stocks.

The government has been trying to amend the existing Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, for six years, but could not finish the job.

Recently, the move has gained momentum. It comes at a time when some government officials' alleged corruption was reported by the media.

> **"If the government employees are allowed to buy and sell in the stock market, corruption will increase manifold."**
>
> **FIROZ MIA**
> former bureaucrat

Although government employees are not allowed to trade in the share market, many of them are doing so, claimed sources in the ministry.

NBR official Matiur Rahman, who has recently come under the scanner amid controversy over his huge amount of wealth, has allegedly made a fortune investing in the stock market.

Sources in the Cabinet Division and the public administration ministry said Matiur's case shows how people with influence over public institutions can become a money-making machine.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

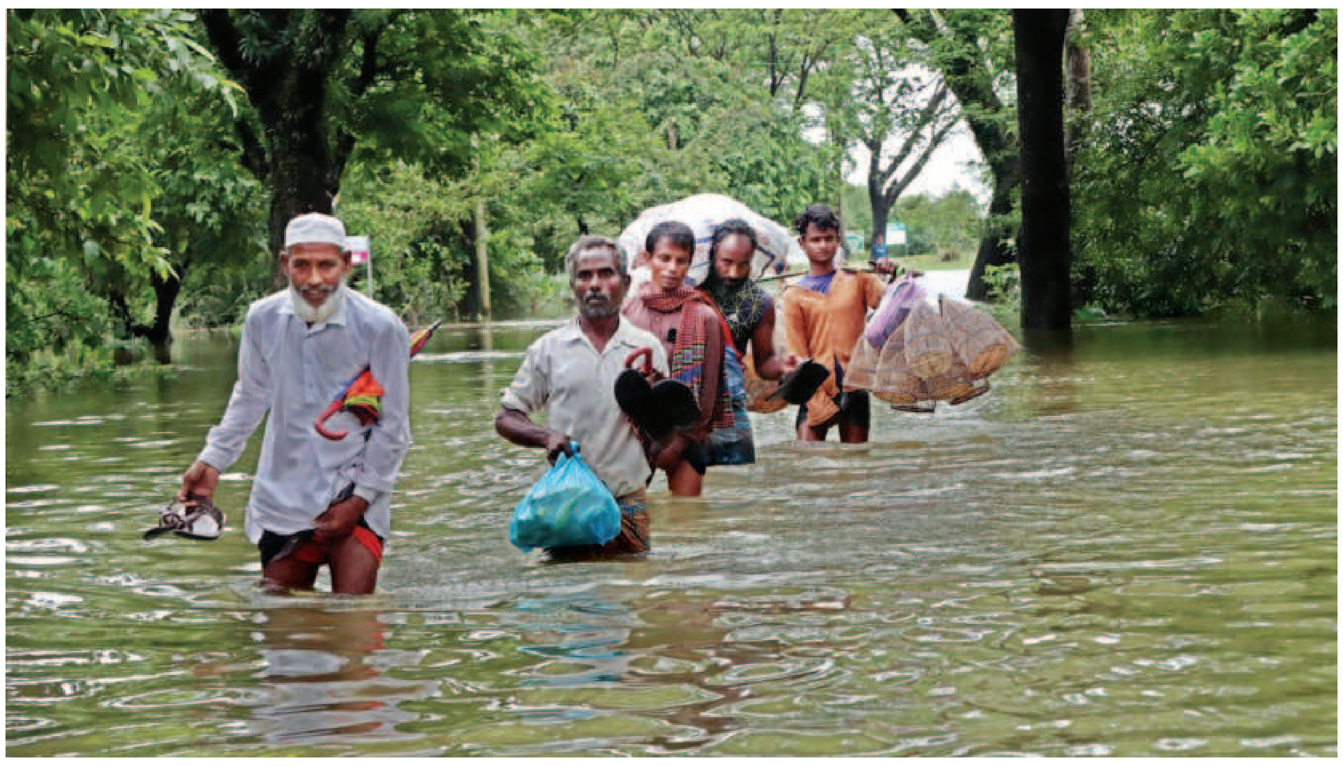

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

People wading through over knee-deep water on a flooded road in Salutikar area in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila yesterday. Due to the floods caused by heavy rain, vast areas of several upazilas in the district have gone under water, while the road communication between Gowainghat, Companiganj and Sylhet Sadar upazilas have been snapped. Story on page 12.

MPs blast govt for sorry state of banking sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three lawmakers in parliament yesterday blasted the government for the sorry state of the banking and financial sector.

Jatiya Party MP Hafiz Uddin Ahmed and independent lawmakers Pankaj Nath and Hamidul Haque Khandker said large companies were getting interest waivers on lame excuses. Bangladesh Bank cannot exercise its power to this end.

The lawmakers made the comments joining the discussion during passage of the "Payment and Settlement Bill-2024".

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali did not respond to the criticism.

Pankaj Nath highlighted the report of a national daily on the interest waiver of four companies.

He said, "Tk 6,497 crore interest was waived for four institutions ... Special approval of Bangladesh Bank was required. I will not go into details; I will not say the organisations' names."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Public universities slip into turmoil

Teachers carry on work abstention over pension, reject authorities' explanation on new scheme

STAR REPORT

Teachers, officials and staffers of public universities abstained from work for the second straight day yesterday over pension benefits, dragging on the stalemate in the activities of the higher educational institutions.

They rejected the explanation put forward by the pension authorities on the new Prottoy scheme of the universal pension system.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali yesterday termed the teachers' indefinite strike "unreasonable".

Teachers refraining from work at 35 public universities since Monday under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) yesterday demanded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina step in to solve the crisis.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

RETIREMENT AGE WILL BE RAISED IN 'PROTTOY' SCHEME -- PAGE 2

Load shedding despite lower demand

10,000MW sitting idle for fuel shortage, maintenance

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Though the electricity demand has dropped with the onset of monsoon, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) is struggling to supply adequate power due to a shortage of gas and other fuel supply and maintenance works.

The demand for power during the monsoon months is about 15,000 megawatts, down from 17,000MW. But PDB is straining to supply even the reduced demand despite having the generation capacity of 26,364MW.

In the last couple of days, PDB has been supplying around 13,000MW to 14,000MW of electricity, according to generation data.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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Retirement age will be raised in 'Prottoy' scheme

Says National Pension Authority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will amend the retirement age-related provision of the new pension scheme Prottoy, said the National Pension Authority.

The retirement age of teachers is 65 but the scheme's provision stipulates that beneficiaries will start receiving pension from the age of 60. So, the government will bring necessary changes to the provision of the scheme, the authority said in a press release yesterday.

The press release was issued to clarify several issues related to the Prottoy scheme that was launched in March for the employees of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory and similar organisations.

"Employees get a fund against lamp grant and PRL [post-retirement leave] on the basis of their earned leave and they will get it as usual," it said.

A subscriber to Prottoy will get pension throughout his lifetime. If the person dies, a nominee will get the pension for up to 15 years after starting to receive pension.

A subscriber to Prottoy will get pension throughout his lifetime. If the person dies, a nominee will get the pension for up to 15 years after starting to receive pension.

For instance, if a pensioner dies after receiving pension for five years, the nominee will get pension for 10 years, the press release added.

All the provisions of the new pension scheme will apply to those who joined work after July 1, 2024.

The non-contributory pension system is increasing the expenditures of the government day by day and that is why this system is not sustainable. Neighbouring India also started a contributory pension system in 2004, the National Pension Authority said.

A man running across the rail track near Narayanganj's Chamber Road, with an incoming train just a few feet away. Meanwhile, multiple makeshift shops stand dangerously close to the tracks, raising the possibilities of accidents. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Halving food waste can reduce hunger for 153m people

Say OECD, UN's food agency in a joint report

AFP, *Paris*

Halving food waste could cut climate-warming emissions and end undernourishment for 153 million people globally, the OECD and the UN's food agency said in a joint report yesterday.

Around a third of food produced for human consumption gets lost or wasted globally, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) -- resulting in useless emissions and less available food for those who need it.

By 2033, the number of calories lost and wasted between produce leaving farms and reaching shops and households could be more than twice the number of calories currently consumed in low-income countries in a year, the report warned.

Cutting in two the amount of food lost and wasted along the journey from farm to fork "has the potential to reduce global agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by four percent and the number of undernourished people by 153 million by the year 2030," according to the report.

"This target is a highly ambitious upper bound and would require substantial changes by both consumers and producer side," they added.

Agriculture, forestry and other land use account for around one-fifth of global human-induced greenhouse gas emissions.

UN nations have committed to cutting per capita food waste by 50 percent by 2030 as part of sustainable development goals but there is no global target for reducing food loss along the production supply chain.

Between 2021 and 2023, fruit and vegetables accounted for more than half of the lost and wasted food given their extremely perishable nature and relatively short shelf life, according to the report.

Cereals followed, accounting for over a quarter of lost and wasted food.

The FAO estimates that approximately 600 million people will be facing hunger in 2030.

"Measures to reduce food loss and waste could significantly increase food intake worldwide as more food becomes available and prices fall, ensuring greater access to food for low-income populations," the report said.

GRAFT BY GOVT OFFICIALS

Cabinet secy to sit with secretaries tomorrow

BAHARAM KHAN

The cabinet division yesterday called a meeting with all government secretaries at 4:30pm tomorrow and allegations of corruption against government officials is likely to be one of the topics of discussion.

The meeting agenda encompasses five issues, including integrity and good governance, implementation of the electoral manifesto and the national budget.

An additional secretary, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star, "The cabinet secretary wants strict measures against corruption and irregularities in the ministries and divisions. There are some examples of pardoning officials even after the allegations of corruption against them were proven. He may give specific directives on these issues."

The meeting is taking place at a time when corruption allegations against government officials are widely discussed inside and outside the parliament.

Sources said the corruption issue is likely to dominate the meeting, which will be chaired by Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain. They added that the Government Servant Conduct Rules-1979 is likely to be discussed.

JAILBREAK

Bogura jailer removed from post

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

The jailer at Bogura District Jail, from which four death row convicts escaped briefly on June 26, has been removed from his post.

Jailer Faridur Rahman Rubel has been closed and attached to the DIG prison office in Rajshahi following an order of the Directorate of Prisons on Monday night, Anower Hossain, jail super of Bogura prison, told the Daily Star.

In Rubel's place, Syed Shah Sharif of Rajbari District Jail has been transferred to Bogura, said Anower.

Earlier, four prison guards, including Deputy Jailer Hosenuzzaman, were suspended for negligence in duty over the escape of four prisoners. A departmental case was also filed against three other prison guards.

Early on June 26, four death row convicts escaped by making a hole in the roof of a condemned cell. They were caught after one and a half hours by the police.

Two separate probe bodies are investigating the matter.

Govt may let its employees trade in shares

FROM PAGE 1

His case is simple yet intriguing. He entered the share market with insider information, an unlawful practice as per the capital market regulations, to mint money, they said.

"If the government employees are allowed to buy and sell in the stock market, corruption will increase manifold. There are both profits and losses in the speculative market. If an employee incurs losses, that employee may tilt towards corruption. Such an opportunity should not be given at all," former bureaucrat Firoz Mia told The Daily Star yesterday.

Government servants cannot lobby lawmakers, high officials, and political or non-political personalities, who have relationships with the government, to get direct or indirect benefits.

The draft now includes a provision that they cannot even send any electronic message to get any favours.

Officials said the use of electronic messages was mentioned in the draft to block a way of lobbying.

The draft said government servants can be candidates, if the rules allow and upon approval from the appropriate authorities, for posts in non-political organisations.

It also said they cannot join any protest programme violating rules, and they cannot make any statement to the media on behalf of any organisation without any approval.

Officials said if the draft is finally approved with this provision, government employees would require permissions for holding any press conference.

The draft forbids government servants from directly or indirectly visiting any foreign mission or aid agency to get invitation for travelling abroad or to avail training abroad.

As per the existing rules, government employees are not barred from becoming members of any recreational clubs.

Citing the "Boat Club", a high official said the incident involving actress Pori Moni embarrassed the government as a high-ranking official was the president of the club.

A provision has been included in the draft so that government employees cannot be members of clubs where people indulge in "unethical activities".

Sources said the existing rules do not specify what government employees can or cannot do on social media.

However, the draft said the government can take action against its employees if they violate the "Government Employee Discipline and Appeal Rules-2018".

Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain said the draft was at the final stage, but there would be some changes.

"... I can say that a modern and time-befitting code of conduct will be formulated," he said.

Load shedding despite lower demand

FROM PAGE 1

At least 10,000MW of generation capacity is sitting idle due to fuel shortage or short- and long-term maintenance: 5,132MW is lost for maintenance and 4,971MW for fuel shortage.

Of the 4,971MW sitting idle, 3,152MW is for want of gas, according to data from PDB.

If the PDB wants to run all the installed gas-fired power plants, it will require at least 1,959 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcfd).

But for the past month or so, it has been getting about 950 mmcfd after Cyclone Remal damaged one of the two floating storage and regasification units (FSRU), according to data from Petrobangla. The FSRU would not be operational before July 15.

Subsequently, 36 of the 70 gas-fired power plants are now out of service.

Before Cyclone Remal, PDB was getting about 1,300 mmcfd, according to Petrobangla.

In the absence of an adequate gas supply for the power plants, the PDB was relying on coal-fired power plants. But those are generating below their capacity.

Of the three main coal-fired power plants, Rampal and SS Power are operating at half capacity at best, with only Payra in full run.

Then on June 25, the 1,496MW Adani coal-fired power plant in Jharkhand, India abruptly shut down for a technical glitch. The plant came back into operation only yesterday.

Subsequently, the PDB has to run the costly furnace oil-run power plants, which has been impacting the power generation cost, according to officials informed with the proceedings.

"We have enough power generation capacity and there should not be any more load shedding across the country. But we couldn't let that happen," said Ijaz Hossain, a former professor at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology's department of chemical engineering.

There was about 1,000MW of load shedding in different parts of Bangladesh, according to data from the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board, which supplies electricity to more than 70 percent of the subscribers, mainly in rural areas.

However, the PDB officials maintain the situation is stable.

"The weather is favourable [as the demand has dropped] -- we hope the situation will not further deteriorate," said Khandaker Mokammel Hossain, member (generation) of PDB.

The government always tries to cover up the actual situation, said M Shamsul Alam, energy advisor to Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

"Rather, they should admit the crisis and act accordingly," he said.

The gas supply situation is as bad as ever and unexpected situations have arisen too, said Hossain, the former BUET professor.

"We have to use high-cost furnace oil or diesel to keep the power supply normal and this is increasing the generation cost amid the dollar crunch. We had enough time to replace the high-cost fuel with renewables, but that did not happen. We need to rethink the whole situation more intensively," he added.

The government was never able to import as much fuel required to the power plants to meet the country's demand, said Alam, also the dean of Daffodil International University's faculty of engineering.

"They have just raised the power generation capacity without proper planning or demand analysis, which was highly required. We didn't follow any standard practice -- we have no policy either," he said.

For instance, sending so many power plants into maintenance at once is unusual, he said, adding that there were times when overloaded plants were put into operation and scheduled maintenance was postponed to meet the demand.

All the maintenance works should have been pre-scheduled and in rotation.

"It should not be done when power demand is high... this is just an excuse. We couldn't pay the fuel bills. We couldn't pay the plants' bills due to the dollar crunch. We have only taken loans from the donors and cleared dues with bonds. In the upcoming years, the loans will be paid. What will be the situation then, I can't imagine."

Public universities slip into turmoil

FROM PAGE 1

FBUTA Secretary General Nizamul Hoque said that they would request the prime minister to listen to their demands.

"The finance ministry has issued the circular [on the new pension scheme] and they might not amend it. So, we are requesting the prime minister to meet our demands," he told The Daily Star.

Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association, said, "Why such a discriminatory pension scheme was imposed on the teachers suddenly? The teachers will never accept this."

Staffers of the 35 universities under the banner of Inter University Officers Federation also continued work abstention yesterday demanding reinstatement of the previous pension system. This led to a halt in all administrative activities at those higher educational institutions.

Teachers have been demonstrating since May 26 protesting the government decision to include all officers and employees, joining the service of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or similar organisations and their subordinate institutions on or after July 1, 2024, under the Prottoy scheme.

University teachers said that under the current system, no money is deducted from their basic salary for pensions, whereas the new scheme mandates a 10 percent deduction from the basic salary or Tk 5,000.

Teachers currently receive a one-time gratuity after going into retirement, but there is no mention of this facility in the new scheme. These two changes will eventually reduce the financial benefits of the university teachers who would join service on or after July 1, 2024.

Terming the new pension scheme discriminatory, teachers said that many people will not take up teaching at universities if the new scheme is implemented.

They also demanded a separate pay scale for university teachers and inclusion of professors in the pay grade equivalent to that of a senior secretary.

DEMO AT DU

All classrooms and libraries were closed at Dhaka University yesterday. Skipping classes and exams, teachers held a sit-in in front of the arts faculty building for about an hour.

Speaking at the sit-in, DUTA leaders said the teachers of 35 public universities have rejected the Prottoy scheme. They alleged that some vested quarters were spreading propaganda over the teacher's movement.

Addressing the demonstration, Nizamul rejected the explanation of the pension authority.

"We have logic behind our demands and the government will have to pay heed to it. We will accept our inclusion in the Sebok scheme [to be launched next year for government employees] if it is made universal [for teachers and government employees]," he said.

The National Pension Authority issued a statement yesterday and said that the government will amend the retirement age-related provision of the Prottoy scheme.

Boycotting administrative activities, staffers under the banner of Dhaka University Karmakarta Karmachari Oikya Parishad took out processions on the campus yesterday. They also staged sit-ins in front of the administrative building and the central library.

In Barishal, at least 10 people were injured after two officers' organisations of Barishal University brawled over taking part in a human chain protesting the introduction of the Prottoy pension scheme.

Witnesses said officers under the banners of Direct Officers Association and Barishal University Officers Association exchanged heated words over standing in the human chain. At one stage, they scuffled and threw plastic chairs at each other.

No classes and exams were held at the DU, BUET, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong, Jagannath and other universities. The university authorities either kept the transport service suspended or significantly reduced trips to and from campuses.

MPs blast govt for sorry state of banking sector

FROM PAGE 1

The lawmaker said the state-owned bank Janata Bank was dying and that the status of private bank NBL was poor.

Criticising the interest waiver, he said natural calamities, death of borrowers could be the reason for waiving interest. But nothing happened, not even a disaster. Interest has been waived on dubious and lame excuses.

Without mentioning the name of former NBR official Matiur Rahman, Pankaj said the name of a controversial person is being discussed every day for his alleged corruption. One person holds three to four important positions. The controversy over his political identity started 15 years ago.

He enquired who recommended his name for these important positions.

While discussing the bill, JP MP Hafiz Uddin Ahmed said PK Halder had left for India with money. Many companies are bankrupt today. It is not clear whether those who deposited in the leasing company he was in will get their money back, he said.

Hafiz Uddin said Bangladesh Bank cannot exercise its power. The bank has become like a frog's umbrella. The condition of 10-20 banks is fragile.

Lawmaker Hamidul Haque Khandker said when it comes to our financial institutions and banks, everyone panics.

Ex-additional IGP, wife own Tk 30cr

FROM PAGE 12

Shamsuddoha has been named in the two charge sheets, while Ferdowsi has been included in a charge sheet.

On November 21, 2019, ACC Deputy Director Shahin Momtaj lodged a case against Shamsuddoha and another one against Ferdowsi, bringing allegations of hiding wealth information and amassing illegal wealth.

One of the two charge sheets said Shamsuddoha illegally acquired wealth worth Tk 2.87 crore and concealed wealth information worth 8.44 crore.

"Ferdowsi amassed wealth worth Tk 27.48 crore beyond known sources of income, while she concealed information of wealth worth 28.47 crore," investigator Khorshed said in another charge sheet.

Shamsuddoha abetted his wife in her acquiring the illegal wealth, the investigator added.

He started his career as assistant superintendent of police on August 28, 1986. Shamsuddoha became an additional IGP in 2011 and worked as BIWTA chairman from September 1, 2011, to February 28, 2015, according to the probe report.

"During his service, the former IGP misused power and accumulated a huge amount of assets beyond known sources of income. His wife Ferdowsi has a huge amount of wealth though she is a homemaker," it also said.

"Shamsuddoha claimed that he earned Tk 2.5 crore as salary, various allowances and from farming. He made a profit of Tk 1.5 crore after investing Tk 2.5 crore. He also got Tk 70 lakh from land sale. But he did not provide the ACC with any documents in favour of his claim," the investigator mentioned in the probe report.

In one case, the investigator appealed to the court to issue an arrest warrant for Shamsuddoha.

His wife Ferdowsi is on bail.

The charge sheets are likely to be placed before the judge of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka today, a court staffer told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Protests against quota intensify

STAR REPORT

Students from various universities in Bangladesh intensified their protests against the recent High Court decision reinstating the quota system in government jobs.

As part of the protests, hundreds of Dhaka University students blocked the Shahbagh intersection for an hour yesterday afternoon.

Beginning around 3:45pm, slogans filled the air as protesters blocked traffic from Bangla Motor to Shahbagh, causing significant congestion in Bangla Motor, Shahbagh, Science Lab, and Kakrail areas.

They left the intersection around 4:45pm.

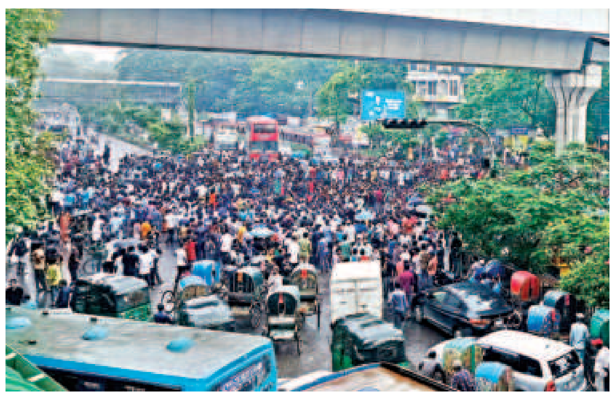
Nahid Islam, one of the organisers of the "Boishommo Birodhi Chattrra Andolon", said, "We have resumed protests as our ultimatum ended on June 30."

Asif Mahmud, one of the organisers, demanded reinstatement of a 2018 circular that initially abolished the quota system.

"After that, if the government wants, they can reform quotas gradually in a logical way rather than a blanket reinstatement," he added.

Earlier, the students assembled at the Central Library

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Students block traffic at Shahbagh protesting reinstatement of quota system. PHOTO: STAR

Take advance preparation for floods: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina instructed authorities to prepare for more potential floods this year, following discussions at an Executive Committee of the National Economic Council meeting held at the NEC auditorium in Sher-E-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

After the meeting, Planning Minister Abdus Salam said, "Based on weather analyses, the premier anticipates possible flooding soon. We must be ready to take necessary actions if it occurs."

Quoting the PM, Salam added, "The rainy season could persist until September, potentially disrupting project

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

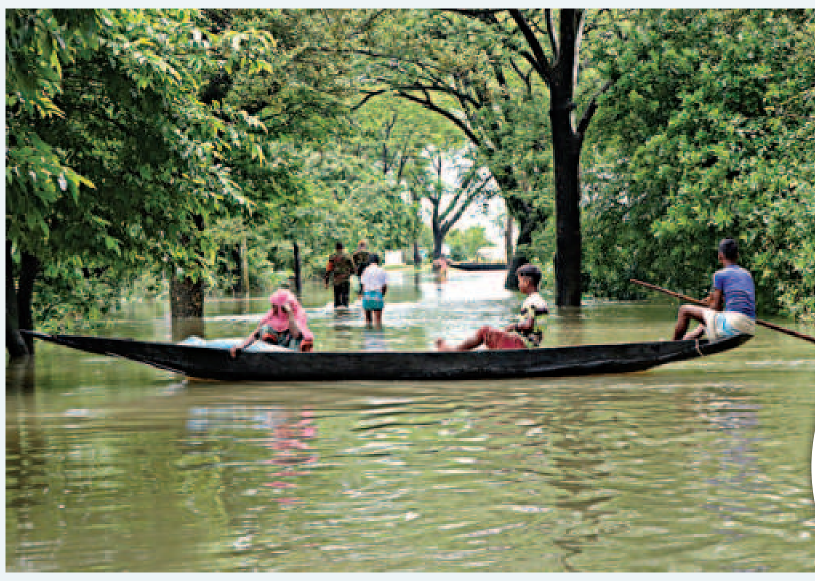


PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Under water for three weeks and counting

Haor dwellers bearing the brunt of Sylhet flood

MINTU DESHWARA, *Moulvibazar*

The houses are barely standing on bamboo poles with fences broken, other parts dilapidated, and foundation submerged under water.

Some residents have found the most elevated space within their houses to stay put, while many have taken refuge in shelters or in their relatives' houses.

This was witnessed by this correspondent when he visited Murshibadakura, Baramaidan, Durgai, Paschim Gagra, Purba Gagra, Srirampur, Hakaluki Haor areas of Talimpur union under Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar yesterday.

Many people in these areas chose to remain in their homes despite immense sufferings due to the ongoing flood which began on June 15.

Vast stretches of land have been inundated by floodwaters, especially in Hakaluki

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Flood damages 39 schools in Rangpur

KONGKON KARMAKER, *Dinajpur*

At least 39 government primary schools across Rangpur division have either sustained damages to their infrastructure or washed away due to recent flash floods and river erosion.

Of those, 11 schools were in Gaibandha, 20 in Kurigram, two in Rangpur, and six in Lalmonirhat.

The damages were caused by the rising waters of Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers in Rangpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, and Gaibandha districts since mid-June, following torrential rainfall upstream in India.

According to locals and teachers, this has been a recurring issue that results in massive financial losses to the government and disrupts the education of hundreds of children.

Officials said these schools often cannot protect their lands and infrastructure from erosion and flash floods due to close proximity with the rivers.

As such, these schools are often built with corrugated tin sheets and bamboo for easier relocation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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Javed Muneer re-elected NSU trustee board chair

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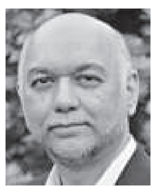


Javed Muneer Ahmad has been re-elected as the chairman of the board of trustees of North South University Trust for 2024-2025.

This announcement was made during the 13th annual general meeting of the NSU Trust on June 30, said a press release.

This marks Ahmad's second term as chairman.

A founding member of NSU, Ahmad's first tenure as chairman was for 2023-24.

Ahmad, the founding managing director of Aprosoft Consulting and Training Corp Ltd, has over 35 years of experience in the IT industry.

He also served on the boards of federally regulated non-profit organisations in the US for over 25 years, the press release added.

2 killers went to Kolkata

FROM PAGE 5

the killing.

Amanullah promised substantial financial support and arranged their passports, visas, and tickets to Kolkata, said the probe report.

Foysal and Mostafiz, both truck drivers by profession, did not have passports.

Siam, Aktaruzzaman's associate, confirmed payment for their passports and coordinated the entire process.

According to Mostafiz, they traveled from Khulna to Dhaka on April 15 to obtain Indian visas urgently.

After securing medical visas, they travelled to Khulna on April 25 and then to Kolkata on May 2, staying at a residential hotel.

On May 10, Mostafiz went to the New Town flat in Kolkata. He, alongside Jihad, Foysal, Mostafiz, and other members killed the lawmaker in the flat afterwards, according to the report.

Mostafiz and Foysal returned to Bangladesh on May 19 and visited Aktaruzzaman's flat.

They went into hiding after the victim's family filed a case with Sher-E-Bangla Nagar police, and Amanullah was arrested.

On June 26 evening, the two suspects were arrested from a temple in Chattogram's Sitakunda. They are on a six-day remand in DB custody.

DB chief Harun Or Rashid, also an additional commissioner of the DMP, said to dodge the eyes of law enforcers, they started working as cooks at the temple.

"Foysal and Mostafiz are the followers of Amanullah, a leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party. They worked as two main associates for Amanullah in the murder of the MP," he said, adding that the two were involved in different criminal activities on Amanullah's instructions.

During interrogation, they said the passports were kept at Aktaruzzaman's Bashundhara residence. Cops recovered the passports from under a mattress during a raid at the flat on June 29, as detailed in the investigation report.

Five individuals have confessed to the murder so far.

They are: Amanullah, his nephew Tanvir Bhuiyan, Aktaruzzaman's friend Celesty Rahman, and Kazi Kamal Babu, Jhenaidah AL's relief secretary.

Foysal remains in custody, while Saidul Karim Mintu, Jhenaidah AL's general secretary, is in jail.

Delay in probe

FROM PAGE 5

Maasranga Television, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar.

"The investigation into the Sagar-Runi murder case has not yet been completed even after 12 years, as such, its trial has not seen the light of day yet. Unfortunately, this case has been continuously ridiculing our criminal justice system and damaging it to an irreparable stage, which was remedied to some extent by the Bangabandhu murder case and the cases before the International Crime Tribunals," the HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Md Bazlur Rahman said in the 65-page verdict released yesterday.

On May 13 this year, the HC bench delivered the verdict following a petition filed by three death-row convicts on August 31, 2021, challenging the legality of confining them to death cells before attaining the finality of their sentence.

In the full text of the verdict released yesterday, the HC directed the authorities concerned to start immediate arrangements for shifting the prisoners from death cells to ordinary prisons and complete the process within two years.

Protests

FROM PAGE 3

around 2:30pm and marched from Nilkhet to Katabon intersection, before reaching Shahbagh.

Police were stationed in anticipation of their arrival. During the protest, students made a four-point demand, including reinstatement of the 2018 notification and merit-based recruitment.

Similarly, students from Jahangirnagar University, Barisal University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, and Islamic University, Kushtia brought out processions and held rallies in and around their campuses.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sontan Sangsad also made their stance clear, advocating for the preservation of the 30 percent quota for children of freedom fighters.

They made a seven-point demand in front of the Raju Sculpture around 10:30am.

"Since university students are unhappy with the 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters, the government can consider how it can be decreased to a more acceptable level," said Solaiman Mia, chairman of the platform.

Under water for three weeks

FROM PAGE 3

Haor and adjoining areas, with villages appearing as a vast water body when this correspondent was on his way to Murshibadkura village by boat.

To make things worse, waves from the haor are hitting the waterlogged houses, washing away soil from the bases and weakening the foundations further.

Residents were trying to protect their houses from the waves with bamboo, pieces of corrugated iron sheets, and water hyacinths.

The fear of snakes looms large at night.

"I have two daughters, and 5-6 cattle. It is difficult to navigate the waterlogged surroundings to reach the shelters. So I remained home, even though we are essentially trapped inside for three weeks. The flood situation keeps worsening," said Husna Begum, a resident of Murshibadkura village.

"No help has reached us yet. We are struggling to survive," she added.

Kamrul Islam, a fisherman from the same area, said the flood this year has been a big blow.

"We have not recovered yet from the damage caused by the 2022 flood. This year, the storm caused a lot of damage to the house. Then the flood has left us reeling. We are spending sleepless nights in fear of waves and snakes.

Somehow, I am putting food on the plate for the family by catching fish. No one can understand the difficulty poor people like us are going through," he said.

Fokhor Uddin of Baramaidan village said, "Our house got significantly damaged in the flood. It will take a lot of money to fix the house once the flood recedes."

Najratun Naeem, UNO of Barlekha upazila, said, "We have sufficient stock of food grains. Instructions have been given to ensure that no flood-affected person is left out of relief supplies."

3 IEDs from Rupganj flat recovered

FROM PAGE 5

was arrested from Cox's Bazar on Monday, and based on the information provided by her, ATU identified their hideout in Rupganj.

ATU surrounded the building, evacuated its residents, and cut power lines in the surrounding area. ATU officials assumed the recovered IEDs were made in the flat.

ATU's Bomb Disposal Unit defused one IED inside the flat, while two others were defused in an open space next to the building. Two machetes and some knives were also found inside the flat.

A case will be filed, said OC Deepak Chandra Saha of Rupganj Police Station.

Daughter killed her to conceal affair

FROM PAGE 5

Her brother filed a case with Savar Model Police Station the following day.

CID investigated for over four years, arresting three suspects but ultimately sought their exemption in a final report.

The case was then assigned to the PBI.

PBI's investigation into the murder revealed crucial evidence: a broken switchboard and a bloodstain hand mark on the wall.

"During investigation, we found out the victim was stabbed before electrocution," said Kudrat-e Khuda, PBI Dhaka district special superintendent.

The accused, Shubol, confessed to his involvement, citing affair with Selima's elder daughter, Poppy, as motive, he added.

Elora Khan Majlish, younger daughter of the victim, said, "My sister even accompanied us to the Prime Minister's Office seeking justice. We never imagined she could kill our mother."

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
ধানমন্ডি ৪/এ, ২৩১০ বর্গফুটের
নতুন ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হবে।
বিস্তারিত: ০১৯১৫-৭৯০৪১১

Request for Proposals (RFPs)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested Firms/ Organizations for the following tenders:

1) **Hire a Firm/Organization to provide implementation support for Agriculture Value Chains Work (Salt & Seaweed)- enterprises component of the ILO program: Leaving No One Behind- Improving Skills and Economic Opportunities for the Women & Youth in Cox's Bazar." (Ref: RFX_589_ROAP)**

The bidding documents can be downloaded from the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) web portal ***Procurement Notices*** at **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/239162**

The deadline for submission of the proposal is **Tuesday, July 30, 2024, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.

Vacancy Announcement for A Multinational Shipping Company in Bangladesh

A highly reputed leading Multinational Shipping Company is looking for a dynamic & self-motivated individual who can work under pressure for the location Dhaka in a state-of-art technology environment.

Job 01:
- **Position:** Senior Executive (02 Vacancies)
- **Department:** Marketing & Sales
- **Experience:** 3+ years in related field
- **Key Responsibility:**

i) Execute sales operations with a focus on assigned business trade and achieving sales targets (e.g., from Bangladesh to America/Europe). Responsibilities include regular meetings with customers, agents, and stakeholders to enhance business relationships and address operational challenges.
ii) Manage cargo space allocation efficiently to maximize vessel utilization and revenue. Select cargo based on priority, profitability, and alignment with company objectives.
iii) Coordinate with global offices on export matters, including tariff filings and rate negotiations. Ensure compliance with international trade regulations and company policies.
iv) Generate and manage comprehensive service contracts for Exports from Bangladesh. Negotiate contract terms to ensure profitability and adherence to service level agreements.
v) Implement trade strategies to optimize service offerings and enhance market competitiveness.
vi) Provide analytical support to team, aiding in data-driven decision-making processes. Utilize advanced analytics tools to interpret data and present insights.
vii) Monitor performance metrics, analyze results, and recommend process enhancements.
viii) Keeping track of volume forecast to address equipment shortages and optimize resource utilization.

Job 02:
- **Position:** Executive (03 Vacancies)
- **Department:** Customer Service & Documentation
- **Experience:**1+ years in related field
- **Key Responsibility:**

i) Prepare Export Bill of Lading (B/L) as per Shipping Instruction
ii) Send B/L draft to respective shipper and obtain confirmation or correction prior sending DTX
iii) Take care of Shipping Instruction status and Sending DTX against assigned FDR
iv) Responding to customers emails regarding Documentation queries
v) Any other tasks assigned by HOD

Job 03:
- **Position:** Executive (01 Vacancy)
- **Department:** Finance & Accounts
- **Experience:**1+ years in related field
- **Key Responsibility:**

i) Accounts Receivables voucher preparation and matching
ii) Accounts Payables voucher preparation
iii) Money Receipt preparation using company system
iv) Disbursement of salary to employees of Dhaka office.
v) Collecting & checking Export Bank certificate from customer service dept. & sending it to Chittagong Office.
vi) Checking Bank statement
vii) Maintaining all type of Cash Transaction

Benefits:
- **Salary:** As per company policy (negotiable for really deserving candidate)
- **Benefits:** The company provides industry standard various benefits and facilities.
- **Working Hours:** 9:30am – 5:30pm(Sunday – Thursday)
- **Location:** Dhaka.
- **Skill development:** On-job training, seminar, conference, meetings (physical/ online) may be arranged regular basis at home country or away.

Qualification:
- **Education:** Ideal candidate should have a master's degree preferably in Business/ Commerce. Educational qualification can be relaxed for deserving candidates.
- **General Skill:** In-depth understanding and hands-on work knowledge of container shipping business. Candidate should be proficient in English, should pose sound knowledge on MS Office, be able to use various customized software, apps, on-line based contents.
- **Competencies:** The individual should play vital role in a team while must have tenacity to lead. Result oriented for achieving target, innovative to new ideas, adaptability to changing environment, quick to learn are other qualities.

Apply with confidence if you like the challenge of working in a competitive environment.
Please send your CV in pdf format within 20/07/2024 at: hrad730613@gmail.com

Take advance

FROM PAGE 3

work. She emphasised completing preliminary paperwork now to ensure full-scale project implementation after September."

Senior Secretary of the Planning Division, Satyajit Karmakar, echoed the PM's concerns, noting an expected rise in rainfall and river water levels, suggesting a heightened risk of flooding in August nationwide.

Karmakar said the PM directed civil and field administrations to prepare adequately to mitigate flood impacts and protect citizens.

During the meeting, 11 projects were approved, with a combined estimated cost of Tk 5,459.87 crore.

Of this amount, Tk 5,214.34 crore will be funded by the Bangladeshi government, Tk 140.44 crore from project assistance, and Tk 105.09 crore from organisational funds.

Among the approved projects, seven are new initiatives, while four involve revisions.

Flood damages

FROM PAGE 3

"Patilbari Primary School had to be relocated three times in the past year due to erosion," said Mahbubur Rahman, headteacher of the school in Saghata upazila of Gaibandha.

Abdul Malek, headteacher of the school in Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila, said, "Bhati Borail Govt Praimary School has been vulnerable to Teesta's erosion over the past one and half years. We have continuously contacted the LGED department for relocation. Recently, the school has been relocated."

Authorities of Gujimari and Khamar Damarhat government primary schools in Kurigram's Ulipur did the same.

"Kurigram saw the most schools damaged in floods and erosion in the division, affecting at least 1,300 students," said Md Amir Hossain, primary education officer in Ulipur upazila.

Contacted, Muzahidul Islam, deputy director of Primary Education Department in Rangpur, said they are working on alternative measures to compensate for the academic losses.

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Progoti Foundation for Education and Development
Permanent Sanad Holder

Join East West University: Be a Mentor for Future Leaders

Vacancy Announcement

East West University, a leading Private University and an equal opportunity employer, invites applications for the following full-time positions:

Position: Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

Number of positions: 01

The CTO serves as a strategic leader for the Information and Computer Services (ICS)/IT department and oversees the development, implementation, and management of all technological undertakings/tasks of the university. The CTO plays a key role in shaping the university's technological direction, driving innovation and technology initiatives aligning with the university's mission and objectives, and ensuring the security of the systems. The incumbent CTO will report to the Vice Chancellor of the University.

Salient Responsibilities:
- As Chief of ICS/IT department, engaging and aligning all stakeholders with a shared vision to achieve the strategic objectives for the technological advancement of the university.
- Advise on the technological needs of the university in the fast-changing IT environment.
- Collaborating with internal stakeholders such as students, faculty members, and university administration to realize their needs, goals, and expectations.
- Build effective communication with relevant external stakeholders while adopting or implementing updated technologies/methodologies in the global context.
- Overseeing software development processes and optimizing as and when necessary.
- Implement and maintain the university's technology infrastructure and ensure the security of infrastructure components.
- Identifying and evaluating potential vendors and partners for technology-related products or services.
- Monitoring vendor performance, negotiating contracts, and ensuring compliance with agreed-upon terms and deliverables.

Essential Criteria:
- Minimum B.Sc. in CSE/CS/IT from a reputable university.
- M.Sc. or post-graduation in a related field is preferable.
- About 10 (ten) years of professional experience with at least 5 (five) years as a System Administrator.

Desirable Criteria:
- Experience in the technical lead (Software Development), IT-enabled service (preferably in Academia), and data management are preferable.
- Relevant professional certifications will be a key advantage.

Age: Maximum 50 (fifty) years. The age limit may be relaxed in the case of exceptionally qualified candidates.

Position: Advisor, Department of Students' Welfare and Head, Career Counseling Center

Number of positions: 01

The Advisor of the Department of Students' Welfare and Head of the Career Counseling Center at East West University plays a pivotal role in preparing students for successful careers and supporting their overall well-being. The incumbent executive will be responsible for building and maintaining relationships with local employers to facilitate job placements for the graduates. S/he will also work closely with the students to enhance their co-curricular activities supported by various student clubs. The incumbent executive will report to the Vice Chancellor of the University.

Main Functions of the Post: Students Welfare
- Serve as the primary point of contact for students seeking guidance on co-curricular and non-academic club activities.
- Collaborate in the planning and execution of social events and activities tailored to student interests and preferences.
- Offer compassionate support to students facing social or emotional challenges, providing resources and assistance as needed.
- Offer expert advice, guidance, and oversight to ensure the effective coordination and monitoring of students' co-curricular and club activities.
- Continuously update the database of the alumni of the graduates of the university.

Career Counseling
- Develop and maintain relationships with local employers to create job opportunities for the graduates.
- Assist students and new graduates in securing internships and placements relevant to their fields of study and career aspirations.
- Coordinate on-campus recruiting events, job fairs, and other career-related events to connect students with potential employers.
- Conduct outreach to potential employers and identify new partnerships to increase job opportunities for the graduates.
- Act as a liaison between employers, students, and faculty to ensure successful job placements.

Socio-Psyche Counseling
- Supervise and manage the daily operations of the Socio-Psyche Counseling Center.
- Ensure that counseling services are delivered efficiently and following established protocols and ethical standards.
- Maintain confidentiality and security of student records and information. Collect and review counselors' reports to monitor trends, identify areas for improvement, and assess the effectiveness of counseling services.

Essential Criteria: Master's degree from a reputable university with no third class/division in any examinations. S/he should have about 15 (fifteen) years of experience in a senior-level administrative position in Universities/ Private organizations/Govt./Semi Govt. In addition, s/he should possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills in English and Bangla and sound IT knowledge with proficiency in modern computer applications.

Desirable Criteria: Preference will be given to candidates with experience in soft skills training, student development, and university-level career counseling.

Age: Maximum 50 (fifty) years. The age limit may be relaxed in the case of exceptionally qualified candidates.

* Please apply through East West University website (**jobs.ewubd.edu**) attaching all academic results, copies of academic and experience certificates and a passport size photograph. Or,

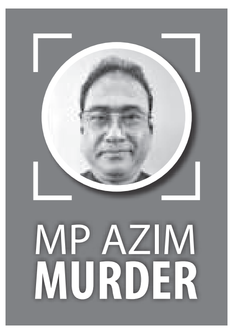
Send your application with a complete CV including all academic results, copies of academic and experience certificates and one passport size photographs to the **Vice Chancellor, East West University, Plot-A/2, Jahurul Islam Avenue, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Dhaka-1212**

Application Deadline: 25 July 2024

‘2 killers went to Kolkata on medical visa’

Says DB in report to court

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER**



Foysal Ali Sahazi and Mostafizur Rahman Fakir travelled to Kolkata on a medical visa to murder Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar.

Aktaruzzaman, mastermind of the killing mission, arranged their bank statements, medical documents, and other papers required for visa application through Siam Hossain, another suspect.

The two stayed at Aktaruzzaman’s flat in Bashundhara, Dhaka, from April 15 to 24, to submit their visa applications at Jamuna Future Park’s Indian Visa Centre, according to a report submitted to the court by the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Mahfuzur Rahman, the investigation officer, disclosed this information after investigating Mostafizur.

Mostafiz said in late March, he and Foysal contacted Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, for money needed for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

‘Waste of time, money to place such a bill’

MPs criticise placement of trade, tariff commission bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was passed in Parliament yesterday to further amend Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission Act, 1992.

The amendment bill was placed to change the name of the “secretary” post of Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission to “director”.

State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu moved the bill, and it was passed by voice vote, however, multiple lawmakers criticised it.

Jatiyo Party MP Hafiz Uddin Ahmed said the work of the commerce ministry is to control commodity prices.

If the ministry brought any law to control the market, or if they had brought any law to break syndicates, then it could be said the commerce ministry is doing a good job, said Hafiz. “It [commerce ministry] tries to control the market at times, and things become fine then. But things return to how they were after the ministry leaves.”

Independent MP Pankaj Nath said the bill is not in the interest of the people. People’s interests would be served if the Tariff Commission was tasked with determining the prices of consumer goods, daily commodities, availability in the market, coordination of imports and production and making it easy for the people, he said.

He criticised bringing the bill to parliament just to change a word, saying, “It is a waste of time and money to call 350 MPs of parliament to change the name of the position from secretary to director.”

Several people were injured after two separate officers’ organisations of Barisal University clashed over taking part in a human chain against the Universal Pension Scheme yesterday afternoon. The incident took place near the administrative building. Teachers and employees of public universities went on an indefinite strike over pension benefits from Monday, paralysing universities across the country. PHOTO: TITU DAS

New curriculum, same old craze for guidebooks

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Despite government efforts to promote a new curriculum focusing on critical thinking, guide books aligned with the old memorisation-based approach continue to dominate book markets.

As subject-based six-month assessments for grades six to nine are scheduled to start today, the sales of these supplementary materials have surged in recent months.

According to the National Curriculum and Textbook Board Act, only books published or approved by the board can be prescribed as textbooks in schools.

Additionally, the Book Prohibition Act of 1980 completely bans the printing and marketing of unauthorised notes or guidebooks.

While visiting several book markets in the capital, guidebooks aligned with the new curriculum were found to be displayed and openly sold.

Rashed Mia, owner of a bookstore in Farmgate, said, “Despite the introduction of the new curriculum, the demand for guidebooks remains steadfast. Parents and students regularly seek these materials.”

Another shop owner in Nilkhet said Mathematics guides for class 9 published by Panjeree Publications are being sold at Tk 430, English at Tk 360, and History and Social Science at Tk 320, among others.

Guidebooks are similarly prevalent in book markets across Rajshahi, Kushtia, Jhenidah, Khulna, and several other districts, as found by our local correspondents.

Jahurul Islam, a parent in Jhenidah, said, “My children find it challenging to grasp the curriculum, and often teachers are not supportive. So, we purchase guidebooks.”

A teacher from Rajdhani High School in the capital said the new curriculum has the potential to reduce students’ reliance on guidebooks, but it would take time.

“Until then, parents will continue seeking such resources, as the guidebooks offer additional chapters and exercises for their children,” the teacher added.

Even different online platforms are selling guidebooks of major publishers like Panjeree, Lecture Publications, and Royal Publications.

This newspaper reviewed an English guidebook for class nine, spanning 558 pages.

Upon analysing several chapters, it was observed that each chapter begins with instructions for students, teachers, and guardians.

The guidebook provides step-by-step guidance on how students should approach activities after studying a topic in the original textbook.

It also includes additional examples, questions, and answers relevant to each subject.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

Prof Moshiuzzaman, acting chairman of NCTB, said, “Regulations alone cannot eliminate guidebooks from the market. What we need is a systematic change, which is exactly what the new curriculum aims to achieve.”

“When parents realise that guidebooks offer limited support unless students engage in class activities or assignments, their demand will naturally decline,” he added.

MURDER OF EX-MP’S WIFE

Daughter killed her to conceal affair: PBI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shubal Kumar Roy, an electrician by profession, was a frequent visitor to former MP Shamsuddoha Khan Majlish’s house.

He engaged in an affair with the lawmaker’s daughter, Shamima Khan Majlish alias Poppy.

When MP’s wife Selima Khan Majlish came to know about it, she restricted Shubal’s entry to the house.

In response, Poppy allegedly stabbed her mother to death to conceal the affair, then attempted to stage the murder as an accident by electrocuting Selina with Shubal’s assistance.

Banaj Kumar Majumder, the chief of Police Bureau of Investigation, yesterday confirmed the arrests of Shubal, Poppy, and house help Aarti Sarkar in connection with the murder, which took place 13 years ago.

On June 14, 2011, Selima was found injured at her home in Savar. She died at Combined Military Hospital on June 18.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Delay in probe ‘ridiculing’ our justice system: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The delay in investigation and start of the trial of Sagar-Runi murder case “has been continuously ridiculing our criminal justice system and damaging it to an irreparable stage”, observed the High Court in the full text of a verdict.

Sagar Sarwar, who was the news editor at

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল
২০৩, শহীদ সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম সরণী
পুরাতন ৮৬ বিজয়নগর, ঢাকা-১০০০।

সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গত ২৮ জুন ২০২৪, শুক্রবার THE DAILY STAR পত্রিকার পৃষ্ঠা নং ৮ এ বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিলের একটি বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়। বিজ্ঞপ্তির ৮ নং লাইনে “ মাত্রাতিরিক্ত ঔষধ প্রয়োগের ফলে রোগীর মৃত্যু হয়” বাক্যটি বাদ যাবে। বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য বক্তব্য অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

Hossain
ডা: মো: লিয়াকত হোসেন
রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল

Anti-Terrorism Unit of Police cordons off a building in Narayanganj’s Rupganj yesterday during a drive at a militant hideout. PHOTO: STAR

3 IEDs from Rupganj flat recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

Anti-Terrorism Unit, a specialised unit of Police, yesterday recovered three improvised explosive devices (IED) from a flat of a four-storey residential building at Narayanganj’s Rupganj upazila and defused them later through explosion.

ATU started the drive at 10:30am, which lasted six hours.

Mohammad Sanowar Hossain, SP (Operation) of ATU, said, “The flat was rented by militants as a hideout. Two men and one woman, along with two children, were living in this flat for a few months. Those three adults have connections with Ansar-Al-Islam.”

However, ATU didn’t reveal their names.

Md Shahnewaz, a tenant of the building, said, “The building’s owner is a Saudi expatriate. The flat was rented out to a couple a few months ago.”

Sanowar said a female Ansar-Al-Islam member

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 3

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
চীফ কমার্শিয়াল ম্যানেজার (পূর্ব) এর কার্যালয়
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম।

নং- ৫৪.০১.১৫০০.১০৭.০৫.১১৬.২৪-৮২৩
তারিখঃ ০২.০৭.২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।

অনবোর্ড সার্ভিস পরিচালনার জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (সংশোধনী - ০১)

ঢাকা-সিলেট-ঢাকা রুটে চলাচলকারী ৭০৯/৭১০ নং 'পারাবত এক্সপ্রেস' ট্রেনের এবং চট্টগ্রাম-ঢাকা-চট্টগ্রাম রুটে চলাচলকারী ৭২১/৭২২ নং 'মহানগর এক্সপ্রেস' ট্রেনের অনবোর্ড সার্ভিস পরিচালনার জন্য সিসিএম (পূর্ব) দপ্তরের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-৫৪.০১.১৫০০.১০৭.০৫.১১৬.২৪-৭২৫; তারিখঃ ১৩-০৬-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ এর মাধ্যমে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির নিম্নরূপ সংশোধন করা হলোঃ

প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং	বিবরণ/বিষয়বস্তু	পূর্বে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির তথ্যাদি		সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির তথ্যাদি (যা পড়তে হবে)	
১৭।	দরপত্র বিক্রির সর্বশেষ তারিখ	০৩.০৭.২০২৪ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।		১০.০৭.২০২৪ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।	
১৮।	দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	তারিখঃ ০৪.০৭.২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	সময়ঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	তারিখঃ ১১.০৭.২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	সময়ঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৯।	দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরনের তারিখ ও সময়	তারিখঃ ০৪-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	সময়ঃ SR-5: দুপুর ১২.১৫ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। SR-6: দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	তারিখঃ ১১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রিঃ	সময়ঃ SR-5: দুপুর ১২.১৫ ঘটিকা। SR-6: দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।

পূর্বে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য শর্তসমূহ অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

02.07.2024
(মোহাম্মদ মাহবুবুর রহমান)
চীফ কমার্শিয়াল ম্যানেজার (পূর্ব)
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম।

S(24)(168)

GD- 03

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
www.police.gov.bd

International Tender Notice

Memo No. 44.01.0000.024.02.002.24.1130
Date: 02/07/2024.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Breeders/Principals/Suppliers/Local Agents in their official pad for supply of Dogs as required by Bangladesh Police in fiscal year 2024-2025.

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2.	Agency	Police Headquarters, Dhaka
3.	Head of Procuring Entity	Inspector General of Police, Bangladesh.
4.	Invitation for	**Purchase of Dog**
5.	Invitation Ref No	44.01.0000.024.02.002.24/01(2024-2025)
6.	Date	02 July 2024
	KEY INFORMATION	
7.	Procurement method	One stage two envelop
	FUNDING INFORMATION	
8.	Budget and source of fund	GOB Revenue
	PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
9.	Tender publication date	03 July 2024
10.	Last selling date	14 August 2024
11.	Closing date and time	18 August 2024 at 12.00 hrs
12.	Opening date and time	18 August 2024 at 12.30 hrs
13.	Name & address of the office	Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000
	Place of Selling / Receiving/ Opening tender document	Transport Section, Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters Dhaka-1000
14.	Date and time of pre-tender meeting (Optional)	28.07.2024 at 15.00 PM Office room, Addl. DIG (Transport), Level-4, NCCOM Center, PHQ, Dhaka
	INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
15.	Eligibility of tenderer	(i) Up to date trade license (ii) Up to date income tax certificate (iii) VAT registration certificate (iv) other requirements described in the Standard Tender Document (PG-4)
16.	Brief description of goods	

Identification of item	Tender security amount in BDT or equivalent	Price of tender document (BDT)	Completion time
Dog	**5,00,000.00**	**2,000.00**	**180 days**

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17.	Name of official inviting tender	Sarwar Murshed Shamim, BPM
18.	Designation and address of the official inviting tenderer	Addl. DIG (Transport) Level-4, NCCOM Center, Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000
19.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone : +88 02 223384779 E-Mail: addldigtrans@police.gov.bd
20.	**Special Instruction**	
a.	No tender will be received after the deadline of submission.	
b.	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all/ any tender or annul the tender proceeding without causing any reason.	
c.	The Procuring Entity also reserves the right to increase or decrease the quantity of tender items.	
d.	The bidders must abide by the decision of the HOPE.	
e.	The procurement process will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act - 2006 & PPR- 2008.	

2/7/24
(Sarwar Murshed Shamim, BPM)
BP 7401020793
Addl. DIG (Transport)
Bangladesh Police
For Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Phone : +88 02 223384779

GD-01

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Didn't think a director could ruin his own creation: Bobby

ZAHID AKBAR

This Eid-ul-Azha, Eamin Haque Bobby starrer film ***Moyurakkhi*** was released nationwide. Shortly after, the actress expressed disappointment in her portrayal, claiming it did not match what was promised. She also accused the film's director, Rashid Polash, of not paying her full remuneration.

In addition to her acting career, Bobby has ventured into the restaurant business, opening Bobstar Dining in Gulshan, Dhaka. However, the business has faced financial losses.

Recently, a case was filed against Bobby at Gulshan Police Station, accusing her of attempted murder, theft, assault, and intimidation related to her restaurant business. Bobby discussed these issues with The Daily Star.

In addition to her acting career, Bobby has ventured into the restaurant business, opening Bobstar Dining in Gulshan, Dhaka. However, the business has faced financial losses.

Could you share with us the issue between 'Moyurakkhi's' director Rashid Polash and you?

The story of the movie is beautiful, and those who have seen it can attest to this. It could have been even better, but the director [Rashid Polash] failed to portray my character properly. Many beautiful sequences were not included in the released version. I never imagined a director could treat his creation in such a way. As a result, the movie seemed disorganised.

There have been allegations against you that you physically assaulted the director regarding this film.

The production company handed over all payments to the director, but he did not properly pay the remunerations of all the artistes. He also told the producer he needed money to shoot specific scenes but never filmed them.

Just a day before Eid, we were told the film would be released in 15 theatres, but it ended up in only two. When we confronted him, we argued, and something happened that I should not detail.

The director claimed that he paid your remuneration completely and also said you were not on time on set.

They scheduled me for about 17 days, but I only shot for six. Many of the scenes I shot were not included in the film. Despite taking money from the producers in my name, I did not receive my full payment as per the agreement. The director should provide evidence for his claims.

You have been accused of attempted murder, theft, physical assault, and intimidation. What do you have to say about these allegations?

These are all false. I am an artiste, and these actions are intended to damage my image. Those behind this thought I would remain silent, out of fear of losing my reputation. However, I have always believed in standing up against injustice. In my decade-long career, no one has ever made negative remarks against me. I am now addressing this legally. Since false cases have been filed against me, I have also filed a case stating the truth and everything that has happened.

For the past three months, I have tried to resolve this matter but couldn't find a solution. After the attack at the restaurant, I had no choice but to speak out. These incidents have caused me extreme mental and financial distress. I have lost around Tk 75 lakh. Additionally, Muhammad Sakib Uddoja, AGM of YN Centre, has filed a false case against me and my business partner, Mirza Abul Bashar.

What are your expectations from this case now?

I believe the real truth will come out soon. Circumstances are not always favourable for everyone, but I have never encouraged anyone to fabricate something to gain attention in any legal case. All the recognition I have received so far is through my work. I believe that justice will be served.

Kareena Kapoor starrer 'The Buckingham Murders' drops premiere date

Kareena Kapoor starrer ***The Buckingham Murders*** has finally locked the release date. The Hansal Mehta directorial film will be released in theatres this September 13.

Kareena Kapoor's character in the film, inspired by Kate Winslet in ***Mare of Easttown***, is a mother and detective solving a murder in Buckinghamshire.

The filmmakers shared the film's poster alongside the film's release date via Instagram.

The Buckingham Murders also stars Ash Tandon, Ranveer Brar, and Keith Allen. It is written by Aseem Arrora, Kashyap Kapoor, and Raghav Raj Kakker.

The film had its world premiere at the 67th BFI London Film Festival in October 2023.

'John Wick' producers to remake Hindi film

KILL
THIS JOURNEY IS ONE-WAY

The production companies behind the popular ***John Wick*** franchise, Lionsgate and 87Eleven Entertainment, have announced their plans to create an English-language remake of the upcoming Indian action thriller ***Kill***.

The Hindi-language original, directed by Nikhil Nagesh Bhat and produced by Karan Johar, is set to release in India on July 5.

Kill, which premiered at TIFF's Midnight Madness and was featured at Tribeca, follows Indian Army commando Amrit (Lakshya) as he races against time and armed foes on a New Delhi-bound train to save Tulika (Tanya Maniktala).

COUNTRYWIDE

Road damaged before handing over

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Carpeting of a four-kilometre-long newly renovated road in Barguna's Patharghata upazila is getting damage at different points even before handing over the road resurfacing work.

Local people, however, blamed use of sub-standard materials in the construction work and lack of supervision by the authorities concerned as well.

During a recent visit this correspondent found the newly constructed road, stretching from in front of Patharghata Upazila Health Complex to Haringhata Eco Park, has developed numerous cracks at different spots withing three months of the road resurfacing work.

According to Patharghata Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), a tender was called to construct the four-kilometre road, under Road Widening and Strengthening Project, in 2022-23 fiscal year.

Abul Kalam Azad, a contractor from Patuakhali, got the Tk 6.72 crore work order that started in June 2023 and was scheduled to the completed by June this year.

However, two local contractors from Barguna -- Mohammad Shahin and Shahidul Islam Mridha -- took the sub-contract of the work and implemented it.

Local resident Mojibur Rahman said they were happy to see the road work done, but soon got disappointed after seeing the newly resurfaced road collapsing at many points within three months of its construction.

Patharghata Sadar Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Alamgir Hossain said the situation arises due to lack of proper supervision and carelessness by the authorities concerned.

Although LGED has been informed about the irregularities on several occasions, but to no avail, he added.

Despite repeated attempts this correspondent could not contact one of the sub-contractors Shahin for his comment in this regard as he did not receive the mobile phone.

While talking, another sub-contractor Shahidul said construction of the road has been done as per the work schedule.

Patharghata LGED Upazila Engineer Chandan Chakraborty said the contractor concern is yet to hand over the project officially and it is his responsibility to repair the damaged portion of the road.

Contacted, Sultana Nadira, lawmaker from Barguna-2 constituency, said the upazila LGED engineer has been asked not to pay the final bill until the road repair work is done.

Like this one, several cracks have developed on this newly constructed road in Barguna's Patharghata upazila even before handing over the project. PHOTO: **STAR**

Ensure govt staffers comply with provision

FROM PAGE 12

the National Board of Revenue; governor of Bangladesh Bank; and head of Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit have been made respondents to the rule.

The court said corruption and money laundering must be stopped as they are obstacles to good governance and development.

"People of all classes and professions, including judges, lawyers and journalists should join hands and build a movement against corruption in order to turn Bangladesh into the 'Sonar Bangla' that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dreamed of," the bench said during the hearing of a writ petition.

The order and rule were issued following the petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Subir Nandi Das seeking the HC's directive on the government to disclose the movable and immovable properties held by government servants serving in civil capacity, and by their family members.

He submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the court on Monday, also appealing to the it to direct authorities concerned of the government to adopt guidelines or policies or to enact proper legislation in this regard.

According to section 13(1) of the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules-1979, "Every government servant shall, at the time of entering government service, make a declaration to the government through the usual channel, of all immovable and movable properties, including shares, certificates, securities, insurance policy, and jewellery having a total value of Tk 10,000 [Tk 50,000 under amended provision] or more belonging to, or held by him or a member of his family and such declaration shall state the district within which the property is situated, show separately individual items of jewellery exceeding Tk 10,000 [Tk 50,000 under amended provision] in value, and give such further information as the government may, by general or special order, require. Every government servant shall submit to the government, through usual channel an annual return of assets in the month of December showing any increase or decrease of property as shown in the declaration under sub-rule [1] or, as the case may be, the last annual return."

The bench scheduled October 22 for the hearing of the rule.

Subir Nandi Das himself moved the petition while Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik and AKM Fazlul Hoque appeared for the state and the ACC respectively during the hearing.

Thousands marooned

FROM PAGE 12

shelters that the local administrations have reopened.

Sitara Begum, 60, of Jamura village in Sunamganj's Chhatak upazila, returned home from the shelter centre barely a week ago; now her house has been submerged once more.

"Before I could repair the house, another flood hit my village, forcing me to move back to the shelter centre," she said in a frustration-filled voice.

Meanwhile, road communication with Sylhet's Companiganj and Gowainghat, and Sunamganj's Dowarabazar, Tahirpur, and Bishwambharpur has been snapped.

In Moulvibazar, sections of a road that serves as a dyke for the Kushiyara River got breached at Hamorkona village in Sadar upazila, inundating vast areas.

The latest round of flash floods hit in the early hours of yesterday, and the situation is rapidly deteriorating due to the relentless rain.

In 24 hours till yesterday morning, Sunamganj town recorded 300mm of rainfall, Sylhet recorded 294mm, Sunamganj's Chhatak recorded 233mm, Sunamganj's Tahirpur recorded 211mm, and Moulvibazar's Sherpur recorded 183mm.

At the same time, Meghalaya's Mawsynram recorded 207mm of rainfall, while Cherrapunji recorded 141mm in the 24 hours till last morning, according to the Indian Meteorological Department.

In the next two days, there is a possibility of light to moderate rainfall over all the country along with heavy to very heavy rainfall in some areas, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The IMD also predicts very heavy rainfall in Assam and the neighbouring state of Meghalaya until Friday.

Owing to the constant rain, the Surma, Kushiyara, Sari, Gowain, Juri, and Manu rivers are all flowing above the danger level and rapidly rising, the Water Development Board reported yesterday.

Aftab Ahmed, chairman of Tahirpur upazila, said, "The upazila has been severely affected, with residents of Tanguar Haor, Shanir Haor, and Matian Haor losing their homes to the recent flood."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged all concerned, including civil administration, to prepare for potential floods across the country in order to protect citizens from the consequences and devastation.

Contacted, Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Abu Ahmed Siddique, said, "The region is experiencing a third wave of flooding due to heavy rainfall here as well as in neighbouring India's Meghalaya and Assam states. The coming days could be critical, depending on the rains.

"Since the first round of flooding, we have been continuing our relief distribution efforts, which will continue until the flood-affected people's hardships are alleviated."

"We currently have an allocation of 4,500 tonnes of rice, Tk 1.5 crore cash, and Tk 45 lakh worth of baby food, in addition to cattle fodder and packaged dry foods."

"This is sufficient for now but with this new round of flooding, we have requested for more allocation."

TOURISTS STUCK IN SAJEK

Around 800 tourists got stuck in Sajek after incessant rains and flash floods snapped vehicular movement on the Baghaihat-Sajek road.

ACC primary probe

FROM PAGE 12

to issue asset declaration notices to them under section 26(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004. Accordingly, the notices were issued yesterday.

In another development, the anti-graft body yesterday served notices to former member of National Board of Revenue Matiur Rahman, his two wives, and children, asking their wealth information, ACC Secretary Khorsheda told the media.

She said the ACC has sought wealth statements of Matiur, first wife Laila Kaniz, her children Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman Arnab, Farzana Rahman Ipsita, and second wife Shammi Akhtar Shivli.

During the inquiry, the ACC has come to know that Matiur owns a large amount of wealth in his name and the names of others beyond known sources of income, said the notices.

Statements of all movable and immovable assets, liabilities, sources of income, and the details of their land acquisition shall be submitted to the commission.

Malen hits brace

FROM PAGE 12

counter in stoppage-time.

The victory put the Oranje on course for a quarter-final clash with Turkey or Austria, who beat the Netherlands in 3-2 in the group stage.

"We played a good game. I'm very pleased. Especially after the last game we needed a reaction and today was a good step in the right direction," Gakpo said.

"We talked a lot about the aggression, the intensity and defending like a team. It was a good step.

"Sacrifice something for each other and work really hard to be at your best. Good game overall."

Ronald Koeman's side will need to improve their effectiveness in front of goal should they wish to emulate their manager, who was a player for the Dutch when they won the 1988 Euros on German soil.

ADANI SHORT BET

Hindenburg denies SEBI's allegations

REUTERS

Hindenburg Research has denied allegations by India's securities regulator that it colluded with a US asset manager to use non-public information to set up a short bet against Adani Group last year, which if proven would breach the country's rules.

Hindenburg posted a copy of a 46-page "show cause" notice from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) outlining the allegations on its website on Monday, in the latest twist to a saga that began last year when the US-based short-seller alleged improper business dealings by Adani.

The notice said that six entities including Hindenburg, Kingdon Capital Management and a Mauritius-based trading fund set up by Kotak Mahindra Bank violated certain rules under the Prevention of Fraud and Unfair Trade Practices regulation. It was dismissed in a statement by Hindenburg as "nonsense".

Kingdon did not respond to an emailed request for comment yesterday.

Displaced Palestinians from areas in east Khan Yunis arrive in the city as they flee after the Israeli army issued a new evacuation order for parts of the city and Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

FRANCE ELECTION

Candidates exit runoff to block far right from power

AFP, *Paris*

French candidates faced a deadline yesterday to stay in or quit the weekend's runoff election, with over 160 withdrawing so far in an effort to block the far right from winning an absolute majority.

France votes Sunday in the decisive final round of the snap legislative polls President Emmanuel Macron called after his camp received a drubbing in European polls last month.

His gamble appears to have backfired, with the far-right National Rally (RN) of Marine Le Pen scoring a victory in the June 30 first round with more than 10.6 million votes.

Faced with the prospect of the far right taking power in France for the first time since the country's occupation by Nazi Germany during WWII, Macron's camp and the left have urged a broad "Republican Front" to stop the anti-immigration and eurosceptic party of Le Pen.

The rivals are hoping that putting their differences aside ahead of runoff with withdrawals will prevent the RN winning an absolute majority of 289 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly.

Former Pak PM Imran Khan arbitrarily detained

Says UN panel

AFP, *Geneva*

A panel of UN experts has determined that the detention of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan was arbitrary and a violation of international law, calling for him to be released "immediately".

In an opinion published Monday, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention raised concerns about multiple cases brought against Khan since he was ousted in April 2022.

It found that his depravation of liberty was "arbitrary" and violated several international laws and norms.

Khan's "detention had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office", the working group said.

"Thus, from the outset, that prosecution was not grounded in law and was reportedly instrumentalised for a political purpose," it said in the opinion, which was dated March 25 and made public Monday.

The working group, made up of five independent experts whose opinions are not binding but carry reputational weight, called on Pakistan's government to "take the steps necessary to remedy the situation".

"The appropriate remedy would be to release Mr. Khan immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law," it added.

The experts also called on Pakistan's government to ensure "a full and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Mr. Khan, and to take appropriate measures against those responsible for the violation of his rights".

It's a 'dangerous precedent'

Biden blasts top court ruling on Trump immunity

AFP, *Washington*

President Joe Biden warned later on Monday that the US Supreme Court's landmark ruling on presidential immunity sets a "dangerous precedent" that Donald Trump would exploit if elected in November.

The conservative-dominated High Court ruled that Trump -- and all presidents -- enjoy "absolute immunity" from criminal prosecution for "official acts" taken while in office, but can still face criminal penalties for "unofficial acts."

"For all practical purposes today's decision almost certainly means there are no limits to what a president can do. This is a fundamentally new principle, and it's a dangerous precedent," Biden said in a speech at the White House.

Trump is facing criminal charges over his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Biden, but that trial had been put on hold while the Supreme Court considered his immunity claims.

The 6-3 ruling on Monday, split along ideological lines, is set to further delay proceedings in that case, almost certainly to sometime after voters head to the polls in November.

"The American people must decide if they want to entrust... once again, the presidency to Donald Trump, now knowing he'll be more emboldened to do whatever he pleases, whenever he wants to do it," Biden said.

Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts, in his majority opinion, said a president is "not above the law" but does have "absolute immunity" from criminal prosecution for official acts taken while in office.

"The president therefore may not be prosecuted for exercising his core constitutional powers," Roberts said.

"As for a President's unofficial acts, there is no immunity," the chief justice added, sending the case back to a lower court to determine which of the charges facing Trump involve official or unofficial conduct.

Trump is charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States as well as obstruction of an official proceeding -- when a violent mob of his supporters tried to prevent the January 6, 2021, joint session of Congress held to certify Biden's victory.

The 78-year-old former president is also charged with conspiracy to deny Americans the right to vote and to have their votes counted.

"The public has a right to know the answer about what happened on January 6, before they're asked to vote again this year," Biden said.

"Now because of today's decision, that is highly, highly unlikely. It's a terrible disservice to the people of this nation," he said.

The three liberal justices dissented from Monday's ruling with Justice Sonia Sotomayor saying she was doing so "with fear for our democracy."

"...the presidency to Donald Trump, now knowing he'll be more emboldened to do whatever he pleases, whenever he wants to do it."

S CHINA SEA ROW

Manila, Beijing agree to 'de-escalate'

AFP, *Manila*

The Philippines and China yesterday agreed to "de-escalate tensions" over the South China Sea, Manila said, following a violent clash in the disputed waters.

"The two sides discussed their respective positions on Ayungin Shoal and affirmed their commitment to de-escalate tensions without prejudice to their respective positions," the Philippine foreign ministry said in a statement, using the country's name for Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands.

Chinese coast guard personnel wielding knives, sticks and an axe surrounded and boarded three Philippine navy boats near the shoal last month, the latest and most serious in a number of escalating confrontations.

A Filipino soldier lost a finger in the June 17 clash, with Manila also accusing the Chinese coast guard of looting guns and damaging three boats as well as navigational and communication equipment.

Beijing insisted its coast guard behaved in a "professional and restrained" way and blamed Manila for the clash.

UK election gives hope to first time immigrant voters

REUTERS, *London*

Voting for the first time in a British election, Prathesh Panjak and other immigrant voters are excited to take part in the July 4 ballot, hoping they can influence change in the country that they have chosen to call home.

The opposition Labour Party is widely expected to win by a landslide, replacing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party which has been in power for 14 years. Refugees and immigrants from Commonwealth countries, mainly former territories of the British Empire such as Nigeria, India, and Malaysia, are eligible to vote in British elections.

"In my country, they don't allow people from other countries to vote ... I came here on a student visa, but they are giving us an opportunity, like British citizens," said Panjak who works part-time as an ambassador at his university in Manchester, northwest England.

We Mourn

Capt. Mohammad Ashraf Hussain

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Capt. Mohammad Ashraf Hussain, retired Biman Bangladesh Airlines pilot, on 30 June 2024. Inna lillahi wa Inna ilayhi raji'un.

He is survived by his loving wife, Reyhana Ashraf, his children Shermeen, Abbas, Akbar, and Omarr, and his 7 grandchildren. He will be dearly missed by his extended family and countless friends.

His Namaz e Janaza was held at Gulshan Society Mosque after Zuhr prayers on 2 July 2024, followed by his burial at Banani graveyard. The family requests prayers for the departed soul.

Reyhana, Shermeen, Abbas, Akbar, Omarr, Rana, Azra, Farah, Auboni, Zoheb, Zahraan, Zayan, Ehaan, Zohaan, Ayrah, and Aarish.

People push a metal object as they attend a demonstration over police killings of people protesting against the imposition of tax hikes by the government, in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. *Inset*, a person is detained by police during the demonstration in Nairobi.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Bank Asia

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for information of all concerned that Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh (CRAB) has rated Bank Asia PLC. AA_1 for long term and ST-1 for short term based on the financials of 2023. The rating will remain valid up to June 30, 2025.

Ratings	2023	2024
Long Term	AA_1	AA_1
Short Term	ST-1	ST-1

AA_1 : Very strong capacity to meet financial commitments & very high quality and very low credit risk

ST-1 : Highest capacity for timely repayment of obligations and excellent position in liquidity

Dated: July 02, 2024
Dhaka

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Pension worries must be resolved

Teachers' strike shows the importance of dialogue and clarity

In a concerning development, Bangladesh's public universities have come to a grinding halt. Classrooms are locked, exams are postponed, and administrative work has stalled, as teachers of 35 public universities have gone on an indefinite strike demanding their exemption from the new Prottoy Universal Pension Scheme. Teachers argue that the new scheme—which will be applicable for recruits joining on or after July 1 in any autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations and their subordinate institutions—is discriminatory, offering significantly lower benefits compared to the existing system for government employees. The government, on the other hand, defends Prottoy as a step towards a uniform and sustainable pension system for all public sector employees. They claim the scheme, in the long run, will offer higher monthly payouts than the existing plan.

While currently no money is deducted from teachers' salary, under Prottoy, 10 percent of the monthly basic salary of an employee, up to Tk 5,000, will be deducted for the pension fund, and the organisation will contribute a matching amount to the fund. Meanwhile, there will be no one-time gratuity for the retiring employee, but instead a significantly higher monthly installment will be payable to the retired individual for their lifetime. In case of death, however, dependents can claim the pension for 15 years from when the installment starts, rather than for a lifetime as per the current scheme. And there will no longer be a five percent annual increment on the pension amount.

While there can be no denying the budgetary burden of pension payments, and the need for a modernised, universal and sustainable pension system, the question raised by the academics remains—if the system is so good, why have bureaucrats, judiciary and military personnel been exempted from it? While the government says they will institute a similar scheme for bureaucrats, there are anxieties among teachers—not without reason—about possible discrimination in benefits in the absence of any clarity on the matter. Why not make the details of the upcoming scheme for bureaucrats, Shebok, public as well? Why institute such a top-down approach to implementation without, at the very least, engaging academics and other Prottoy pensioners in a meaningful dialogue?

The Bangladesh University Teachers Samity Federation has been organising various programmes since the new scheme's announcement on March 13, including half-day work abstention on June 4, and work abstention for three consecutive days last week. We are at a loss to understand why, during this time, no attempt was made to engage the aggrieved parties in a consultation. Whatever the merits or demerits of Prottoy may be, it is obvious that a consensus cannot be reached without constructive and transparent discussions among the relevant stakeholders as well as an impartial assessment of the benefits of such a scheme.

Having said that, we cannot condone an indefinite strike on education. For the sake of the students, we need to find a solution fast, which requires open dialogue and compromise, not egoistic tussles. The government needs to address the concerns of discrimination and provide a transparent review of the scheme's calculations. Moving forward, we also need to initiate a broader discussion about how "universal" the scheme really is, including for those outside the purview of public institutions.

Feasibility studies a must for BR projects

Bangladesh Railway needs to stop wasting public money

That Bangladesh Railway (BR) has been a loss-incurring entity for almost a decade is not news. Yet, it is difficult not to get flabbergasted by BR projects that not only squandered public money during the implementation phase, but continues to be a burden for taxpayers. The lone passenger train operating on the Rajshahi-Rajbari-Gopalganj route, which railway authorities extended to bring Tungipara, the birthplace of the father of the nation, under the railway network is one such example.

According to a report in this daily, the government approved this project in 2010 to revive a 75-kilometre old, inoperative line from Kalukhali of Rajbari to Bhatiapara Ghat of Gopalganj and build a 32-kilometre line from Kashiani to Gopalganj to connect Tungipara. The project was completed in 2018, five years behind schedule and with a huge cost overrun. Till date, it has failed to generate enough return on investment because only one train runs on the Tk-2,011-crore line.

Additionally, there was no monitoring or quality checks of the material used by the contractors, essentially making the line risky. Now four stations and several staff quarters built along the route remain unused and are falling into decay. A top railway official attributed the underutilisation to the shortage of manpower, locomotives and carriages, but failed to acknowledge the issue of low traffic demand on that route.

We have repeatedly called attention to irregularities, inefficiency and poor performance of the railway authorities in implementing viable and profitable projects, and ensuring proper maintenance of its physical assets and infrastructure. But no one has ever been held accountable for BR's continuous wastage of public funds. Around the world, railway, a mode of transport with a low carbon footprint, is witnessing a comeback. If we want to follow on that track, we must ensure pragmatic and judicious leadership at the BR.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Egyptian president removed

On this day in 2013, following massive demonstrations against his rule, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi was removed from office by a military action.

Unbridled corruption and a minister's reckless comment

A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

As one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, Bangladesh is currently the 35th largest economy in the world (as of 2022) and aspires to clinch the 25th spot by 2035—earning the apt label of "the emerging Asian Tiger." Grand ambitions, grander dreams and the grandest rhetoric by our politicians and policymakers make the country look all set to conquer the future.

Unfortunately, the reality is, Bangladesh is mired in multiple economic and sociopolitical challenges that would make achieving these ambitious targets considerably difficult. With a persistent high inflation (9.89 percent in May 2024), rising poverty and people's shrinking purchasing power, uncontrollable foreign exchange volatility that we are having to cushion with foreign loans, non-performing loans (NPLs) reaching an all-time high of Tk 182,295 crore, and the economy struggling to grow with the IMF repeatedly slashing growth projections, our economic hurdles ahead look overwhelming.

However, the single biggest factor that creates the major roadblock to our growth aspirations is the unbridled corruption that has permeated every layer of every organ of the governance system, crippling the nation and creating a hollow at the heart of our economy. A study titled, "The state of the business environment in Bangladesh," conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and World Economic Forum (WEF), identified corruption as the most problematic factor in doing business in Bangladesh in 2023, with 67.6 percent of respondents pointing to high levels of corruption. In the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023 by Transparency International, Bangladesh secured the 10th lowest score at 24 out of 100. In South Asia, Bangladesh holds the second lowest position, just above Afghanistan. This is the lowest score for the country since 2012.

Recent reports on former law enforcement officials and revenue collectors being nose deep in various forms of corruption and criminal activities, including land grabbing and insider trading, as well as a sitting MP being involved in smuggling, which got him killed in a foreign country, are disturbing and portrays a picture of a society that is rotting from the inside.

But what is more alarming is the specious—almost defensive—narratives by the powers that be that have emerged following these revelations. The Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA), for instance, has come down heavily on the media in the aftermath of the investigative reports into the misdeeds and corruption of former and current police high-ups, terming these reports as "partial," "ill-motivated," and "exaggerated"—a smear campaign—and warning them to refrain from publishing such reports going forward. Meanwhile, a high-profile minister of the current regime has also made a bizarre comment about the latest wave of corruption revelations.

While the BPSA statement is reckless and paints a picture of a public institution that is trying to cover up the criminal activities of its members, rather than taking a rectification approach, the comment by the minister comes off as blatantly apologetic for the corrupt and corruption as a practice.

The minister's comment demands in-depth scrutiny for understanding. There are three main points to the comment: the universality of corruption and acceptance of corruption in his own ministry, as well as among politicians; asking for introspection for those who are asking for accountability of the corrupt officials; and reiteration of the government's zero tolerance policy against corruption.

To start with, saying that corruption is universal is tantamount to normalising it, which is undesirable and contrary to a lawmaker's oath of office, "I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office according to law: That I will bear true faith and allegiance to Bangladesh: That I will preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the laws of Bangladesh: And that I will do right to all manner of people according to law, without fear of favour, affection or ill-will." While it is a positive sign that the minister has accepted that corruption is pervasive among his own political network and within his own ministry, one cannot help but ask: what has he done so far to prevent the spread of corruption among those he knows are corrupt, and how many have been held accountable for their actions?

The second point was perhaps a jab at the opposition parties who are blaming the disintegration of the integrity of the governance apparatus, resulting in rampant corruption among bureaucrats. However, just because previous governments have been engaged in corruption does not give the current regime the scope to take it as a normal practice, or allow it to evolve in new dimensions. So, there is no reason for anyone to look into the mirror before calling a spade a spade.

Finally, while it is nice to hear repeatedly that the government remains committed to its zero tolerance policy against corruption, it has unfortunately remained lip service only, and we are yet to see any meaningful actions being taken to walk the talk.

To put it short, the minister's comments are not only provocative, offensive and irresponsible, but at times a violation of his own oath as a member of parliament. There is no way we expect a responsible public representative to make such careless remarks that would put into question not only their own morals, but also the moral authority of the government. No wonder we have reached a point where bureaucrats and politicians alike are engaged in heavy corruption, plundering the hard-earned money of the people, with almost no consequences.

The minister owes the people an explanation of his remarks and an apology at the very least. And the ruling regime should focus less on talking and more on actions, to create a conducive environment that truly eliminates corruption from our governance system and supports our growth aspirations.

CORRUPTION IS UNIVERSAL

VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

Ensure equity for girls in education

EDUCATING EDUCATION

Dr Rubaiya Murshed
is lecturer (on study leave), Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and recent PhD from the University of Cambridge.

RUBAIYA MURSHED

The movie *An Education* is the story of a young ordinary girl who goes through life with her parents' aspirations becoming her own. Her parents expect her to attend the University of Oxford and she is groomed accordingly. Along the way she meets a man who soon becomes, to her parents, a prospective husband for their daughter. Surprised by her parents' shift in focus from Oxford to marriage, she asks, "Why go through all those years of studying, all those years paying for an education, when she could have just dressed up and attended parties, and dances, in her efforts to land a marriage." Many women in real life too deserve the answer to this question.

In many countries around the world, girls are not given access to the same educational opportunities as boys. So, activists and researchers call for increased investments in girls' education. Bangladesh has been no exception to this—we've achieved some milestones, mostly in terms of statistics. We've done well, but the question remains whether we've done enough.

We've battled against the problem of early marriage and perhaps eliminated dowry to some extent. But has there been any change in our collective mentality towards girls' education and their aspirations? No, not really—at least not inclusively. Yes, there was a time when girls hardly got to finish their HSC exams, but now many girls "get to" go to universities. The "get to" part remains the problem, since girls' education still, in many cases, remains dependent on the family's decision, and not the girls' own. It may be difficult to agree with this if one only considers women from middle-income and higher-income families. There are many inspiring and empowered women in Dhaka and among these trailblazing women, it's rare and difficult to find a woman from a lower socio-economic background or a woman who lives in a remote village of Bangladesh. There is a huge divide here, which becomes visible when we open our eyes to the whole picture and not only to selective parts of it.

To this day, it's not surprising to hear of a girl suddenly having to drop out of college or university because it's time to "marry her off." It comes down to two things really—marriage as a substitute to education and, of course, the deeply entrenched patriarchy in our society. This is why objectifying women is still somewhat of a norm around us, and why women are always the ones mostly judged by their looks.

The marriage market in Bangladesh is a breeding ground for objectification of women. How a woman looks, how she walks—these are often given the same importance, sometimes even more, as how educated a woman is. Sadly, this is more of a norm than an exception and so, existing narratives are not devoid of such objectification.

> **It's not surprising to hear of a girl suddenly having to drop out of college or university because it's time to "marry her off." It comes down to two things really—marriage as a substitute to education and, of course, the deeply entrenched patriarchy in our society.**

These problematic narratives spill over to the lives of girls everywhere and how a girl sees herself growing up. Women needing make-up, women wearing high-heels, the expensive jewellery women wear—are these by choice? Maybe so, but can it be denied that these practices have patriarchal roots too? Does it matter? Arguably, yes.

You see, these societal "norms" shape the image of women in the society both in the eyes of men and women, and influence the education women are "allowed" to have. If it were the case that most of these girls who are married off get to continue their education after marriage, then that would have been a better consequence than them having to give up their education. But we don't know whether this is mostly the case, and even if it is, the lack of the freedom of choice for women remains.

Then there's the fact that it's often forgotten that women are humans, not superwomen. Having to juggle all the responsibilities just because they're women is, undoubtedly, unfair. In reality, there will always be some things women do better than men, and vice versa. The point is that the attitude towards what constitutes women's responsibilities needs to change. This is where education has a strong role to play in breaking the stereotypes born from patriarchy.

To fight patriarchy, we need to educate our boys as much as we need to educate our girls. First, we need to fight for equity in choice. If a woman chooses to not have a career, that is her success and society should see it that way too because success lies in the happiness that comes from choosing one's own path.

A good education matters. Only with a proper education does an educated human-being, girl or boy, become an asset to the society. I don't have to be a feminist to argue for girls' right to education. I just have to be a human who believes education to be a right. When we view education as not just a means to earning a living but having a wider purpose, as Rabindranath says, of awakening the mind and soul—it's easier to understand why everyone, every girl and boy, has a right to the magic of awakening their souls.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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The Bangladesh-India friendship dilemma

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ANU MUHAMMAD

India is Bangladesh's biggest neighbour. We are connected through our shared border, history, cultural traits, and language, among other things. Various threads bind us, including Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971. Considering all this, having a friendly, healthy relationship with India is as important for us as it is for them.

However, India's current leaders along with big business oligarchy have been pursuing a one-sided foreign policy. Their dominant mindset to extend their influence in the neighbourhood has created an unbalanced relationship in South Asia. This has raised questions and created reservations among the people in other countries. Therefore, it is not surprising that, except for Bangladesh, India is not on the best terms with the South Asian governments.

There is a common perception that the bilateral relationship benefits India much more than it does Bangladesh. FILE PHOTO: AFP

As our current government has said on a number of occasions, the relationship between Bangladesh and India has reached new heights since it came to power. That is true for the government, but not for the people. And there is a common perception that this relationship benefits India much more than it does Bangladesh. Our prime minister recently went on a formal visit to India, and all the memorandums of understandings and agreements made there seem to re-establish that notion. Bangladesh's interests seem to have been downplayed considerably, and objective critical questions of our citizens have once again been ignored.

Consider the fact that Bangladesh shares the border with India on three sides, and India is putting up a barbed wire fence on this entire border. This is not an example of friendship. Surrounding an entire country is akin to holding it captive. While the Bangladesh government has not spoken against this issue, our citizens are concerned. India's reasoning behind putting up the barbed wire fence is to prevent criminals from Bangladesh from entering India. If India's understanding is that criminals are going to enter its territory from Bangladesh, how can it ask for a transit through Bangladesh? If they believe ours is a country filled with criminals who must be contained with a barbed wire fence around our entire border, how can they ensure the security of their goods while using our roads and rivers for transit? Last month, the countries agreed on railway transit through Bangladesh as well.

We have been hearing about transit benefits even before our current government came to power, with promises of billions of dollars in earnings for Bangladesh. But in reality, now that the transit is being formalised during this government's time, we are not seeing the financial benefits for us—not even one percent of what was promised. On the contrary, Dr Mashiur Rahman, the economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, once regarded demanding any such financial benefits or gains as "uncivilised." This means India will get transit benefits through Bangladesh, which gives them economic gains, while Bangladesh gains nothing. Moreover, the additional pressure on our roads, bridges, and rivers and the resulting damage to our environment, economy, and businesses will be significant.

While India will be able to transit through Bangladesh, the latter still cannot have the same access for a mere 30-40 kilometres to establish business ties with Nepal or Bhutan. Our government says that ties with Nepal and Bhutan will be established, but nothing has been formalised yet. There are many direct and indirect barriers to this, caused by India.

Also, in terms of business, thousands of Indian products find a place in Bangladesh's markets. But when it comes to exporting goods from Bangladesh to India, there are many barriers, tariffs, and non-tariffs, so we don't get the same business benefits in India as it does in Bangladesh. India is also gaining access to our seas. I can't help but ask: how can we ensure our country's national security in this state of affairs?

Then there is the water-sharing issue. Many of Bangladesh's rivers originate in India. Being upstream, India has constructed dams and other structures to control the water flow in the rivers, preventing us from getting the water we need. Instead of giving us the water, India now wants management responsibilities of the Teesta River.

The border killings have still not stopped. Even after our prime minister returned from her India tour last month, there have been reports of border killings.

Is India truly interested in the multilateral development of South Asia? To unlock the power in this region, we need to have multilateral cooperation among all the countries. Bilateral relationships can only take us so far. To justify the new bilateral agreements that happened during her recent visit to India, our prime minister mentioned the European Union as an example. But in reality, our bilateral relationship with India and the transit deal do not compare with the agreements in the EU in any way. The EU is a comprehensive economic and political system, where every country has rights over every other country, and they give the same rights to each other. Economic and communication benefits are ensured for all the countries in the EU. There is the European Central Bank, the euro currency, and an institutional structure.

While India will be able to transit through Bangladesh, the latter still cannot have the same access for a mere 30-40 kilometres to establish business ties with Nepal or Bhutan. Our government says that ties with Nepal and Bhutan will be established, but nothing has been formalised yet. There are many direct and indirect barriers to this, caused by India.

A union of South Asia is truly important for our future, and that is something in which I firmly believe. But it is probably not going to be possible with India's current mindset of extending influence and the one-sided relationship-building approach. If we have a South Asian Union, we can utilise the massive amount of wealth and opportunities that lies here. Doing so can put a stop to communalism, corruption and the massive waste of wealth. It can create a multi-language, multinational, multi-ethnic community. This is only possible if the rights, wants, and needs of all the nations are ensured, and one country is not given priority over another. It should be a political demand of all the South Asian countries: a South Asian solidarity. It is for the sake of the citizens of South Asia that this should be prioritised.

The current leaders in India, and the business stakeholders, are not doing this to the rest of South Asian nations only. In truth, they are doing it to the majority of the Indian citizens as well, prioritising their own interests. So it is also for the sake of Indian citizens that a multilateral, multicultural union needs to be planned, finalised, and brought to reality. It should be clear to everyone that subordination and friendship are not the same. We want friendship, and that can only be achieved when we are treated as equals.

FIRST 2024 US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Biden needs to go, but he won't

Ramisa Rob
is in-charge of Geopolitical Insights at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

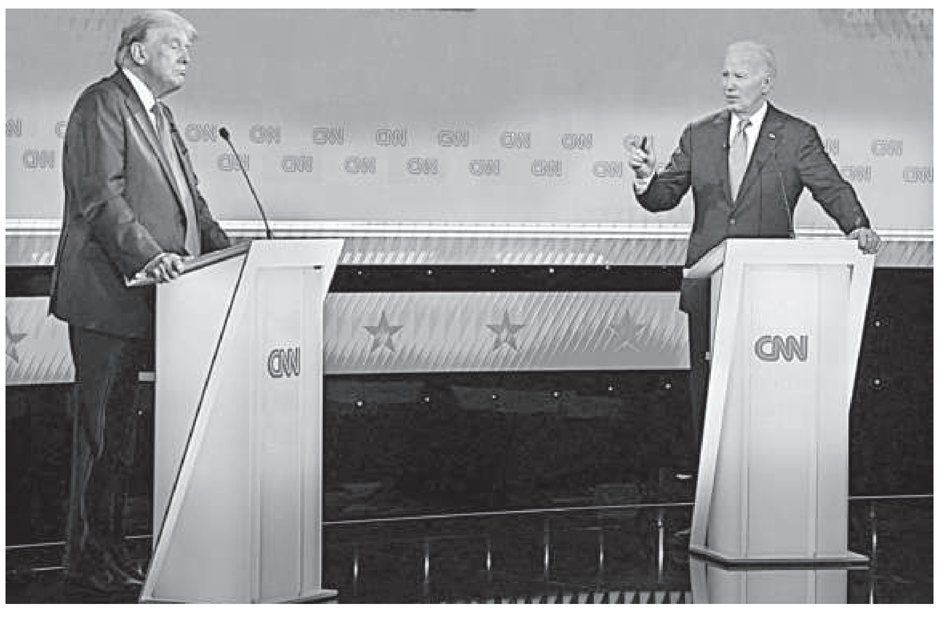
Watching the first US presidential debate between Donald Trump, a convicted felon and fascist, and incumbent President Joe Biden for 90 minutes felt as painful as getting through a wisdom tooth removal. The debate, rather a debacle, has led the nation to a panic stream about its future leadership and the future in general. We have been familiar with the fears about Donald Trump throughout, that he is not a legitimate choice; he spews conspiracy theories and lies like a machine gun. The debate was the earliest in electoral history—both are presumed party nominees—and in fact, the Biden campaign pushed for it to remind the public of the former president's chaotic nature. The Biden campaign prepared for weeks in Camp David, but the result of that was a disoriented, alarmingly incoherent Joe Biden who, more than once, could not complete a sentence.

The media coverage since has been rampant with discussions about Biden's embarrassing underperformance that has crystallised fears about his age—though he's only four years older than Trump—and raised questions about his cognitive fitness to run the most powerful country in the world. It takes a lot to overshadow Donald Trump in a negative way. For an hour and a half, Biden stood on the stage, unable to answer questions, and unable to remember things he's done himself. Expected to make a strong case for why he should be re-elected, Biden did exactly the opposite. He could not respond to Trump's jabs, and just spewed a few insults, calling him "a loser and a sucker." Biden was so incredibly sluggish that it makes one wonder whether this man even makes the decisions that come out of the White House, or whether he just sits there with a group of others in the Oval Office, while his secretary of state or vice-president gives him papers to sign with his executive pen.

The New York Times' editorial board has already called for Biden to step aside; his supporters are saying that as a patriot, he should put the country before himself. The US media is already analysing what would happen if Democrats open up the convention on August 19 in Chicago, and considering potential candidates like California Governor Gavin Newsom and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, among others. But the question is: where were these candidates during the primaries? Why did none of them run rigorous presidential campaigns? Does Joe Biden run such a formidable lobby within the Democratic Party that no sane person could tell him that his time is up? While the media and reportedly some Democrats have "quietly" considered some replacement options, support from the members of the Democratic Party for Biden remains steady even after the disastrous debate.

The mental fogginess that Biden displayed on that debate stage in Atlanta surely didn't happen overnight. One can say he is not like this every day, that he had a bad night, but he must be this out of it some days, and that itself is a huge issue for a commander-in-chief at such a critical time for the US—and the world.

Biden won the primaries essentially unchallenged. California Governor Gavin Newsom was seen as a front-runner for the 2024 presidential race, but he put that to bed quickly last September, saying he had "great respect and reverence for Joe Biden as a person." After Biden's underperformance, media outlets continue to name Newsom as a potential replacement, while he himself told MSNBC, "You don't turn your back because of one performance. What kind of party does that?"



If Joe Biden continues this way—in debates, on live television—the attention on his weakness might cost him and his party the election in November. PHOTO: REUTERS

The mental fogginess that Biden displayed on that debate stage in Atlanta surely didn't happen overnight. One can say he is not like this every day, that he had a bad night, but he must be this out of it some days, and that itself is a huge issue for a commander-in-chief at such a critical time for the US—and the world. CNN's Anderson Cooper asked Vice-President Kamala Harris, "Is this the Biden you work with every day?" She responded rather defensively, reiterating the president's superior performance in contrast to Trump, which the former failed to communicate at a worrying level during the debate.

The huge game changer that the media is pushing for would realistically require Joe Biden to say, "I can't do this job," and release all the delegates he has accumulated, which would open the field for dozens of candidates. It would be chaotic and tough; a new candidate would lack Biden's established branding as a universal household name and need heavy advertising in a short span of time. The move could reveal factionalism and cracks in the Democratic Party, but all that chaos would serve the US better than four years of Donald Trump, who has vowed to be a "dictator" from day one.

By the looks of it, however, Biden has not indicated a desire to gracefully step down. After the debate, he appeared in North Carolina, and did what he does best: honestly address his own shortcomings, seem relatable, and say, "I know how to do this job." He started by stating, loudly, squinching his forehead, "Folks, I know I'm not a young man... I don't walk as smoothly as I used to. I don't debate as well as I used to." But he made it clear that the "stakes are too high," and invoked familiar tactics, saying like millions of Americans, "when you get knocked down, you get back up."

What's clear for now is that the Biden campaign is rushing behind the scenes to control the spiralling speculations of "the beginning of the end." But that is a short-term solution. If Biden is this rusty today, how will he be after four years, if re-elected? There are many, many questions to ask and consider for the Democratic Party. Reportedly, influential donors have pressured Biden to step aside. The hope among Democrats that this round of panic can fizzle out is not impossible, and it is unclear how much this will affect voter decision. But the possibility that this could get worse, and Biden could lose to Trump, is just as real too.

The main factor favouring the sitting president is the sentiment that a vote for Biden is a vote against Trump. When Biden says the stakes are too high, it is because he, along with many members of the Democratic Party, genuinely believe that only Joe Biden can defeat Donald Trump, because he did it in 2020. But things have changed since then; Biden is not the same person anymore. Though the US economy has done well under his administration, Biden isn't currently assertive enough to reap a winning electoral strategy out of it. His foreign policy missteps, especially in regard to the genocide perpetrated by Israel in Gaza, will likely sway some young voters, as well as Arab voters in swing states like Michigan.

Donald Trump used "Palestinian" as a slur and said Israel should "finish the job," and spouted nonsense theories about Putin's invasion of Ukraine. He said ridiculous things about abortions, and Roe v Wade, but all of that has blended into the background. Instead, pro-Dem media outlets are remembering and even agreeing with Trump's words, "I don't know what he said at the end of that sentence and I don't think he knows either." If Biden continues this way—in debates, on live television—the attention on his weakness can cost him and his party the election. There is still time to introduce a new face and a charged, exciting voice, but it's hard to imagine Biden and the Democrats doing that. It hasn't happened since 1884, and the idea that he will step down after just one debate is a dream that won't come true. After all, the course of US politics recently has dwelled much more on illogical party loyalty and lust for power, than the right thing to do.

NEVER STOP
ONLINE
THE FUTURE IS HYBRID

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

THE EDTECH DILEMMA

Understanding the pivot towards "offline" models

A hybrid model, offering both online and offline learning experiences, seems to be the answer. Online platforms provide interactive content and self-paced learning, while offline methods such as workshops, peer group discussions, and practical sessions foster hands-on learning and critical thinking.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Just two years ago, online learning was set to revolutionise education in Bangladesh, with companies like Shikho and 10 Minute School leading the charge. These platforms promised to democratise access to quality education. However, there is now a noticeable shift towards incorporating offline centres alongside online models. Why are these pioneers of online learning embracing offline methodologies?

The edtech market in Bangladesh is projected to reach several billion dollars by 2030, driven by increased internet and smartphone penetration, government initiatives, and changing perceptions about online learning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of edtech accelerated significantly, highlighting the importance of digital learning. However, challenges remained. A 2023 study shows that only 18.7% of children participate in remote learning due to device and internet access issues. Additionally, the offline education market, including coaching centres and private tutoring, remains significant, worth an estimated BDT 25,000 crore.

A hybrid model, offering both online and offline learning experiences, seems to be the answer. Online platforms provide interactive content and self-paced learning, while offline methods such as workshops, peer group discussions, and practical sessions foster hands-on learning and critical thinking. A notable success story from India is PhysicsWallah, which achieved unicorn status within two years of its launch. They began with a purely online platform but quickly recognised the potential of a hybrid model. By integrating offline centres, they have managed to cater to a wider audience, providing personalised guidance and practical experiences alongside their digital content. Their success has prompted other edtech companies, including India's Byju's and Brazil's Descomplica, to adopt similar hybrid strategies.

The majority of users in Bangladesh are still accustomed to the offline experience. Students from classes 1-8 often lack the self-discipline to study online independently, and their parents prefer in-person, supervised learning. Concerns about young children using smartphones and the affordability of decent smartphones further emphasise the preference for offline education. Additionally, exams remain a significant part of the education system, and giving tests offline is a practice that online experiences do not fully replicate. Consequently, online education is often viewed as a secondary option.

"The hybrid model will serve as a bridge to connect the unconnected, gradually transitioning offline users to fully online learning. It will also help create locally trained teachers to support their communities," explained Mirza Salman Hossain Beg, an entrepreneur with experience in edtech.

Traditional coaching centres in Bangladesh have long been a staple of supplementary education. However, they often suffer from overcrowded classrooms, lack of personalised attention, and outdated teaching methods. The hybrid approach leverages technology to deliver personalised learning while maintaining the benefits of face-to-face interaction. Building on this idea, Shikho has recently started incorporating offline experience centres to complement its online courses. These centres offer students physical exam hall experiences and personalised guidance, crucial for subjects requiring hands-on practice. By making the platform accessible in a tangible setting, they aim to demonstrate the effectiveness of online learning.

"Our decision to establish offline exam centres was driven by the unique educational needs and opportunities in Bangladesh. These centres complement our digital offerings, allowing students to engage with online resources while benefiting from the discipline of a physical exam environment," shared Shahir Chowdhury, founder of Shikho. These centres primarily serve as places where students can sit for exams and acclimate to the physical exam environment. They also offer combo courses that provide access to both offline exams and online class materials, such as live classes by top mentors, timed MCQ and CQ exams, and animated videos that explain topics further.

Similarly, 10 Minute School has initiated offline learning centres, enhancing peer-to-peer learning and community building. "Our core vision is to find synergy between what our learners want, what they need, and what we can provide. Recognising that certain learning experiences can only be offered offline, we see the strategic move to offline offerings as a complement to our existing value proposition, ensuring a more effective learning outcome for our students," explained Abdullah Abyad Raied, co-founder and CTO of the company.

"Technology enables both online and offline learning. In Southeast Asia and MENA, hybrid models are now the norm. Going forward, we will see continued synergy between these approaches," Abdullah concluded.

The shift towards a hybrid model in edtech is not merely a trend but a strategic move towards inclusive and quality education. By combining the strengths of both online and offline methods, edtech companies are paving the way for a more robust educational system. This approach addresses immediate challenges while aligning with global educational advancements, ensuring that Bangladeshi students are well-prepared for the future.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Grameenphone
Brand Manager, Digital Services

Deadline: July 4

Eligibility:
- Minimum Bachelor's degree. Marketing/brand concentration will be an added advantage.

Minimum experience: 4 years

City Bank
Assistant Manager - External Affairs and Sustainability, Brand & Communications

Deadline: July 3

Eligibility:
- Bachelor's degree in Communications, Public Relations, Business Administration, or related field. Master's degree preferred.

Minimum experience: 3 years

American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB)
Lecturer, various departments

Deadline: August 1

Eligibility:
- MBA/Masters with Bachelor/Honors in relevant discipline with no third class in all examinations with minimum 3.80 CGPA.

Minimum experience: N/A

Square Pharmaceuticals PLC.
Executive, ERP

Deadline: July 6

Eligibility:
- M.Sc./B.Sc. in Computer Science & Engineering with experience in Oracle or MS-SQL databases.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work."
>
> STEPHEN KING

Capitalising on market trends

The secret sauce to success

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Just two weeks ago, Nvidia dethroned tech titan Microsoft to become the world's most valuable company, reaching a staggering market capitalisation of $3.335 trillion. At the time of writing, Nvidia currently sits comfortably in third place at $3.038 trillion, only behind Microsoft and Apple. Despite that, the company's meteoric rise proves a compelling example of the power of capitalising on current market trends. Let's take a look at how capitalising on market trends can be the secret sauce to your startup's success.

Finding a common thread

Let's extend the example beyond Nvidia. Just last week, Amazon joined the exclusive $2 trillion market value club, solidifying itself as the fifth US company to reach this massive landmark. The common thread? The recent boom in artificial intelligence (AI). Because of how prominent the use of generative AI has become, consumers are driving the demand for AI-powered products. Likewise, investors are pouring money into companies positioned to benefit from this technological revolution.

This is a prime example of how companies can achieve tremendous success by strategically aligning themselves with current market trends. Nvidia, a company synonymous with high-performance graphics cards for gamers, provides a particularly compelling case study. Recognising the potential of AI, Nvidia adapted its powerful GPUs for use in data centres, specifically those running cutting-edge AI models similar to OpenAI's ChatGPT and Microsoft's Gemini. The result? The level of success you see now.

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

Dive deep - and stay informed!

So, what can you do to make sure your startup achieves success as well? As Nvidia and Amazon have shown us, banking on current demands is the way to go. Before steering your company's ship in a new direction, it's crucial to become educated about the current industry landscape. Immerse yourself in what the general public thinks about your industry and the type of product/service you offer. A good way to stay updated with current needs and demands is to read up on social media discussions and look for themes and consumer behaviour shifts.

For example, the growing interest in sustainable living is a trend that Tesla leveraged with its electric vehicles. As per a 2022 research paper on Tesla's sustainability factor, the company had taken note of the green economy movement - which became a trend a few years ago - and since then has become a popular name in the world of EVs. Even though Tesla stocks have had their recent ups and downs, the brand is still known for electric cars that many international users have switched to owing to the clean fuel hype.

Be open to diversifying

To stay ahead of your competitors, you should keep your company open to continuously innovate, and, when needed, diversify your product or service offerings. Do this by identifying complementary areas where you can leverage existing capabilities to meet new market demands. A strong example of this is, once again, Amazon, which started as an online bookstore and has now become a multinational tech and e-commerce juggernaut.

This level of success was possible because Amazon recognised the potential of e-commerce, and quickly expanded its product categories to meet a variety of needs. Of particular note here is Amazon Web Services (AWS), which allowed the company to brand from e-commerce to cloud computing, thus branching out to numerous new nodes of revenues - specifically data commercialisation, which further boosted the e-commerce's business value through user-based data and insights.

Embrace technological advancements

While market trends are important, neglecting research and development (R&D) can hinder long-term success. In the age of generative AI, where tech giants are constantly unveiling new models, companies need to embrace all available tools to expand sales and market reach. Once again, Nvidia serves as a prime example. The company not only capitalised on the surge in demand for graphics processing units (GPUs) but also actively invested in AI technology, generating significant industry buzz in the process.

In a similar vein, consider data analytics. It will offer valuable insights into customer behaviour and operational efficiency, ultimately streamlining your business. Remember, technology's purpose is to simplify processes. Companies that fail to leverage the latest advancements risk falling behind competitors. As such, use companies like Nvidia, Amazon, Tesla, etc. as examples of how to capitalise on demands and stay ahead of current market trends.

Star
SPORT
DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 3, 2024, ASHAR 19, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD 1
Wimbledon
Second round
Live from
3:30 pm

BCB clueless about Tigers' insipid show against Afghans

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon had no explanation for the national team's lack of intent in the crunch match against Afghanistan in the ICC T20 World Cup after a board of directors meeting yesterday in Mirpur where the biggest agenda for discussion was the team's performance at the event.

Chase down 116 inside 12.1 overs and play a semifinal of a World Cup for the first time, this was the equation for Bangladesh in their final Super Eight match against Afghanistan.

The Tigers, quizzically, abandoned that dream midway in their chase, and have essentially became the laughing stock in world cricket.

The BCB, however, were looking at the World Cup performances positively and quite comically, they chose to discuss World Cup performance in a board meeting before even speaking with the coaches, captain and the players and are yet to receive head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's report.

When asked about the team's approach in the Afghanistan game, Papon had no answers, saying, "What can I say about that?"

"When they needed to defend, they attacked and when they needed to attack, they defended," he added.

Papon, however, did not accept captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's explanation that the team stopped trying to win in 12.1 overs after fall of early wickets.

"I heard that the captain said that after three wickets went down, they didn't try. I think that's not acceptable. But when I saw the game, I didn't feel like that," he added.

All in all, it was a bizarre press conference yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium and curiously, this time no investigation committee was formed.

Problem-plagued Arambagh return after three years

SPORTS REPORTER

Once giant-killers, Arambagh Krira Sangha returned to football yesterday after overcoming numerous challenges in the last three years, securing a comprehensive 4-0 victory against Swadhinata KS in a Senior Division Football League fixture at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Dhaka.

"We formed a strong squad with an estimated budget of Tk 45 lakh after getting hope for financial help from Bashundhara Group," Arambagh general secretary Md Yaqub Ali told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that they want to play in the second-tier Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) for a few seasons before acquiring the capability to form a squad for the top-tier Bangladesh Premier League.

The traditional outfit, established in 1958, had faced demotion to the third-tier competition from the top-tier following their involvement in live betting, spot-fixing, match manipulation, and online betting in 2021.

Previously, they had struggled to form their squad due to involvement in a casino scandal in late 2019.

FIFA also banned the club from registering local players due to their inability to clear the wages of Brazilian coach Douglas Silva Dos Santos.

Rishad's emergence not yet a watershed for leg-spin

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Rishad Hossain grabbing the attention of the cricket world through his wrist-spin was perhaps the biggest positive takeaway for Bangladesh from an otherwise underwhelming campaign in the recently concluded ICC T20 World Cup.

The leggie grabbed 14 wickets in seven matches in competition, finishing as Bangladesh's most successful bowler in the competition, and joint third overall in the tournament.

Rishad's performance in the T20 World Cup vindicated the management's years of investment on the 21-year-old.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), which often finds itself at the receiving end of criticism – mostly for the off-the-field issues while on-field performances also don't help them much – had singled out the leggie years ago and had been preparing him for the national side.

Rishad first got into the scenes in 2017 through 'Robi Khoj: The Number 1 Spinner', a talent hunt where he was awarded the title of the 'Most Accurate Bowler'. Since then, Rishad has featured in many developmental teams of the BCB, even when he was hardly getting a game at the domestic level.

The officials at the board must now be heaving a sigh of great relief as their blueprint of nurturing Rishad for the national team has clicked, that too on the big stage, and they are now getting the applause from the country's cricketing fraternity for their long-term planning.

Although the emergence of Rishad Hossain is a huge positive for Bangladesh cricket, it would be unwise for the management to get complacent about their leg-spin reserves just now.

Rishad has started his career with a lot of promise, but there is no telling whether he would go strength to strength from here or end up as a one-tournament wonder.

Experts suggested that the process of nurturing wrist-spinners from a young age needs to continue and feel that Rishad can become a role model for the aspiring leggies in Bangladesh.

> **You need to have examples in cricket. When Rashid Khan started bowling leg-spin in Afghanistan, he set an example there. Many Afghan boys got interested through Rashid's bowling and started bowling like him. As Rishad does well in international cricket, the number of leg-spinners in the country will also increase.**
>
> **Sohel Islam**
> Bangladesh Tigers head coach

"I think the leg-spinners in different age-level teams now can be inspired by Rishad," said Sohel Islam, the Bangladesh Tigers head coach, who closely worked with Rishad, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"You need to have examples in cricket. When Rashid Khan started bowling leg-spin in Afghanistan, he set an example there. Many Afghan boys got interested through Rashid's bowling and started bowling like him. As Rishad does well in international cricket, the number of leg-spinners in the country will also increase," he added.

The BCB's game development committee is currently running a camp for wrist-spinners and Sohel expects to find a few promising leggies from there.

"The spinners in the camp are from different age groups. The board is thinking of sending them to different age-level teams to get match practice," said Sohel.

Veteran coach Wahidul Gani, who is currently looking after the Under-14 and Under-15 setups, feels a collective approach from the BCB and domestic teams is required to ensure continued success in the wrist-spin department.

"This year in U14, U15 age-level tournaments, we made it mandatory to play a leg-spinner in every team and to give him five overs. This is how we are trying to give leggies playing opportunities. But I don't think it's the correct way to make a leg-spinner. The player needs to have talent and earn the trust of their coaches," Gani told The Daily Star.

"There is a saying in sports that winning is a poor teacher. We play to win, but we can get a good player while losing a match. We need to have faith in him and also need people who understand right-arm wrist-spin," he said, adding that Mushtaq Ahmed's inclusion as Tiger's bowling coach can play a big role in Rishad's development. "I think having Mushtaq will also help Rishad a lot because he has played at the top level. He knows the quality of batsmen at the top level and their footwork very well. I think Mushtaq's experience will help him a lot."

SHORT CORNER

Taskin apologised for arriving late before India match, says Shakib

The unexpected reason behind Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed not featuring against India in the recent T20 World Cup has recently garnered attention. Reports disclosed that Taskin overslept on the match day and missed the team bus, a fact later confirmed by former captain Shakib Al Hasan. "So, when Taskin actually had reached the field, it was probably five to ten minutes before the toss. Naturally, it was difficult for the team management to include him in the team at that time," said Shakib.

Swimmers Rafi, Sonia receive wild cards for Paris Olympics

Swimmers Samiul Islam Rafi and Sonia Akhter are the latest athletes from Bangladesh to receive wild cards for the upcoming Paris Olympic Games after World Aquatics, international swimming governing body, confirmed their participation to the Bangladesh Olympic Association and Bangladesh Swimming Federation today.
Rafi, who has been training in Thailand, will participate in the 100m freestyle while Sonia will take part in the 50m freestyle, informed BOA member and BSF general secretary BM Saif.

'We want to be champions, but also need to be realistic'

"Actually, if we look at the performance of our women's team, the performance graph is not that bad. It's true that we couldn't do well in our recent two series. But our performances before those two series were quite promising. Hopefully, we will have a good Asia Cup in Sri Lanka. We had won the Asia Cup in the T20 format once before. We have also won against Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. With the ability this team possesses, I'm optimistic that they will do well in the tournament," said Bangladesh Cricket Board's women's wing chairman Shafiul Alam Chowdhury Nadel during a conversation with The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Defending champion Marketa Vondrousova was eliminated in the first round of Wimbledon by Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro in straight sets, 6-4 6-2, yesterday. The Czech became the first female holder to fall at the opening hurdle since Steffi Graf 30 years ago. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Ronaldo battling with Father Time

REUTERS

"Time beat him. Time takes everybody out. It's undefeated," said Rocky Balboa in the film "Creed" and those words could easily be applied to Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo who struggled to impose himself on their Euro 2024 last-16 game with Slovenia on Monday.

A tearful Ronaldo being embraced and comforted by team mates after missing a penalty in extra time that could have helped Portugal secure a spot in the quarter-finals before a shootout win is a cathartic image that stunned fans around the world.

Portugal won 3-0 on penalties minutes later, with Ronaldo converting the first spot kick and apologising to fans in the stands immediately after scoring before breaking down in tears following the game and being unable to finish an interview.

His tears showed more than just the sorrow or guilt of a player feeling the weight of responsibility from almost letting his country down. They were the tears of a frustrated player who expects greatness but was not the difference maker he once was.

During the 2022 World Cup Ronaldo said: "The best timing is my timing" as he arrived in Qatar with his career in turmoil, about to leave Manchester United to play in Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo, a five-times Ballon D'Or winner, had arrived with a mission to prove he could still make a difference on the world stage. But he ended the tournament on the bench and had no impact as a substitute in the 1-0 quarter-final loss to Morocco.

After that defeat, the shocking image of Ronaldo running to the tunnel in tears as desolate as the football world had ever seen him was something Portugal fans were not used to.

But with long-time Portugal manager Fernando Santos gone and newcomer Roberto Martinez trusting him with the captaincy and a leadership role in a young and talented squad, Ronaldo was given another shot at glory in Euro 2024.

Despite being a model of longevity for more than two decades in an outstanding career, breaking numerous records and playing for some of the biggest clubs in the world, Ronaldo has been a shadow of his old self over the last two weeks in Germany.

Lacking the speed, explosion and agility that were his trademarks while pouncing on balls like a tiger to plunder goals in various ways that only he was able to, the 2024 version of Ronaldo has yet to score at this Euros after four games.

Against Slovenia, just as in the previous three games, his shooting was off kilter and his headers failed to trouble keeper Jan Oblak while his team mates seemed to be forcing the ball to him, disrupting Portugal's tempo and slowing them down.

At 39, Ronaldo would have become the oldest player to score in a European Championship if he had netted his extra-time penalty but he failed to beat the excellent Oblak and instead of relief came desperation.

Martinez still trusted him to take the first penalty in the shootout and Ronaldo duly delivered to help Portugal stay alive at the Euros, with several records that he is still seeking.

They will face France in the quarter-finals with the world questioning whether Ronaldo's brilliant international career is nearing an end. There could still be a happy ending for one of the world's greatest ever players - only time will tell.

BGCCI
Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BGCCI) is an independent, member-driven bilateral trade organization which promotes bilateral economic trade relations between Germany and Bangladesh since 2003. BGCCI provides services to Bangladesh and German companies and acts as a strategic partner between the two economies

We are inviting applications from deserving candidates for following position:

Position : Executive Director
Location : Dhaka, Bangladesh
Reports to : Board of Directors
Job Type : Full-Time

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with Government agencies, International development agencies, German/ European Agencies working of Sustainable development, Trade promotions and other relevant organizations for business development between Bangladesh and Germany.
- Organize and manage trade promotional events, including conferences, seminars, and networking events.
- Develop and implement strategic plans to advance the chamber's mission and objectives
- Formulate sectorial reports and make recommendations based on findings.
- Ensure the effective operation of the chamber in accordance with the established policies and strategic plans.

Qualifications and Skills

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, International Relations, Economics, or a related field. A master's degree or equivalent experience is preferred.
- Minimum of 12-15 years of experience in a Senior management role, Preferably served Bangladesh Government Civil services, Overseas Bangladesh Missions, International development agencies, Other Major trade association with similar role or served a job which has significant verbal and written communication experience to articulate an effective relationship development between trade bodies

Interested Candidate can send their CV along with recent Photograph within July 10, 2024
To:
The President
Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI)
House # 10/B – 5th Floor; Road # 90; Gulshan 2, Dhaka – 1212, Bangladesh
(e-mail: maksud.corona@gmail.com , wps@weberbd.com)

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Ensure govt staffers comply with provision for asset disclosure

HC orders authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to strictly ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the law for time-to-time monitoring of the disclosures of movable and immoveable properties of government officials serving in civil capacity.

It also directed them to submit progress reports to this effect before the court in three months.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadot Hossain also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their failure and inaction to adopt guidelines or policies or to enact proper legislation to prevent accumulation of illegal wealth (movable or immovable) through corruption by the public/government servants serving in civil capacity, and their family members, should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries at the cabinet division; and ministries of finance, home, law, and public administration; the Bank and Financial Institution Division of the finance ministry; chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission; chairman of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

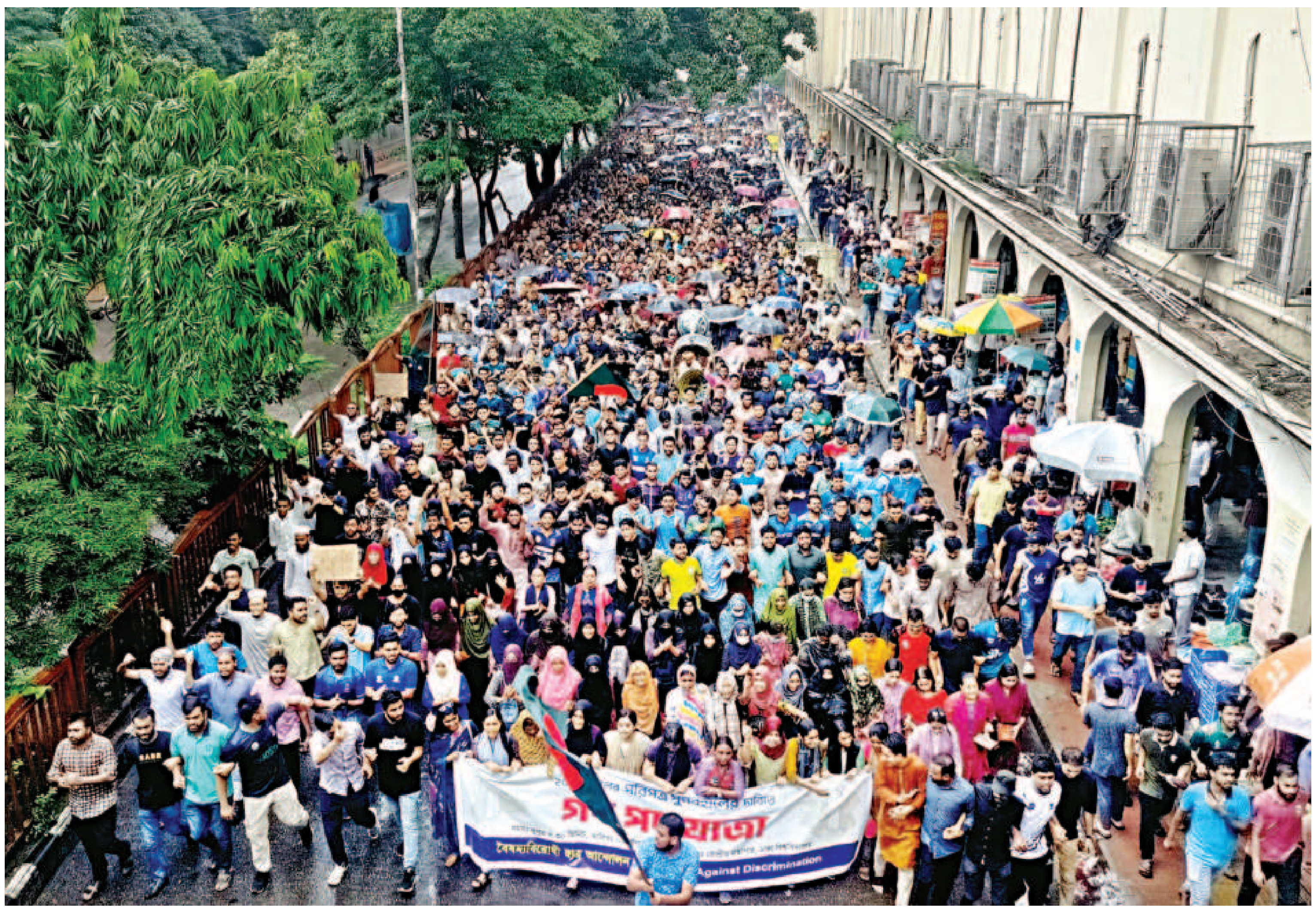

PHOTO: SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Chanting slogans against the quota system in government jobs, several hundred university students headed towards the Shahbag intersection to continue their protest around 3:45pm yesterday. The demonstration lasted an hour, causing severe traffic congestion in nearby roads.

Ex-additional IGP, wife own Tk 30cr illegal assets: ACC

They also hid info on Tk 36.96cr wealth

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former additional IGP M Shamsuddoha Khandaker and his wife Ferdowsi Sultana Khandaker illegally amassed wealth worth Tk 30.35 crore, found an Anti-Corruption Commission probe.

Shamsuddoha

The couple also concealed information of wealth worth Tk 36.91 crore, said the probe report submitted before a Dhaka court yesterday.

The two also laundered Tk 62.34 crore, said the ACC.

ACC Assistant Director Khorshed Alam, also investigation officer of two graft cases, yesterday filed two charge sheets with the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka, accusing Shamsuddoha, also former chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), and Ferdowsi, said an ACC assistant inspector working at the court.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

116 killed in stampede at India religious event

Most of the dead are women, children; many others injured; death toll may rise

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

At least 116 people, many of them women and children, were killed in a stampede at a Hindu religious gathering in north India yesterday, authorities said, in one of the country's worst such tragedies in years.

The stampede happened in a village in Hathras district, about 200 km (125 miles) southeast of the national capital New Delhi, where authorities said thousands had gathered in sweltering late afternoon temperatures.

"The incident happened due to overcrowding at the time when people were trying to leave the venue," Ashish Kumar, administrator of the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, told reporters.

Chaitra V, another senior state official, told broadcaster India Today that people may have lost their footing as they sought water in the heat.

"There was wet mud at one place where people may have slipped. Also because of the heat, people may have made their way to the spot where water was kept and that could have caused the incident as well," she said.

Video clips recorded by news agency ANI showed bodies piled into the back of trucks and laid out in vehicles.

Purses and bags covered in dust, were heaped up at the venue, with people sitting on their haunches sifting through them to identify their belongings.

Mobile phones were similarly piled together, waiting to be claimed by their owners.

A video on social media showed a large crowd packed into a tented area, standing and listening to devotional tunes as they waved their hands in the direction of the religious leader who sat on a stage.

It also showed some women hanging on to the bamboo poles holding up the canopy to get a better view above the heads of the large crowd.

"There must have been about 50,000 people...at the gate on the highway, some people were going left and some people were going right, the stampede was caused in that confusion," Suresh Chandra, a witness who was at the gathering, told local media.

Seema, a woman who travelled from a town almost 60 km away to attend the event, said she was leaving the venue when the stampede occurred. She was accompanied by three relatives, two of whom were killed.

FLOOD IN SYLHET

Thousands marooned in three districts

STAR REPORT

At a time when Sylhet is still reeling from the devastation caused by last month's deluge, the region is now experiencing a fresh round of flooding triggered by the nonstop rain over the last few days, plunging thousands deeper into despair.

Low-lying areas of eight upazilas in Sylhet, including parts of the city, five upazilas in Sunamganj, including parts of the municipality, and two upazilas in Moulvibazar have been newly inundated.

Sylhet witnesses large-scale destruction to life and property every monsoon due to flooding in its vast network of rivers.

Last month, flash floods displaced more than 22 lakh people during two rounds of flooding in the region, affecting hundreds of areas and causing untold suffering to the dwellers.

The flood waters left behind a trail of destruction, submerging villages, destroying crops and wrecking homes.

This time, the ongoing flood situation is expected to worsen, with more rainfall predicted in the coming days, according to the weather department and the Flood Forecasting Warning Centre.

Already hundreds of flood-affected people, the majority of whom have only recently returned home from shelters, are being forced to return to the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Israel pounds Gaza after evacuation order

Thousands flee their homes in Khan Yunis; 25 more Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Israeli forces bombarded several areas of the southern Gaza Strip yesterday and thousands of Palestinians fled their homes in what could be part of a final push of Israel's intensive military operations in nine months of offensive.

Eight Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded in Khan Yunis, health officials said. Israel's military said that two soldiers had been killed in battle a day earlier.

Israel's leaders have said they were winding down the phase of intense fighting against Hamas, and would soon shift into more targeted operations.

Later yesterday, 17 Palestinians were killed in Israeli tank shelling of a street in the densely populated Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza City in the north of the Strip, medics said. Footage on some Palestinian social media showed the scene at a local market, with bread scattered on a floor stained with blood.

- » A quarter of a million hit by evacuation order: UN
- » Troops would soon start targeted operations: Israel
- » Gaza death toll rises to 37,925

The Israeli army had ordered residents of several towns and villages in eastern Khan Younis to evacuate their homes on Monday evening, prior to tanks re-entering the area the military had left several weeks ago.

Thousands who had not heeded the call were forced to flee their homes in the dark overnight, as Israeli tanks and planes bombed Karara, Abassan and other areas that had been named in the evacuation orders, residents and Hamas media said.

"Where will we go?" said Tamer, a 55-year-old businessman, who has been displaced six times since October 7.

"Every time people go back to their homes and begin to rebuild some of their lives even on the rubble of their houses, the occupation sends the tanks back to destroy what is left," he told Reuters via a chat app.

BENAZIR, FAMILY

ACC primary probe finds corruption evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has obtained preliminary information indicating that former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, his wife and daughters acquired assets beyond their known sources of income.

The commission has also found evidence of more immovable and movable properties at home and abroad in their names or fake names.

ACC Secretary Khorsheda Yasmin shared this information with reporters at a press conference at its headquarters yesterday.

She stated that they got preliminary information about illegal wealth in the names of Benazir, his wife Jisaan Mirza, and their two daughters -- Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir.

She mentioned that the commission has decided

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MORE NEWS

Biden blasts top court ruling on Trump immunity
PAGE 7

The Bangladesh-India friendship dilemma
PAGE 9

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি
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স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০.১০১.৪৩.০০০.২৪.৩৬০৪ তারিখঃ ০২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

পাওয়ার গ্রিড কোম্পানি অব বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড এর নাম পরিবর্তন প্রসঙ্গে

পাওয়ার গ্রিড কোম্পানি অব বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড ১৯৯৬ সালে নিবন্ধনের পর থেকে এ নামে পরিচালিত হচ্ছে। 'কোম্পানি আইন ১৯৯৪' -এর অধিকতর সংশোধনকল্পে প্রণীত কোম্পানি (দ্বিতীয় সংশোধন) আইন ২০২০ এর ধারা ১১ (ক) এর বিধান অনুসারে বাংলাদেশে নিবন্ধিত সীমিতদায় পাবলিক কোম্পানির নামের শেষে 'পাবলিক সীমিতদায় কোম্পানি' বা 'পিএলসি' লিখার নির্দেশনা রয়েছে। উক্ত নির্দেশনার আলোকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে কোম্পানির নাম পরিবর্তন করে 'পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি' (Power Grid Bangladesh PLC) করা হয়েছে।

এমতাবস্থায় কোম্পানির বর্তমান নাম 'পাওয়ার গ্রিড কোম্পানি অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ' -এর পরিবর্তে 'পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি' (Power Grid Bangladesh PLC) হিসেবে সর্বক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহারের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অনুরোধ করা হলো। এ নির্দেশনা অবিলম্বে কার্যকর হবে।

নির্দেশক্রমে,
মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আজাদ
কোম্পানি সচিব

Malen hits brace as Netherlands reach Euro quarters

AFP, *Munich*

The Netherlands swept into their first European Championship quarterfinal since 2008 as Donyell Malen scored twice in a 3-0 win over Romania in the last 16 on Tuesday.

Cody Gakpo gave the Dutch an early lead but they were unable to convert pressure into a crucial second goal until the Liverpool forward set up Malen with seven minutes remaining in Munich.

Romania were gritty but out-classed, lacking the quality to punish their opponents' profligacy before Malen added his second on the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

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বিজ্ঞপ্তি

"তীব্র গরম প্রাণঘাতী, সচেতন হই সুরক্ষিত থাকি"

জলবায়ুর পরিবর্তনজনিত কারণে সৃষ্ট তাপদাহ আমাদের নাগরিক জীবনে মারাত্মক প্রভাব ফেলছে। বিগত কয়েক বছরে এই তীব্র তাপপ্রবাহগুলো দীর্ঘ থেকে দীর্ঘতর এবং তীব্র থেকে তীব্রতর হচ্ছে। এই তীব্র তাপপ্রবাহে নগরবাসীর কর্মদক্ষতা হ্রাস পায় এবং স্বাস্থ্যঝুঁকিও বহুলাংশে বেড়ে যায়। সুতরাং এখনই সময় সাধারণ মানুষের তাপপ্রবাহ জনিত স্বাস্থ্য ঝুঁকি এড়াতে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহনের।

জনসচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি ও স্বাস্থ্য ঝুঁকি নিরসনে বাস্তবসম্মত পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণের নিমিত্তে ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন (DNCC) একটি জরীপ (Survey) কার্যক্রম চালানোর উদ্যোগ নিয়েছে। গবেষণা কার্যক্রমের অংশ হিসেবে ডিএনসিসি'র উদ্যোগে বেশ কিছু সংখ্যক ভলান্টিয়ার নিয়োগ দেয়া হয়েছে। উক্ত ভলান্টিয়ারগণ ডিএনসিসি কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত পরিচয় পত্র এবং নির্দিষ্ট পোশাক পরিধানপূর্বক পূর্বনির্ধারিত তারিখে আপনার কাছে উপস্থিত হলে তাপপ্রবাহ সংক্রান্ত কিছু তথ্যপ্রদান করে সহায়তা প্রদানের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

এই গবেষণালব্ধ ফলাফল নগরবাসীর স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষার নিমিত্তেই ব্যবহার করা হবে ।

জনস্বার্থে:
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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 4, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 162 | ASHAR 20, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | ZILHAJJ 27, 1445 HIJRI | 20 PAGES PLUS CAMPUS: TK 15.00

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PM'S VISIT TO CHINA

Dhaka to seek $20b fresh loans from Beijing

PORIMOL PALMA, REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **JAGARAN CHAKMA**

Bangladesh will seek fresh loans amounting to $20 billion during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to China, which Beijing hopes would be a "game changer" in the bilateral relationship.

Of the sum, $15 billion would be for infrastructure projects and $5 billion -- which would be disbursed in yuan -- would be to facilitate payments for imports from China, according to the officials involved in preparing the proposals.

"We have reached consensus on several aspects but are yet to finalise it -- we will finalise it by July 7," one of the officials told The Daily Star yesterday.

The foreign ministry yesterday held an inter-ministerial meeting for finalising the joint statement that will be adopted by Bangladesh and China during the PM's visit from July 8 to July 11.

The visit comes just two weeks after Hasina's first state visit to India after she was sworn in as the PM for a fourth straight term.

The trip to China, Bangladesh's largest trading partner, is viewed as a balancing act by Hasina, who hopes to be in the good books of two competing regional powers.

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, say finance ministry officials.

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, according to finance ministry officials.

This will be an integrated development plan for the southern region involving projects on transport and communication, ICT, power and energy, logistics and a special economic zone.

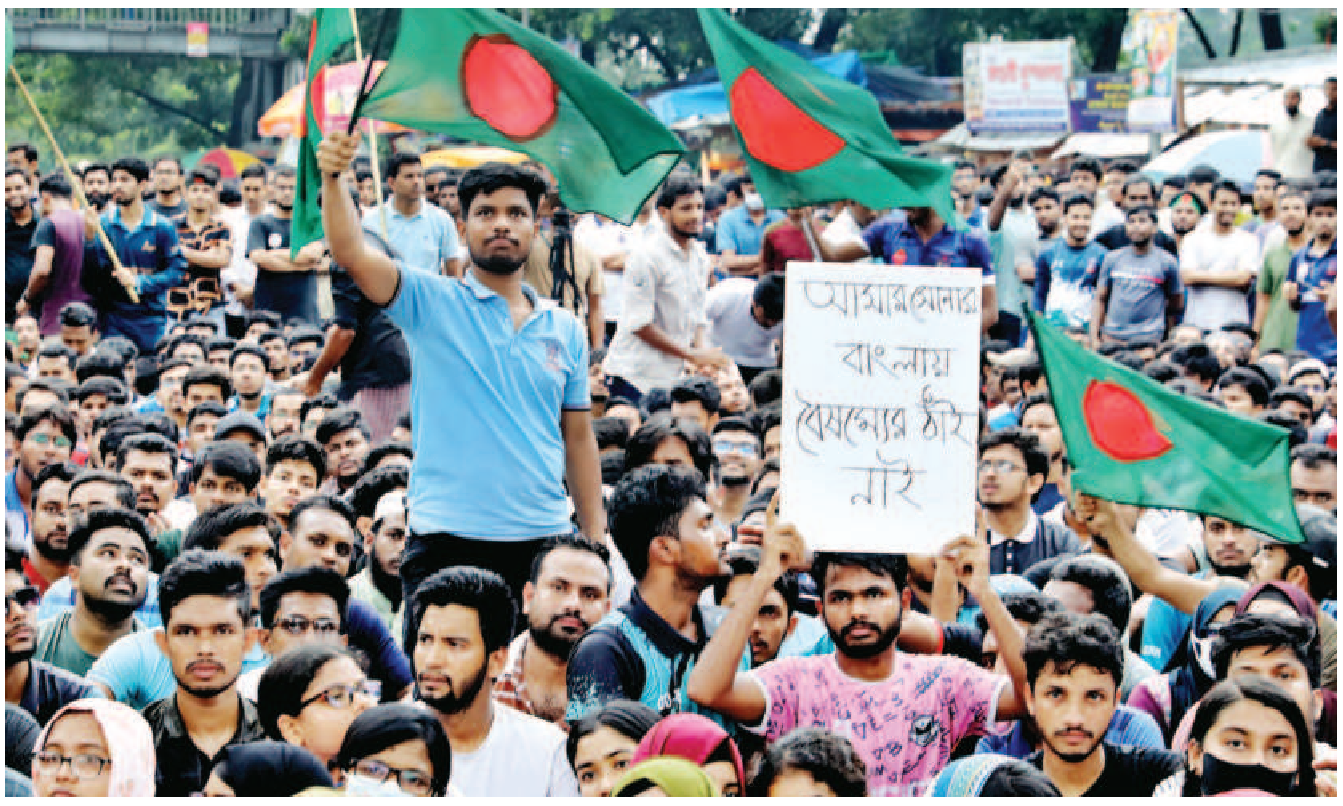
SIDI will see the establishment of an electric vehicle plant, a hi-tech park and a logistic hub at a strategic location, said a finance ministry official.Japan is supporting the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI) and the BIG-B Initiative (The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt).

"Similarly, Dhaka wants Beijing to support SIDI," said a foreign ministry official.

Bangladesh earlier sought a loan in Yuan worth $5 billion to facilitate importers to make payments for goods and services procured from China amid Bangladesh's strained dollar stockpile.

Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and China stands at $23 billion,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Thousands of university students yesterday thronged the Shahbagh intersection in the capital for the second consecutive day, protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs. Story on page 12. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

S Alam Group's rejoinder and our reply

S Alam Group has sent a rejoinder to our story headlined "Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500 crore in VAT, says NBR" published in The Daily Star's online version on June 30, 2024, and print version on July 1, 2024.

We received the rejoinder on July 2, 2024, a day after the Group sent an identical protest note to various newspapers, and about a dozen national and local dailies ran the rejoinder as adverts on July 2, 2024. Below we are running the full, unedited rejoinder (paragraph numbering is ours) along with our response.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Ensure same pension scheme for all

Say experts about equal-contribution plan; 'thrusting it on certain section discriminatory'

AHSAN HABIB

A pension scheme in which the employee and employer make equal contributions is welcome in this economy, but it has to apply to all, be they public university teachers, bureaucrats or other government employees, economists say.

But imposing this scheme on certain types of entities is discriminatory, they add.

Faculty and staff at 35 public universities have been on strike since Monday, protesting a pension scheme which will require those joining on or after July 1 to make contributions to the pension funds.

Experts say public university teachers and government officials should all be under the same pension scheme.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

What's the harm if India given transit?

Asks PM in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

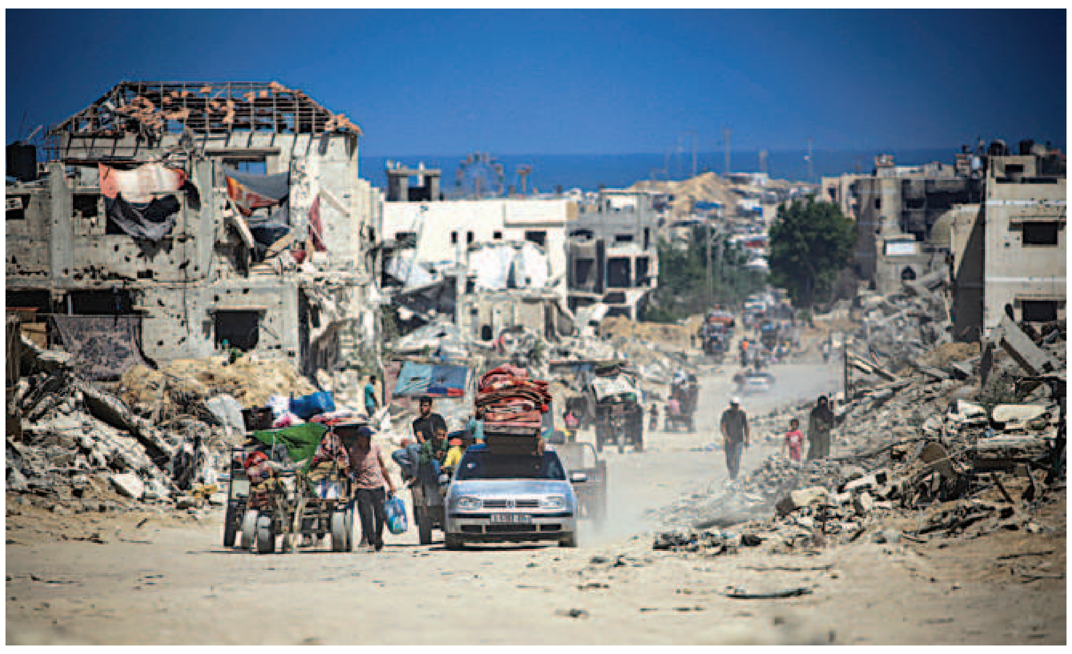
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh cannot keep its doors shut in this era of globalisation and she wondered what the loss would be if India is given transit facilities.

"There are objections about why we gave transit facility to India. We have already given this facility. What is the harm in this? Rather, we are getting tolls for the use of roads. The people of our country are having benefits. We are earning some money," she said in her concluding speech of the budget session in parliament.

Blasting those who criticised her recent visit to India, Hasina said the opposition parties continue saying many things about her tour.

She said Bangladesh needs to join Trans-Asian Highway. "We have also secured transit facilities from India for [carrying goods to and from] Nepal and Bhutan."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Palestinians go past buildings destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Univ teachers likely to sit with govt

Vow to carry on abstention until pension demands met

STAR REPORT

The government is likely to hold a meeting today with the representatives of the public university teachers over pension benefits amid their strike.

Teachers, however, said they will continue their indefinite work abstention and negotiate simultaneously until their demands are met.

They criticised Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali for terming their protest "unreasonable". They also challenged the minister to sit down for talks.

Teachers of 35 public universities

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Labour predicted to eject Tories as UK goes to polls

AFP, *London*

Britain's political leaders made a final push for votes yesterday on the last day of an election campaign expected to return a Labour government after 14 years of Conservative rule.

Ex-premier Boris Johnson staged an 11th-hour rallying call for the flagging Tories but an ally of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak conceded their party was staring at an "extraordinary landslide" defeat.

Voters will cast ballots from 7:00am (0600 GMT) today, with polls predicting that Labour will win its first general election since 2005 -- making its leader Keir Starmer prime minister.

That outcome would see Britain swing leftwards back to the centre ground after almost a decade and a half of right-wing Conservative governments.

Starmer was crisscrossing the UK on Wednesday with visits in England, Scotland and Wales in a bid to shore up Labour support and warn against complacency in the campaign's final hours.

"If you want change, you have to vote for it," the 61-year-old told reporters, adding that he was "not taking anything for granted".

- Labour majority expected after 14 years of Conservative rule
- A party needs 326 seats of the 650-seat parliament to secure a majority
- Economy, healthcare, immigration are among the most important issues
- Final results are expected in the early hours of Friday

The Tories have been going all out to play upon people's fears, warning of tax rises and weaker national security if they are voted out, in what Labour sees as a desperate last stand to cling on to power.

They have also increasingly urged voters in recent weeks to stop the prospect of Labour winning a "supermajority" -- a claim Labour fears is intended to hit turnout.

Work and Pensions Secretary Mel Stride, one of Sunak's closest allies, said Wednesday the electorate would "regret" handing Labour "untrammelled" power without an effective Tory opposition.

"If you look at the polls, it is pretty clear that Labour at this stage are heading for an extraordinary landslide on a scale that has probably never, ever been seen in this country before," he told right-wing broadcaster GB News.

Labour has enjoyed a consistent 20-point lead in the polls over the past two years with many voters dissatisfied with the Conservatives' handling of a range of issues including the cost of living, public services, immigration and the economy.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

ACC sues Rajuk official, his wife over illegal assets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed two cases against Rajuk Director Mobarok Hossain on charges of acquiring assets through illegal means.

Mobarok Hossain

In one case, filed under section 109 of the penal code, his wife Shahana Parveen is the main accused and he is the second accused. The other case, under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act-2004, was filed only against Mobarok.

Asif Al Mahmud, the commission's assistant director at the Dhaka Integrated District Office-1, filed the cases, ACC Public Relations Officer Aktarul Islam told The Daily Star.

In the wealth statements submitted by Mobarok, the ACC found evidence of acquisition of assets inconsistent with his income of Tk 41.46 lakh, according to a case statement.

It said Mobarak declared that he has movable and immovable assets worth Tk 1.86 crore in the wealth statement he submitted to the ACC. By reviewing the records obtained during the verification, the ACC found authenticity in the wealth statement submitted.

Against this wealth, the total

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

আমি বাংলায় কথা বলি

ব্যাংকিং এখন আরও সহজ কারণ আপনার প্রিয় মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং অ্যাপ MyPrime এখন বাংলায়। তাই আপনার ইচ্ছার স্বাধীনতায় মাইপ্রাইম-এর মাধ্যমে ব্যাংকিং হবে আরও স্বাচ্ছন্দ্যে।

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NORTHERN MYANMAR

Clashes break out near military regional command

AFP, *Yangon*

Clashes broke out near a regional military command in northern Myanmar yesterday, residents and local media said, in what appeared to be a widening offensive against junta troops.

Gunfire has rocked the northern Shan state town of Lashio, home to the military's northeastern command, since late Tuesday, one resident told AFP.

"Since last night we have been hearing shooting targeting the regional military command... we dare not to go outside," they said, requesting anonymity.

Fighting was happening outside the town, another resident told an AFP correspondent, who heard one explosion down the phone.

She said the military had closed all roads into Lashio but that some shops in the town were still open.

Videos uploaded to social media showed a wooden building destroyed and partly in flames, and local media reported six civilians had been killed in shelling.

Parimita Ghosh delicately picking some collard greens from a waterbody near her home in Beel Pabla area of Khulna's Dumuria upazila yesterday. The swelling of small waterbodies during the monsoon triggers the growth of various semi-aquatic plants, including different kinds of spinach and edible greens. From morning to noon, Parimita collects these, bundles them up and then sets off to the local market in the afternoon to sell them. Through this, she earns Tk 250-300 per day. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Landslides kill two in Ukhiya refugee camps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

Two people, including a child, died in separate incidents of landslides at two Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila early yesterday.

The incidents occurred at camps 8 and 11, said Shamim Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ukhiya Police Station.

The deceased were identified as Sifat Ullah, 13, belonging to the host community living in the eastern zone of Camp 8 at Balukhali's Jumerchhara, and Rohingya refugee Anwar Hossain of Block A in Camp 11, added the OC, quoting locals.

Meanwhile, a hill slide temporarily disrupted traffic movement on Marine Drive in Himchari Point since early morning. However, the road was cleared by a team of the Bangladesh Army before noon.

On June 19, ten people, including eight Rohingyas, were killed in separate landslides at the refugee camps in Ukhiya.

Incessant rains since last week have exacerbated landslide risks for Cox's Bazar residents, especially for people who are living in hilly areas.

About 1.2 million Rohingya, most of whom fled for their lives in 2017 facing atrocities by Myanmar's junta forces, live in 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar. Many of them live in hilly areas prone to landslides.

What's the harm if India given transit?

FROM PAGE 1

Noting that Bangladesh brings fuel from India's Assam to the Parbatipur depot through a pipeline, the leader of the House said this enabled Bangladesh to purchase fuel at a cheap rate.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the government has a plan to bring fuel to Natore through a pipeline.

She described how the interest of the country was neglected during the rules of military dictators Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, and also during the tenure of Khaleda Zia's government.

The PM said Zia had opened Bangladeshi market for Indian goods. She said Zia and Ershad did nothing to resolve the enclave and Tin Bigha Corridor issues with India.

She said Khaleda forgot to raise the Ganges water-sharing issue during her visit to India in 1990s.

Hasina said she objected to selling gas to India ahead of the 2001 general election, but Khaleda agreed to it.

"As a result, my party Awami League could not win a large number of seats despite securing larger percentage of votes.

"We couldn't form the government because of my unwillingness to sell gas. So, who sells the country? Khaleda Zia, HM Ershad and Ziaur Rahman did it. Awami League doesn't do it."

The premier sought cooperation from the MPs so the national budget for 2024-25 fiscal and the Annual Development Programme are properly implemented.

Talking about the Ashrayan project, she said a total of 8.68 lakh landless and homeless families have been rehabilitated. The total number of beneficiaries is more than 43.39 lakh, she added.

This year, the budget session of the 12th parliament began on June 5. The session was prorogued yesterday evening after 19 sittings.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali placed the Tk 7.97 lakh crore proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal in parliament on June 6. The Finance Bill-2024 was passed on June 29 and the national budget on June 30.

A total of 228 MPs took part in the discussion on the proposed budget.

ACC sues

FROM PAGE 1

amount of legal sources, including savings and loans, and excluding family and other expenses from income from various sectors during the service, is found to be Tk 69 lakh.

"In this case, he could not show any legitimate and acceptable sources of income for the additional Tk 41.46 lakh," it said.

On the other hand, although Shahana is a homemaker, there is evidence of non-income assets of Tk 1.58 crore in her name.

According to the statement of the case in which she was accused, "In the wealth statement submitted to the ACC, Shahana showed her movable and immovable properties are worth Tk 1.99 crore. However, the total legal and acceptable income, including net savings and other legal receipts, and excluding family and other expenses from the income mentioned in the name of Shahana Parvin, is Tk 41.2 lakh.

"It was found that the accused Shahana Parvin possessed movable and immovable assets worth Tk 1.58 crore inconsistent with her known sources of income."

The ACC said Shahana bought her properties with her husband's ill-gotten money, which is why she is the main accused in the case filed over abetting the acquiring of illegal wealth.

S Alam Group's rejoinder and our reply

FROM PAGE 1

THE REJOINDER

1. It has come to our notice that a renowned newspaper namely The Daily Star has published a news report in its online version on 30.06.2024 at 4:25 PM and subsequently published in its print version on 01.07.2024 with the headline "Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500 crore in VAT, says NBR". In the said News Report, it has been falsely stated that S. Alam Vegetable Oil Limited and S. Alam Edible Oil Limited have unpaid Value Added Tax, and consequent penalty worth over Tk. 7,000 crore which they allegedly evaded through various means in three years between 2019-20 to 2021- 2022. The said news report made further false allegation that during the period from 2019 to 2022, these two companies evaded Tk. 3,538 crore in VAT for which these two companies have been imposed penalty of Tk. 3,531 Crore. In the said news report, it has falsely been alleged that these two companies evaded revenue by showing lower value of raw material purchase in VAT Return than that reported in their annual reports during the three financial years. In the said news report, further false allegation has been made that the said two companies evaded VAT by deducting less amount of VAT at source. It is further falsely alleged that despite selling edible oil to different purchasers, the said two companies did not pay VAT on those sale transactions. In the said news report it is further falsely alleged that in order to evade VAT, soybean and palm oil were sold after producing the items with the ingredients procured from local sources or collected by any other means. It is further alleged that Tk. 8100.39 core worth of raw materials have been procured locally against which the company failed to submit any VAT challan or Bill of Entry.

2. All the above allegations are absolutely false, frivolous, baseless and the said report has been published with ulterior motive. Both the companies submitted reply to the VAT authority on 27.12.2023 and thereafter submitted an explanation to their reply on 18.03.2024. In the explanation dated 18.03.2024, both the companies produced a clear picture that firstly the said two companies deducted VAT at source in accordance with law and no VAT was evaded which is supported by the evidence produced before the Commissioner of VAT.

3. Secondly, Tk. 10,320 Crore and Tk 9,207 Crore were shown in the respective audit report as sale which were actually received as advance money by issuing DO letters in favour of the intending purchasers for future sales which ultimately did not take place and the amounts so received by the aforesaid two companies were ultimately returned to the buyers through their respective bank accounts. The context of advance sale is a common practice in the local market of edible oil and is recognized business practice all over the country. The return of the amount of those advance sales are well documented.

4. Thirdly, the raw materials for production of edible oil are not available in the local market and those have to be imported by way of L/C. All these explanations were sufficiently placed before the Commissioner of VAT with relevant documents. However, the Commissioner of VAT deliberately avoided from reflecting the same in his determination order. However, in the said news report as well as in the order passed by the VAT Commissioner on 09.06.2024, this explanation of the two companies have willfully been suppressed only to scandalize the said two companies. During the proceeding before the VAT Commissionerate, these two companies requested to allow them opportunity of personal hearing as well as for producing their detailed evidence in supporting their explanation.

5. Lastly, on 04.06.2024 both the companies filed applications before the Commissioner of VAT for fixing the date of hearing on 10.07.2024 or any day thereafter. However, the VAT Commissionerate passed an order on 09.06.2024 without affording these two companies the opportunity of hearing which is a clear violation of section 73 read with 85 of the VAT and Supplementary Act, 2012 as well as of principles of natural justice. Interestingly, the Commissioner in his orders both dated 09.06.2024 totally suppressed the fact of filing of application by these companies on 04.06.2024 only to justify his order.

6. These two companies never evaded any amount of VAT whatsoever and we are confident that if we are given a proper opportunity to produce our explanation along with the supporting documents, we will be able to establish the fact that no VAT has ever been evaded. These two companies challenged the said orders of the VAT Commissioner by filing two writ petitions before the Hon'b1e High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on 30.06.2024. The Hon'b1e High Court Division vide order dated 01.07.2024 was pleased to issue Rule Nisi in the said two Writ Petitions. We already informed the newspaper authority about the pendency of the said two Writ Petitions at 02:00 PM on 30.06.2024. However, the Daily Star published the said news report on their online edition at 4.25 P.M on 30.06.2024 and subsequently published in print version on 01.07.2024 totally concealing the fact that the said order passed by the Commissioner of VAT was already sub-judice before the Hon'b1e High Court Division. This amounts to frustration of administration of justice and therefore, is a serious contempt of the Hon'ble High Court Division.

7. We strongly deny and object to the said false, frivolous, baseless and motivated news report published in The Daily Star. We reserve our right to take appropriate legal action against the said false news report.

OUR RESPONSE

Firstly, the content of our news report was based on findings of an audit by the field office of NBR's Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, and a subsequent review by a five-member committee headed by an additional commissioner, Chattogram VAT Commissionerate. The Daily Star simply reported on the VAT Commissionerate's findings that the said two companies have unpaid VAT and consequent penalty worth Tk 7,000 crore.

So the claim in the second paragraph of the rejoinder that "all the above allegations are absolutely false, frivolous, baseless and the said report has been published with ulterior motive" is totally untrue. The Daily Star published the story in public interest, and with no other motive whatsoever.

The VAT demand adjudication order by the VAT Commissionerate came in June 2024, about eight months after the field office submitted its audit report in October 2023. During the audit and review process, the two S Alam firms were given the opportunity to explain the discrepancies in sales and purchase data they presented in their audited annual financial reports and in their VAT returns. This mismatch between two sets of data, presented by the two companies themselves to the authorities, were discovered by the government's VAT wing, and not by The Daily Star.

In its own admission to the VAT authorities, the two companies said that they "presented inflated values in their audited financial reports to avail bank loans," to which the NBR review committee said that "if this is true, they have clearly committed a criminal offence." The review report further said that the related bank has also "acted very unprofessionally" if it sanctioned loans based on an "imaginary and untrue" financial statement.

We reported these findings and observations of the revenue collector, and not a single word more.

As is our practice in line with internationally accepted standards, we approached their parent company on June 27, 2024, three days before we went online and four days before we ran the report in our print version. Between our first contact and the publication, we have spoken to S Alam Group Executive Director (Finance) Subrata Kumar Bhowmik and the Group's legal counsel Md Mustafizur Rahman multiple times over the phone and exchanged eight text messages via WhatsApp. Md Mustafizur Rahman also sat with The Daily Star at its office on June 29, 2024, to offer their explanations. The meeting lasted about 80 minutes.

In fact, much of the explanations offered in paragraph 3, 4 and 5 of this rejoinder have been included in our story, quoting Mustafizur. We even sent a draft of his comments before publication, asking him to see if it reflected the company's version, and he said by phone "it's okay" and did not suggest any changes, deletion or addition.

To be clear, we dedicated 442 words for the Group to clarify their position in our story. This is only from our telephonic and face-to-face conversations with the Group representatives. If we count the 347 words that we also have incorporated in our story from the NBR's VAT wing report as their explanation on the VAT evasion allegation, we have dedicated 789 words for the Group in our 2830-word story.

About two hours before we were ready to go online, S Alam Group sent a notice asking us not to publish the story since they have filed writ petitions against the orders of the VAT Tribunal. Since we did not comment upon or discuss the merits of the writ petition, we went ahead with our publication which reports on the findings of the NBR field office as provided in its orders.

The Daily Star never engages in "motivated" reporting as the last paragraph of the rejoinder falsely claims. We repeat, we publish stories in public interest, and a story on allegations of VAT evasion worth Tk 3,538 crore and consequent penalty amounting to another Tk 3,531 crore have huge public interest.

The rejoinder does not dispute any facts or present any proof to counter the content of our story. We stand by our report.

Dhaka to seek $20b

FROM PAGE 1

with imports by Bangladesh accounting for almost the entire sum.

A team of Chinese Exim Bank yesterday met with officials of the Economic Relations Division, the finance ministry wing that negotiates foreign loans, to discuss the terms and conditions for the loan, The Daily Star has learnt from officials informed with the proceedings.

The other projects for which Dhaka will be seeking loans from China include: the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project (Line 2), the Bhanga-Kuakata rail line, bridge over the Kocha river at Pirojpur, the renovation of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Maheshkhali-Matarbari Bakhrabad 3rd parallel gas transmission pipeline.

An announcement on starting negotiations for a free trade agreement may also come up during the visit as Bangladesh is eager to boost exports to China to reduce the trade gap.

Beijing wants to upgrade the relationship with Dhaka to a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" from "strategic partnership" that was declared during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2016, according to officials involved with the proceedings.

Stakeholders, however, advised putting national interests at the centre of the negotiations.

Bangladesh wants to sign FTAs or other deals with China but it needs to negotiate efficiently to serve the national interests, said Rumana Islam, a commissioner of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

"We have a number of bilateral trade treaties, but mostly they protect the interests of the foreign investors. They don't speak much about Bangladesh's interests," she said at a roundtable on the future of China-Bangladesh relations organised by the Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies yesterday.

China can support Bangladesh in the development of state-of-the-art hospitals that are in high demand here, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives.

"Several lakh Bangladeshis go abroad for treatment every year, a trend that could be reversed with Chinese investment in the health sector," he said.

There are opportunities for China, India and other countries to work on the Teesta project.

"It is important that the Teesta project implementation begins soon as 29 million people are suffering because of the water deficit in the Teesta. It is time for us to turn geopolitical conflicts into cooperation," Ahmed said at the event moderated by Shah Ali Farhad, a former special assistant to Hasina.

Ensure same pension

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, all teachers should have better packages during their service as well as in retirement, so that the best minds are attracted to the profession, they say.

The finance ministry in a gazette in March announced a pension scheme titled Prottoy for recruits joining the autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations, including public universities, on or after July 1.

Under the scheme, 10 percent of the monthly basic salary of an employee, up to Tk 5,000, will be deducted and given to their pension fund. The employing organisation will contribute the same amount to the fund. The government will pay the authorities managing the pension. There will be no one-time gratuity for the retiring employee.

The government will investment the money, and the proceeds will be added to the fund.

Under the existing pension system, employees do not need to contribute to their pension funds. Faculty and staff recruited before July 1 this year will be under the current pension scheme.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali announced in his budget speech on June 6 that government officials, including bureaucrats, would be under a new pension scheme, which the finance ministry later said would be named Shebok. Employees joining after July 1 next year would be under this scheme.

The government has yet to publish terms of Shebok.

University teachers, meanwhile, are concerned that their retirement benefits will be cut by Prottoy while government officials under Shebok will be better off, said Prof Muhammad Shahadat Hossain Siddiquee who teaches economics at Dhaka University.

He is also a member of a committee the protesting teachers formed to review the new pension scheme.

TEACHERS' DEMAND IS LOGICAL

It is good that the government is heading towards a system in which the employee contributes to the pension funds, said AB Mirza Azizul Islam, former adviser to a caretaker government.

The government must manage the fund carefully and meticulously so that it does not turn into a losing concern.

Retired employees should not be kept waiting for the monthly pension.

The government spending in pension and gratuities was Tk 4,395 crore in fiscal year 2009-10 -- 4.3 percent of the budget. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the government allocated Tk 36,902 crore, which is 4.63 percent of the total budget, according to the Ministry of Finance.

Azizul, also a former chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, said, "The teachers' demands seem logical."

There should be no discrimination and division in the pension of public servants, added Azizul, also a former Dhaka University teacher.

Prof Shahadat said under the new scheme, new teachers and staffers of public universities would enjoy fewer benefits than they would have under the current one.

The brightest students may not choose to be teachers, he said.

The officials who will now be separated under the Prottoy and Shebok categories were all under the same pension scheme for years, he said.

"So, why is this separation all of a sudden?" he asked, adding that teachers were being downgraded from other government officials.

He said he realised that the government's spending capacity had diminished.

"But the government separated us from other officials."

All government officials should be brought under the same scheme, he said.

A finance ministry official, who wished to remain anonymous, said schemes like Prottoy were common across the world.

A similar scheme was introduced in India in 2004, with 10 percent of basic salaries being deducted and transferred to the pension authority, he said.

The government will not be able to continue bearing the growing pension costs, the official added.

The National Pension Authority said in a press release on Tuesday that out of 403 autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations, 90 are currently under one pension scheme. The rest are under the contributory provident fund (CPF) system with employees getting a one-time fund after their retirement. The new schemes will be effective to ensure pensions for all.

Although under the Prottoy scheme pensions will be provided after employees reach the retirement age of 60, the retirement age of university teachers is 65. The National Pension Authority press release said the government will make corrections in the rules.

The new scheme will not provide any one-time pay after retirement, but the monthly allowance will be multiple times higher than that of the existing system.

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16TH JUDICIAL SERVICE RECRUITMENT

Gazette delay leaves candidates in limbo

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Rashed Ahmed, a former student of Rajshahi University, was provisionally recommended to become an assistant judge following the final results of the 16th Bangladesh Judicial Service (BJS) exams.

After getting the recommendation, Rashed thought his days of uncertainty and anxiety would finally come to an end, as he would be joining a government job, which would help him finally start providing for his family.

But to his utter dismay, even after nine months of the results being published, he has yet to join the office due to the delay in publishing the official gazette.

Over 37 lakh cases are pending in the country. If the recommended candidates could join their positions sooner, it would help alleviate some of this backlog.

Due to that, a total of 104 candidates have yet to join their positions as assistant judges, despite being provisionally recommended.

Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC), which is responsible for overseeing the appointment of assistant judges, published the recruitment notice for the 16th BJS on February 7 last year.

According to the BJSC website, the preliminary exams were held on March 18, followed by written exams from May 21-31. Oral exams were completed on September 19 and the final results were published on September 24.

Despite the completion of these stages, the final step -- publishing the gazette -- remains pending, causing significant distress among the selected candidates.

"Being recommended for a job and then waiting for nine months is unbearable and truly disheartening. Many people ask me where I have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Freedom fighters' quota not constitutional

GM Quader tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Not all freedom fighters are under-privileged, therefore, keeping quotas in the name of freedom fighters in government jobs is unconstitutional, Opposition Leader GM Quader told parliament yesterday.

Opposing the freedom fighters' quota in jobs, the JP chief said making the freedom fighters' quota permanent to a large extent destroys the main purpose of the spirit of our independence.

GM Quader said this in his winding-up speech at the third budget session of parliament.

Highlighting the various statements of students protesting against the quota system, GM Quader said, "In my view, permanently setting a large number of quotas for the employment of the upcoming generation of freedom fighters undermines the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Militants using prisons to run operations

Smuggling in phones with help of guards for communication, say police intel report

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Neo JMB, the IS-inspired militant group responsible for the 2016 Holey Artisan Café attack, has been using cell phones from prisons for communication and operations, as per a recent police intelligence report.

The outfit is also increasing its funds through foreign donations and agricultural earnings.

One of the top leaders of the outfit Abu Ruham alias Kunia has been smuggling cell phones in jails with the help of some prison guards, the report added.

Then the inmates install encrypted apps like Signal, Telegram, and Wicker Me for communication.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, told The Daily Star that militants in jail are now under increased surveillance.

The report revealed that Neo JMB's current Ameer, Saudi expatriate and Afghan returnee Abu Bakar, maintains regular communication with jailed members in Bangladesh.

A high-ranking counterterrorism official confirmed that members provide money, SIM cards, and smart phones to inmates with help from some prison guards.

Financial support is also sent through mobile financing services, the official added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase cyber patrolling
- Take initiative to deradicalise extremists
- Heighten vigilance in prisons
- Enhance police monitoring in CHT

Militants collected 1.5 lakh phone numbers for using those to recruit new members through text messages

NEW CURRICULUM

Questions of half-yearly exams 'leaked'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The question papers and their answers to the half-yearly assessment for classes 6 to 9 have been allegedly leaked on social media before the exams.

The recently introduced assessment process began yesterday involving approximately one crore students.

The leaked questions, centrally prepared by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), were found to be identical to those used in yesterday's assessments.

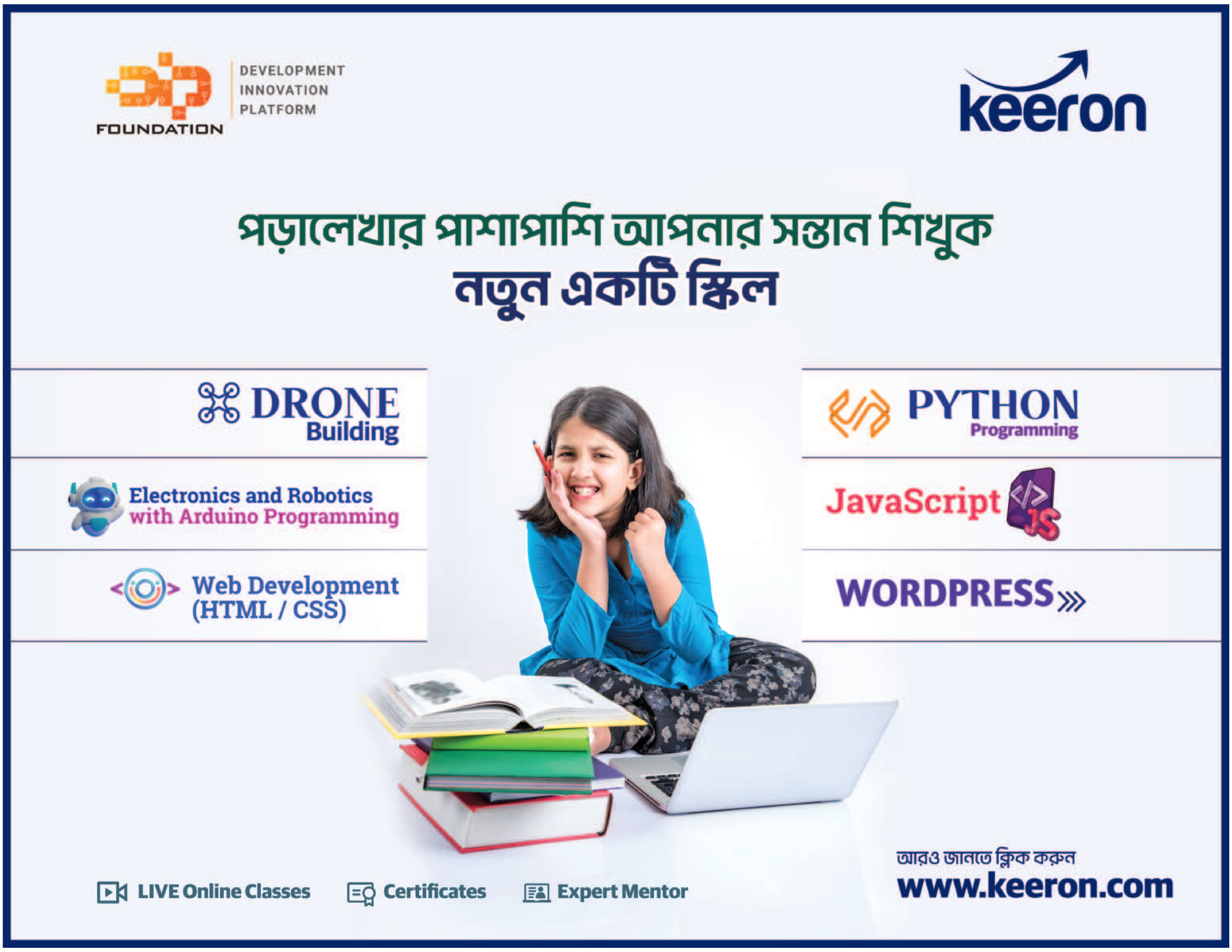
Prof Md Moshiuzzaman, acting chairman of the NCTB, admitted that the papers had been found on social media.

"These [question papers] were sent directly to the IDs of the headteachers around noon before the exam. Unfortunately, these questions were shared by the headteachers, leading to their distribution among the students."

"You can't call it a question paper leak," he said, explaining that during last year's evaluation, such papers were published on the official website about two weeks before the exams.

"As the evaluation process is activity-based, students won't get any advantage, even if they get the questions a week in advance. They have to perform and do tasks in front of their teachers during the evaluation," he said.

Regarding steps taken to address the leak, he said an urgent notice has been issued to headteachers, warning of strict action against anyone found responsible for future leaks.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'We need better transport service for a better Dhaka'

Speakers tell BIP conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Institute of Planners yesterday urged the government to ensure quality bus service in Dhaka to improve its position in the global liveable city index.

Dhaka has dropped two places to 168th on the Economist Group's Global Liveability Index. This decline from last year's 166th rank has placed Dhaka just above Karachi, while Kyiv, the war-torn capital of Ukraine, ranks three places higher.

The annual survey, published on June 27, assessed the liveability of 173 cities based on stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.

BIP, during a press conference at its conference hall, recommended building new playgrounds and parks that are open to everyone.

BIP President Adil Mohammed Khan said the government is prioritising the infrastructure sector in the capital but the question is whether the infrastructure is in place to benefit more people.

Akhter Mahmud, former president of BIP, stressed the need for making all the ministries accountable.

BIP's other suggestions included taking effective initiatives to reduce waterlogging, and protecting waterbodies.

Four to die for killing B'baria AL leader in 2012

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced four persons to death and 10 others to life term imprisonment for killing Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila Awami League vice president AKM Iqbal Azad in 2012.

Judge Mohammad Halim Ullah Chowdhury gave the verdict. The death row convicts are Rafiq Uddin Thakur, Mafuz Ali, Mokkarm Ali Sohel, and Ismat Ali.

Public Prosecutor Ashok Kumar Das said the court sent the convicts -- all leaders and activists of AL and its associate wings -- to jail.

Iqbal Azad was stabbed and hacked to death by his political rivals on October 12, 2012. The PP said Iqbal was murdered in a planned way so that the convicts could grab tender businesses and others political benefits.

SUNDARBANS

Mangroves along rivers to be restored

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The Forest Department has taken an initiative to reforest the lost mangroves on the banks of 52 rivers and canals adjacent to the Sundarbans in Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira.

Under the initiative, only the plants that grow naturally in the Sundarbans will be planted on the banks of the rivers and canals that flow through Sharankhola, Morrelganj, Mongla, Dacope, Koyra, and Shyamnagar upazilas of the districts.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh and the Forest Department will jointly implement this initiative titled "Upper Sundarbans Restoration Programme" with funding from the French Development Agency.

The initiative will enhance the region's capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change by bringing back the lost mangroves. It will be implemented following the model of mangrove afforestation done across five acres of land on the banks of the lake at Sheikh Russel Eco Park in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila.

Dr Abu Nasser Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer, said from July 6 to 8, officials of the department, members of the French Development Agency and IUCN Bangladesh will visit the cyclone-affected areas and the mangrove model created in the eco park.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Encroachment, pollution killing Burai beel

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Burai Beel, an important natural swamp in Tangail district town, is quickly shrinking due to pollution and illegal encroachment.

Once a vast waterbody, locals used it to commute to the district town from adjoining areas. It also served as a natural reservoir of native fish species, providing livelihood to local fishermen.

Tangail municipality, which is responsible for protecting waterbodies in the areas under its jurisdiction, has been dumping municipal wastes into Burai through several drains, thereby polluting its water. Moreover, some local influential people, including those with political backing, have been encroaching the swamp by filling it with different structures and claiming ownership using forged documents.

As a result, the swamp is now on its death bed. It can no longer drain away the accumulated rainwater of the town during monsoon, leading to waterlogging in neighbouring areas.

"We used to bathe in Burai's clean water decades back. Now the water is as polluted and dirty as it gets. It was also full of indigenous fish species," said Rafiqul Islam, a local.

Gautam Chandra Chanda, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said Burai Beel and waterbodies in Tangail are disappearing due to people's greed and authorities' irresponsibility.

Ratan Ahmed Siddique, general secretary of Committee to Protect Waterbodies in Tangail, said many areas in the town have become prone to waterlogging due to poor drainage system, and loss of waterbodies.

Contacted, SM Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir, mayor of Tangail municipality, said they are aware of the issue and steps are underway to recover and protect all waterbodies in the town.

Adulterated drugs a major challenge

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Low-quality and adulterated drugs is a major challenge for Bangladesh, said Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen yesterday.

The minister said this at a programme titled, "Meeting of the assembly members of SEARN", in the capital.

The event was organised by South-east Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN), a network of health ministers of 11 member states from the WHO South-East Asia Region.

Sen said ensuring the safety, efficacy and quality of medicines is of paramount importance to protect people's health.

"The gathering of member states created a valuable opportunity for us to exchange experiences and strengthen drug abuse control in our regions," he added.

Maj Gen Mohammad Yousuf, director general of Directorate General of Drug Administration, Dr Rokeya Sultana and DGHS Director General Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam also spoke.

DNCC launches school bus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday introduced school bus service on a pilot basis in a bid to mitigate traffic congestion and ensure safety of students.

As part of the initiative, three buses were given to Banani Bidyaniketan School for transporting its students.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said these buses will have modern technology including CCTV cameras and app-based tracking system to ensure safety of children.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury and DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman were present at the event.

ACC seizes six Brahma cows from Sadeeq Agro

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday seized six cows of Brahma breed from Sadeeq Agro's farm in the capital's Mohammadpur area.

A drive, led by ACC Assistant Director Abul Kalam Azad, was conducted at the farm in the presence of Dhaka District Livestock Officer Basana Akhter, ACC Public Relations Officer Akhtarul Islam told The Daily Star.

He said the cows have been placed under the custody of the Department of Livestock Services.

Brahma cows were imported from the United States, which is prohibited. During the operation, neither the owner nor the manager of Sadeeq Agro was found.

Gazette delay leaves candidates

FROM PAGE 3

been posted, and it's frustrating not being able to provide them with satisfactory answers," Rashed told this newspaper.

"It has even led me to avoid public gatherings. Some of the recommended candidates didn't even go home for Eid. Those who did, stayed away from social programmes just to avoid answers," he added.

Maruf Rahman, another candidate, said being unable to start their roles, they are missing out on practical experience that could increase their skills and knowledge, which is crucial given the huge number of pending cases that need to be resolved.

AGM Al Masud, deputy secretary of BJSC secretariat, said, "We already did our part a long time ago. However, it sometimes takes a prolonged time for police verification reports and other bureaucratic processes."

Contacted, Md Rezaul Karim, public relations officer of the law ministry, said, "We haven't gotten the police verification files yet. It is contributing to the delay in publishing the gazette."

Citing ministry officials concerned, Rezaul said, "As soon as we get the reports, the gazette notification publication process will proceed."

Over 37 lakh cases are pending in the country -- 16 lakh civil and 21 lakh criminal cases. If the recommended candidates could join their positions sooner, it would help alleviate some of this backlog, said officials concerned.

(Names of the candidates have been changed to protect their identities.)

Militants using

FROM PAGE 3

However, Md Lutfur Rahman, jailer of the Kashimpur High-Security Jail, said, "There is no possibility of militants using mobile phones, as we are maintaining high security inside the prison."

He also refuted the allegations of guards helping inmates.

Meanwhile, CTTC officials have intercepted communications revealing that Neo JMB leader Saiful Islam Khaled, accused in the Gulshan café attack, used Telegram from Kashimpur high-security jail to contact IS militants in Afghanistan's Khorasan province, seeking financial support to reorganise Neo JMB in Bangladesh.

The outfit is also recruiting members inside jail, CTTC sources said.

To boost finances, the group plans to buy a speedboat, CNG-run autorickshaws, autorickshaws, and motorbikes for income generation, they added.

Abu Ahsan Habib Al Bangali, also known as Lion, who is currently on the run after being released on bail, is overseeing all these activities.

The Neo JMB has collected 1.5 lakh phone numbers and uses those to recruit new members through text messages, the intelligence report adds.

They also spread posters and PDFs on online platforms, and have formed eight social media platforms in this regard.

Abu Adnan Al Bengali, a top leader, has been designated for media operations.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman said online propaganda poses a significant challenge due to its ability to quickly spread extremist ideology with minimal cost.

The outfit intends to establish remote hill hideouts for operational activities and train new experts in bomb and arms manufacturing.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, deputy commissioner of the CTTC unit, said, "The outfit is altering its strategy to evade law enforcement, but we have heightened vigilance to thwart their subversive intentions."

(Our Gazipur correspondent also contributed to this report.)

Freedom

FROM PAGE 3

fundamental goal of freedom. It destroys the purpose of creating a society based on justice without discrimination."

He said the constitution talks about equality in terms of opportunities. "If the constitution is to be obeyed then it must be obeyed properly...," he added.

"The country needs talent to move forward... The world will not depend on our sentiments. We have to compete. If merit is not given priority, on what basis will we compete?" he questioned.

Quader also spoke about the movement of teachers over the pension scheme. He said such a situation has been created due to a lack of trust in the government.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 4

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

A family torn apart

FROM PAGE 5

is one of the poorest ones in the village.

Jahangir and other villagers urged the government to provide financial support to the missing fishermen's families and the village as well.

SM Ajharul Islam, district fisheries officer, said they informed the coast guard so that they can recover the bodies.

"We have urged police to increase monitoring so that no fishing boat can go out to sea until the ban ends on July 23," he added.

Career Opportunity at BTMA

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) is looking for 07 (seven) full-time employees for its secretariat as per the following requirements:

1. Deputy Secretary General (Banking & NBR): 01
Master's in Law/Finance/Accounting/Economics/Business Administration with a minimum of 5 years of professional experience in banking, finance, or related fields.

2. Assistant Secretary General (Research & Publication): 01
Master's in Textile Engineering/Statistics/Economics or Business Administration from a recognized university with a minimum of 3 years of professional experience in research/publications section in any reputed organization.

3. Assistant Secretary General (Administration & HRD): 01
Master's in Business Administration/Public Administration or a related field from a recognized university with at least 3 years in a managerial or senior HR role.

4. Officer (Research & Publication): 01
Master's in Textile Engineering/Economics/Statistics/Business Administration or a related field from a recognized university. Outstanding academic results within the given academic discipline will be an added advantage.

5. Officer (Certification & Documentation): 02
Master's in Business Administration/Business Studies/Economics or a related field from a recognized university. Experience within a similar trade organization in the textile and apparel sector in a relevant position will be preferred.

6. Officer (Cash): 01
Master's in Finance/Accounting/Business Studies or a related field from a recognized university.
Experience within a similar trade organization in the textile and apparel sector in a relevant position will be preferred.

Application Process:

Interested candidates meeting the above criteria are invited to submit their CV along with a cover letter to the respective posts:
1. Email at recruitment@btmadhaka.com by July 15, 2024. Please mention the position applied for in the subject line of the email.
2. Submit a hard copy to the following address:
Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA)
UTC Bhaban (Level-8), 8, Panthapath, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
For detail, interested applicants may visit the following:
https://btmadhaka.com/, https://www.bdjobs.com/

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Sources Sought Notice (SSN) for a Potential Digital Development Activity of USAID/Bangladesh

An SSN is requested from all local non-governmental organizations capable of implementing a maximum of $5 million digital activity contract. This SSN aims to collect information and innovative ideas for planning the new Digital Development Activity designs. For detailed information, please Visit https://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/business-opportunities or email mmhussain@usaid.gov and schang@usaid.gov.

Solomon Chang
Contracting Officer
USAID/Bangladesh

D-37

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
Phone: 222218331-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Memo No. 53.23.0000.03.009.24.3993 **Date: 03-07-2024**

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (**http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd**) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No	Description	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing/ Opening Date & Time
1001128	Procurement of Laptop (12 nos.), Printer (8 nos.), Camera (3 nos.), Photocopy Machine (3 nos.), Scanner (3 nos.) and Digital Display Board/4K Android TV (2 nos.) under GCF-RHL, GCF-ECCCP-Drought and giz-Haor Project of PKSF. (Package no- PKSF/GCF/RHL/2023 -2024/GD-01)	03-07-2024 & 10:00 AM	30-07-2024 & 12:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (**http://www.eprocure.gov.bd**) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (**helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd**).

Deputy Managing Director-1

3 killed, 2 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and two injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, two people were killed and two others injured in a collision between a bus and a truck in Mirzapur upazila.

The accident occurred on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Gorai area around 5:00am when the Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Nilphamari hit a pole-laden parked truck, said Mohammad Anisuzzaman, sub-inspector of Gorai Highway Police Station.

Mugni Miah, 35, supervisor of the bus; and Forina Begum, 55, a passenger from Dimla, Nilphamari, died on the spot.

Police seized both the vehicles after the accident, said the SI.

In Joypurhat, a bicyclist was killed after a truck ran him over in Khetlal upazila.

Khairul Islam, 65, from Kashba village in Khetlal died on the way to the local upazila health complex, said police.

Meeting to decide VAT on metro fare today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Road Transport and Bridges Ministry will be holding an inter-ministerial meeting today regarding VAT-related issues of the metro rail service.

Apart from ministry officials, representatives from National Board of Revenue, Finance Division, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd will join the meeting at Road Transport and Highways Division.

RTHD Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri will preside over the meeting, officials said.

The meeting was called after NBR decided not to extend the 15 percent VAT exemption on metro rail fares beyond July 1. DMTCL, however, has not imposed VAT on metro fares thus far.

In April, NBR decided to cancel the tax exemption on fares since the metro rail operation launched in December of 2022.

DMTCL, though the Road Transport and Highways Division, wrote to NBR to review the decision.

Flood deals a blow to peanut cultivation

KONGKON KARMAKER, *Dinajpur*

PHOTO : HABIBUR RAHMAN

Severe flash floods across Rangpur division since mid-June have dealt a blow to peanut cultivation in the region.

Peanut, or groundnut, is a vital cash crop for the marginal farmers in the division who cultivate it on the sandy shoal lands of Teesta river basin.

Torrential rainfall in the upstream in India caused the Teesta to swell, inundating vast stretches of croplands across five districts in the division -- Rangpur, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension in Rangpur, 5,512 hectares of land in the division have been brought under peanut cultivation.

> **Peanut is harvested around June. The flash floods inundated our croplands when we were gearing up for harvesting our produce. My crops were washed away right before my eyes.**
>
> **FOYZUR RAHMAN,**
> a farmer from Shibdeb Char under Pirgachha.

At least 2,315 hectares of land have been affected by floods.

Peanuts cultivated on 315 hectares of land were completely damaged in the flood, said DAE sources.

This year, the production target for peanut was set at 12,600 tonnes.

Visiting the shoals of Gangachara, Pirgachha, and Kaunia upazilas of Rangpur district, this correspondent observed acres of sandy land used for peanut cultivation have become waterlogged following the flash floods.

"Peanut is harvested around June. The flash floods inundated our croplands when we were gearing up for harvesting our produce. My crops were washed away right before my eyes," said Foyzur Rahman, a farmer from Shibdeb Char under Pirgachha.

"I had planted peanuts on three acres of land after borrowing money from a local lender. How am I going to pay my debts now?" he lamented.

Abed Ali, a farmer from Kaunia upazila, said, "Even if we managed to harvest some of our produce, we could not save those due to a lack of drying space after the floods."

Many other farmers echoed them, predicting that this year's production target is unlikely to be achieved due to the disaster.

Obaidur Rahman, deputy director of DAE in Rangpur region, said, "Peanut on 315 hectares of land has been damaged while over 2,300 hectares of land used in peanut cultivation have been affected due to floods."

He, however, expressed optimism that the overall production will not be affected much.

Robbery accused found dead in police station

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The hanging body of a youth, accused in a robbery case, was found inside the lockup of Chandgaon Police Station in Chattogram yesterday morning.

Md Jewel, 22, was arrested by the police on Tuesday night and was put inside the lockup around 12:30am yesterday.

He hanged himself with his shirt, tied to the toilet ventilator of the lockup, around 6:30am, said Arif Hossain, assistant commissioner of Chandgaon zone of CMP, after seeing the CCTV footage.

"We arrested him from his house following a court warrant. We checked the CCTV footage and found that he died by suicide," he said.

Jahidul Kabir, officer-in-charge of the police station, said Jewel was accused in seven cases.

Police said Jewel was a mugger. He also drove a battery-run auto-rickshaw.

Jewel's sister Salma Begum said, "It's true that my brother was involved in mugging and theft incidents. But he recently pledged to my mother that he gave up left all the crimes and started living a crime-free life as an auto-rickshaw driver."

"His rickshaw was stolen at Kotwali a few days ago, and the owner of the rickshaw put a lot of pressure on him over money. A few days prior to his arrest, he tried to take his own life," she added.

Four to walk gallows for killing man

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced four persons to death and another to life term imprisonment for killing a man in Raozan upazila eight years ago.

Judge HM Shafiqul Islam delivered the verdict, court sources said.

The death row convicts are Mithu Chowdhury, Sumon Chowdhury, Md Delwar Hossen and Ershad Hossen. Delwar is on the run.

Another accused Sudip Chowdhury was given life term imprisonment. The court also acquitted another accused Eliash Ilu from the charges.

Victim's lawyer Sudip Kanti Nath said the court also fined the death row convicts Tk 50,000 each and Sudip Tk 10,000. The court sent Sudip to jail and issued arrest warrants against the others.

According to the case, the convicts murdered Sulal Chowdhury, 55, a quack, on June 25, 2016 following a feud over properties. Later, they dumped the body in a local ditch.

Meanwhile, another Chattogram court sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing his wife in the city's Bakalia area.

According to police, Md Jamal, 37, from Cumilla strangled Parvin Akhter, 24, over a family feud in 2022.

PHOTO: **STAR**

A devastated Akabbar Shah and Amina Begum after losing their two sons to the sea within two years.

A family torn apart by the sea

One brother dies, another goes missing in the bay within two years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pirojpur*

Cyclone Remal left the Choto Masua village of Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila devastated in its wake. With no support coming from the government, many fishers were forced to head out to the sea, despite an active 65-day fishing ban, to feed their families.

Al Amin, the only earning member of his family of six -- including his elderly father, blind mother, wife and two children -- was one such fisherman.

A total of 12 fishermen started their voyage on June 23 from the village.

However, tragedy struck mid sea.

Their fishing boat sank on Monday morning, around 10-12 kilometres from Mahipur of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, leaving five fishermen -- including Al Amin -- missing.

Another fishing boat recovered seven fishermen, including the trawler's owner, and returned home on Tuesday afternoon.

Al Amin has been missing ever since.

Al Amin had taken an advance loan of Tk 10,000 from the owner on the condition that he would help them catch fish during the 65-day ban, said Al Amin's father Akabbar Shah, 75.

Akabbar alleged when his son refused to go fishing in the sea, the owner asked him to return the advance loan, leaving Al Amin with no other choice but to accompany them.

Another one of Akabbar's son, Noor Islam, also died after going out to sea one year back.

"Noor's family is leading a miserable life. We support them as much as we can... but now with Al Amin gone, I don't know how we will survive?" he said.

During a visit to the dilapidated house of missing Al Amin, this correspondent found his mother Amina Begum sitting motionlessly.

Al Amin's wife, Salma, kept crying until she lost consciousness. Their two children, yet to understand the gravity of the situation, sat beside their grandmother.

Md Jahangir Alam, a neighbour, said Al Amin's family

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১	সংগ্রহকারী সত্ত্বার নাম	রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ৪টি বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক (সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি., অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি., ও রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।)
০২	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ	নম্বর ...০১... ও তারিখঃ ০১/০৭/২০২৪
০৩	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
০৪	বাজেট ও ফান্ড প্রাপ্তির উৎস	উপরোক্ত ব্যাংক সমূহের নিজস্ব তহবিল।
০৫	কাজের নাম	২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (৪র্থ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০ তে অবস্থিত শিশু দিবাযত্ন কেন্দ্র- "খেলাঘর" এর সার্ভিস প্রোভাইডার নিয়োগ।
০৬	ক) দরপত্র জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য) খ) দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার)। ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার)।
০৭	দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তি স্থান	১) ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, কক্ষ নং- ৬০৭, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২) উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, সাসটেইনেবল ফাইন্যান্স ডিভিশন, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. , প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (১৩ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
০৮	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২১ জুলাই, ২০২৪; বিকাল ৩.০০ টা।
০৯	দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	১) ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, কক্ষ নং- ৬০৭, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২) উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, সাসটেইনেবল ফাইন্যান্স ডিভিশন, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. , প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (১৩ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। **তারিখঃ ২২ জুলাই, ২০২৪; বেলা - ৩.০০ ঘটিকা।**
১০	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	**জনাব মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার,** জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয় (৪র্থ তলা), ঢাকা। **তারিখ ঃ ২২ জুলাই ২০২৪; বিকাল ৪.০০ টা।**
১১	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	যে কোন সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার পরিচালনা কাজে কমপক্ষে ০৩(তিন) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন হতে হবে।
১২	দরদাতার প্রতি বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী	ক) দরপত্র উদ্ধৃত দর সমূহের বৈধতা দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হতে ৯০(নব্বই) দিন পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকবে। খ) দরপত্র খোলার দিন ছুটি ঘোষিত হলে পরবর্তী অফিস খোলার দিন নির্ধারিত সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহন ও খোলা হবে। গ) দরপত্র জামানত হিসেবে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে শিশু দিবাযত্ন কেন্দ্র "খেলাঘর" (রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক সমূহ), মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ এর অনুকূলে ইস্যুকৃত পে-অর্ডার অথবা ডিডি দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। ঘ) তাছাড়া সংশ্লিষ্ট দরপত্রের সিডিউলের শর্তানুযায়ী সকল কাগজপত্রাদির সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দরপত্র প্রস্তাবের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর	জনাব মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার, জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন,সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ফোনঃ +৮৮ ০২ ৪১০৫০৯৪৫, ০১৩২৪৪৩৩৯৩০।
১৪	কোন কারন দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা যে কোন দরপত্র আংশিক বা সম্পূর্ণরূপে গ্রহনের অধিকার ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার
জেনারেল ম্যানেজার
এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন
সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

LALMONIRHAT-KURIGRAM

Erosion takes serious turn with recession of flood water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

With flood water receding, erosion along the banks of the Teesta river in different upazilas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram has taken a serious turn.

River erosions are going at 20 points in different shoal villages under 10 unions in five upazilas of the two districts, while it took serious turn in at least six points.

Currently, Water Development Board (WDB) is trying to check the erosion on a temporary-basis by dumping sand-filled geo-bags at two points.

With flood water receding, erosion along the bank of the Teesta river has taken a serious turn. The photos were taken from Kalirmela village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila. PHOTO: **STAR**

According to WDB officials, erosion by Teesta river is now going on in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila's Rajpur and Khuniyagach unions, Aditmari's Mahishkhochcha union and Hatibandha's Dawabari, Sindurna and Gaddimari unions, and Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila's Gharialdanga, Umar Majid and Bidyananda unions and Ulipur's Thetrai union.

While erosions took serious turn at Rajpur, Tajpur, Kholahati and Barogharia villages in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila and Kalirmela and Burirhat villages in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram.

While talking to chairmen of different erosion-hit Union Parishads (UPs), this correspondent came to know that erosion is going on at different shoal villages along the Teesta river for over a week now.

At least 145 homesteads and about 500 bighas of arable land have already been devoured by the Teesta river since June 21.

Moreover, over 2,000 homesteads, many government and private establishments and several thousand bighas of cropland are under threat of being eroded by the river at any time, they said.

Erosion victim Subas Chandra Roy of Kalirmela village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila said his entire homestead and two bighas of arable land went into the river last week.

Finding no other alternative, he and his family members took shelter on a government road, Subas said, adding that at least 20 homesteads and nearly 80 bighas of cropland of the village have been devoured by the river till now.

Farmer Nazar Ali of Kholahati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said erosion by the Teesta has intensified with the receding water level.

About 25 families, including his, have already lost their homesteads and took shelter on government khas lands.

Rajarhat Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khadiza Begum said relief materials, including rice and dry foods, have been distributed among the erosion affected families.

Kurigram WDB Executive Engineer Rakibul Hasan said sand-filled geo-bags are being dumped at Kalirmela village in an attempt to check the erosion temporarily.

A letter has been sent to the higher authorities, seeking fund allocation so that they can provide adequate sand-bags in other erosion affected areas, the engineer said.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat WDB Executive Engineer Sunil Kumar said erosion has occurred at some places due to a recession in Teesta water level.

WDB higher officials have already visited the erosion affected areas, he said, adding that dumping of sand-filled geo-bags will be done to check erosion soon.

Univ teachers likely to sit with govt

FROM PAGE 1

under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) have been refraining from work since Monday demanding reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

FBUTA Secretary General Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan yesterday said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader spoke to them over holding a meeting this morning to discuss their demands.

"We will join the meeting, but our movement will continue," he told The Daily Star.

Teachers have been demonstrating since May 26 protesting the government decision to include all officers and employees, joining the service of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or similar organisations and their subordinate institutions on or after July 1, 2024, under the Prottoy pension scheme.

Teachers said that the newly recruited teachers will suffer financial loss and many people will not take up teaching at universities if the new pension scheme is introduced.

They also demanded a separate pay scale for university teachers and inclusion of professors in the pay grade equivalent to that of a senior secretary.

PROTESTS CONTINUE

Skipping classes and exams, Dhaka University teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) staged demonstrations for the third straight day yesterday.

Addressing a sit-in in front of the arts faculty building, the teachers rejected the finance minister's statement and a press release from the National Pension Authority regarding the universal pension system.

Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of DUTA, called upon the finance minister to sit down for talks.

"Why is the finance minister avoiding discussion?" she asked.

Boycotting administrative activities, staffers under the banner of Dhaka University Karmakarta Karmachari Oikya Parishad held a sit-in in front of the administrative building.

As a result, many former and current students of the university could not collect their certificates and mark sheets yesterday.

No classes and exams were held at BUET, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong, Jagannath and other universities yesterday. The university authorities either kept the transport service suspended or significantly reduced trips to and from campuses.

Meanwhile, 107 university teachers under the banner of University Teachers' Network yesterday called for scrapping of the "Prottoy" pension scheme and urged the authorities concerned to implement a separate pay scale for them.

In a statement, the teachers' platform said imposing a new pension scheme on the teachers without any discussion or consultation with the stakeholders is yet another "blatant display of the current government's arbitrary behaviour".

Over 50,000 stranded as flood hits new areas

FROM PAGE 16

rehabilitation officer in Kurigram, said 450 chars and low-lying riverside areas have been flooded, leaving about 50,000 locals marooned in the district.

Most residents of the affected areas have either taken shelter on boats or the WDB embankment.

"The water has been rising since yesterday afternoon. It entered our house this morning. We might have to relocate soon if the water levels keep increasing," said Mobarak Ali, a 60-year-old farmer of Char Jatrapur in Kurigram Sadar.

Contacted, Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Saidul Arif said the district administration will provide sufficient relief materials to the flood-hit people.

Meanwhile, the water level of some rivers in the northeastern region began to recede.

The overall flood situation in various low-lying areas of the northeastern region may remain unchanged, said the FFWC bulletin.

"The Surma, Bhugai, and Kangsha rivers in the northeastern region of the country are in a falling trend, while Kushiyara river is in a rising trend, which may continue in the next 24 hours."

According to the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), the Surma River, although above the danger level, marked a fall, while the Sari-Gowain River was flowing further below the danger level. However, the Kushiyara, Manu, and Khowai rivers were still above the danger level and rising.

At 3:00pm, the Surma was flowing 81cm above the danger level at Sylhet's Kanaighat Point, the Sari-Gowain was flowing at 127cm below the danger level at Jaintiapur's Sarighat point.

At 6:00pm, the Kushiyara was flowing 142cm above the danger level at Amalshid point of Sylhet; the Manu was flowing 58cm below the danger level at the Railway Bridge point, while it was flowing 45cm above the danger level at Moulvibazar Sadar point; and the Khowai was flowing 45cm above the danger level at Balla Point.

Many flood-hit people said that they were facing a crisis of relief materials.

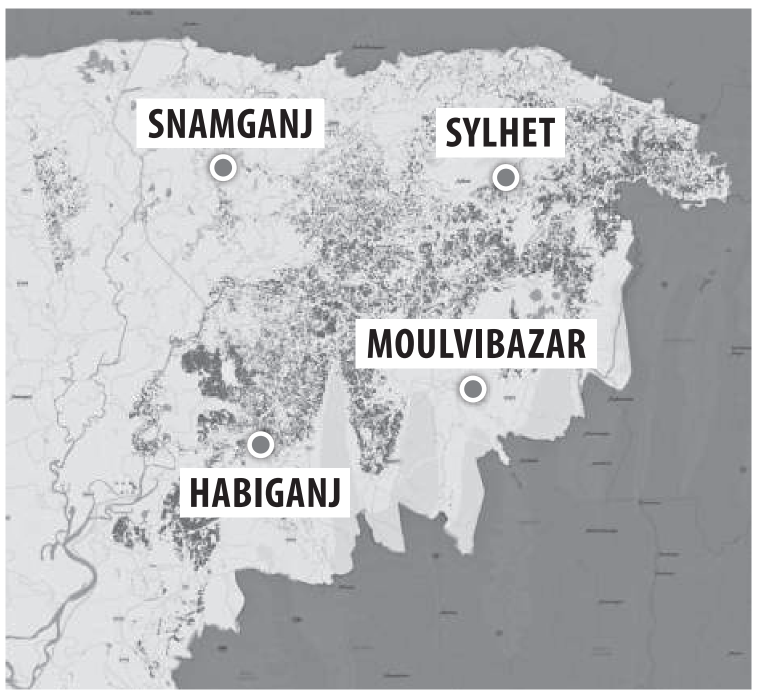
Shamsun Nahar of Rahimpur under Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila said, "The swelling Dhalai river almost destroyed my house. I sent my children to a relative's house. Otherwise, they would be starving as we have not received any relief aid yet."

Contacted, Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Abu Ahmad Siddique said the administration is working to provide sufficient relief materials to the flood-victim people.

[Our correspondents from Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Lalmonirhat contributed to this report.]

INUNDATED AREAS OF SYLHET DIVISION

JUNE 29, 2024



SATELLITE IMAGE SOURCE: **UNOSAT S-1 FLOODAI MONITORING DASHBOARD**

No provision for staying conviction

FROM PAGE 16

Dhaka in the case and also asked the chairman of the Labour Appellate Tribunal to dispose of the appeals as early as possible.

The HC delivered the verdict following a criminal revision petition moved by Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan on behalf of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) against the Labour Appellate Tribunal order.

In the full text, the HC observed that the chairman of the Labour Appellate Tribunal has not assigned any reason for staying the operation of the judgement and order passed by the chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka which on January 1 this year convicted and sentenced Prof Yunus and the others to six months in prison.

"As per Section 426(1) of Code of Criminal Procedure, there is no provision for staying the conviction passed by the learned Chairman, 3rd Labour Court, Dhaka but the Chairman, Labour Appellate Court, Dhaka, contrary to law, initially at the time of admission of appeal stayed the conviction which, in our view, is against the mandate of law and is ex-facie illegality that cannot sustain in the eye of law," reads the full text.

Contacted, Yunus's lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun said his clients will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC verdict.

Anti-quota demos rage on across the country

FROM PAGE 16

The demonstrations began around 2:30pm in front of Dhaka University's Central Library. They marched to the Shikha Chirantan and then to the TSC and Doyel Chattar.

The procession reached Shahbagh at 3:45pm and blocked the intersection, disrupting vehicular movement on key roads leading to Bangla Motors, Science Lab and Kakrail.

Hasib Al Islam, an organiser of the "Boishommo Birodhi Chattrra Andolon" (Anti-Discrimination Students Movement), said, "The High Court recently declared the 2018 quota cancellation circular illegal. The government has filed a writ petition, and the court is set to deliver a verdict on the quota system tomorrow [today]. We're waiting for that. If the quota system is reinstated, we will wage tougher movements."

A significant number of police personnel were present at the intersection ahead of the protesters' arrival.

JU, JNU DEMOS

Meanwhile, students of Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway in front of the university as part of the same protest.

Several hundred students brought out a procession from the JU Central Library around 3:00pm. They then moved towards the highway and blocked it around 3:15pm, halting vehicular movement and causing traffic congestion on both sides.

Jagannath University students also held a procession from the university premises to the Taantibazar intersection and blocked the road from there to Jatrabari, obstructing vehicles from entering the capital for about an hour.

Students from other public universities too blocked different regional highways throughout the day as part of the ongoing movement.

Barisal University students blocked the Dhaka-Patuakhali highway, while Bangladesh Agricultural University students halted train movement on the Dhaka-Mymensingh railway for an hour.

In Rangpur, students of Begum Rokeya University blocked the Dhaka-Rangpur highway.

Additionally, Chittagong University students demonstrated at their main gate and blocked the Chittagong-Khagrachari highway for about 40 minutes.

MOVEMENTS FOR QUOTA SYSTEM

On the other hand, student platform "Muktijoddha Quota Reinstatement Movement" held a rally in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh, in support of the quota system.

They then marched to the Raju Bhashkarjo at DU, making a seven-point demand, including the enforcement of the HC verdict and the issuance of a new circular in this regard.

In Rajshahi, members of the "Muktijoddha Sontan O Projonmo" of Rajshahi University formed a human chain to defend the quotas and protest derogatory remarks about the Liberation War and families of freedom fighters.

They held up placards with messages such as "Those who made the country independent, why should they be insulted?" and "Quota system does not create discrimination but provides equality".

BNP leader stabbed on way to rally

FROM PAGE 16

convener Sabbirul Islam Chapal -- were undergoing treatment at Natore Sadar Hospital.

The criminals also threw crude bombs at the rally around 10:00am.

Rahim Newaz, member secretary of the district BNP, said the chief guest of the rally, Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, forest and environment affairs secretary of the party's central committee, was injured in the blast. Mosaddek, who was also the former mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation, took first aid.

Asked, Rashedul denied the allegation of his involvement in the attack.

Amirul said, "I was not involved in the attack. The incident happened due to internal feud of BNP."

Tariqul Islam, superintendent of Natore police, said BNP had a pre-scheduled programme. BNP leader Shahidul and three others were attacked by criminals on the way to the event. Police identified those involved in the attack.

"Action will be taken against the attackers if a case is filed," he said.

Police had been deployed in front of the BNP office since morning. It is being investigated whether there was any negligence on part of police. If so, they will be punished.

Shariful Islam Ramzan, general secretary of Natore AL, said those who attacked the BNP leaders are identified criminals. None of them are members of their party or its affiliated organisations.

"So, the Awami League will not take the responsibility of this attack. The criminals carried out the attack in front of police."

He added that the incident happened due to inaction of police. Natore AL had no political programmes yesterday.

In Patuakhali, at least five BNP activists were attacked allegedly by AL men on the way to a rally on Swanirbhar Road in the district town yesterday.

The rally was held as part of BNP's central programme.

Injured Rubel Hawlader, senior vice-president of Swechchhasebak Dal Rangabali upazila unit, took treatment at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital, while others took first aid.

Snehanshu Sarkar Kutti, member secretary of district BNP, alleged that a group of AL activists were involved in the attack.

Denying the allegation, Abdul Mannan, secretary of the district AL, said it was BNP's internal conflict.

[Our correspondents in Natore and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]

We have to be prepared

FROM PAGE 16

But Tuesday's draw means Brazil will face a titanic showdown in Las Vegas on Saturday against archrivals Uruguay, winners of Group D with a perfect record.

Brazil goalscorer Raphinha insisted the five-time world champions would be unfazed at the prospect of playing Uruguay.

"Our team is evolving with each game, with each training session and we think we're on the right track," Raphinha said.

EVER-SMILING MOUSUMI MOU SOLDIERS ON

Mousumi Mou, always radiant with her ever-present smile, has become one of the busiest and most acclaimed anchors today. Her spontaneous and engaging style has earned her widespread praise over the years. Demonstrating remarkable versatility, she has successfully anchored a wide range of programmes, including cricket talk shows, lifestyle segments, and entertainment-based broadcasts.

PHOTOS: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

SHARMIN JOYA

The multi-talented artiste has also mastered mime art and been featured in fiction and web projects. She has been involved with dancing, singing, recitation, and debating, from a young age.

In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, the artiste shared about her recent works, upcoming plans with her career, and more.

"Usually, Eid is one of the busiest seasons for entertainment-related programmes. However, this time, I did only one live show as the T20 World Cup was going on," shared Mou. Even on Eid day, Mou did three live cricket shows as a part of the tournament package. She hosted three shows on cricket namely: Banglalink presents ***Cric Café***, bKash presents ***Free Hit*** powered by Banglalink, and Banglalink presents ***Catch the Match*** for the channel Toffee. Meanwhile, she hosted another show for DBC News, titled ***Bat e Ball e Bishwo Kapey***. In her career, she spent the busiest time in this T20 World Cup 2024.

"Due to my heavy schedule, I couldn't return home for 48 hours and even had to stay back at Nagorik Television's office. I slept on the divan in Rubana Huq's office room," she said, "It is because their show's call time was 3am, and after finishing a late-night programme, it was not possible to return home and then show up again at that time."

After keeping up with the tournament's pressure, she travelled to Chattogram with her parents, where her father was honoured with the Bhubonjoyee Baba Award. "It is an exceptionally emotional and win-win moment for me when my parents are honoured for my achievements," she added.

After that, she hosted the ***Shikho GPA 5 Reception*** for the third consecutive year, where all the students' earning GPAs are generally appreciated and celebrated through a grand reception.

While maintaining her busy schedule, she also manages to spare time to nourish her passion for acting. She has already worked in two web-films, which are awaiting release. "One of the web-films is for the platform iScreen, titled ***Shodh***, directed by S Shariar Nazim Joy. It features the director himself, along with Runa Khan, Tangia Zaman Methila, and me," she shared.

"Another web-film, ***Tribhuj Prem,*** is directed byAlok Sen. It tells the story of three couples who belong to different socio-economic classes in society. It features Shohel Mondol alongside me, while the other pairs are Shariar Nazim Joy and Anika Kabir Shakh; and Imtiaz Barshon and Farin Khan. This film will be released on DeeptoPlay".

Mou has done several international shows— not just hosting but mime shows. She won the Best Female Performer Award at the 35th International University Theatre Festival 2023 in Casablanca, Morocco, last July. On her future plans with mime, she shared, "I have collaborated in various mime performances, but this time, I have a plan to do my solo show. It is currently underway and if all goes well, I will be doing it soon."

Discussing the art of mime, the artiste shared that it is a challenging discipline with few practitioners in modern times. "Unfortunately, the investment required for this art form, and the lack of support from related associations, make it difficult to sustain," she explained. Financial constraints are a major reason for mime's limited popularity, and female artistes in this field are especially rare. "When I began performing mime, I was the only woman on the team, but now more girls are being encouraged and showing interest." She expressed her gratitude to Dhaka University Mime Action (DUMA) for their efforts to expand the reach of mime.

She also spoke about her recent on-stage performance in the show ***Adore Gora Bhobishshot***, sponsored by Meril. Directed by Tariq Anam Khan, the show features the veteran actor himself, Sumon Patwary, and herself. "It has a unique style, different from the conventional ones. We performed as hosts in the drama, addressing various issues typically faced by new parents. It was fun to be a part of such a unique project," she concluded.

Kushum Sikder makes directorial debut with 'Shoroter Joba'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After a five-year hiatus, Kushum Sikder is returning to the spotlight, taking on the dual role of director and actress. She is set to make her directorial debut this year with the film ***Shoroter Joba***, in which she also stars.

The film has already received its censor certificate and is slated for release in September. The actress-turned-director managed the entire shoot in the Narail district, overseeing every detail. "This experience is new for me as an actress and quite challenging as a director," she shared.

Once a familiar face in dramas and films, Kushum stepped back from the industry five years ago due to depression and a heavy work schedule. In ***Shoroter Joba***, Kushum teams up with Yash Rohan, marking their first collaboration on screen. The cast also includes Shahidul Alam Sachchu, Naresh Bhuiyan, Jeetu Ahsan, and others.

Chanchal starrer 'Padatik' release date finalised

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After winning hearts with his superb performance in ***Toofan***, Chanchal Chowdhury is once again set to impress fans in theatres with his first Indian film, ***Padatik***, directed by Srijit Mukherji. After much delay, the film has finally locked in its release date.

Earlier on Tuesday, Srijit announced the release date of the movie along with its poster. The film will be released in theatres this August 15.

Padatik is the biopic of renowned Indian film director Mrinal Sen. Chanchal Chowdhury takes on the role of the protagonist in the movie. The teaser of the movie was released last May.

PADATIK
RELEASING ON 15TH AUG

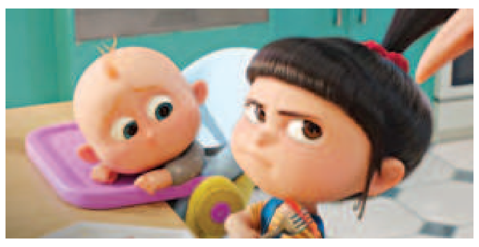
PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

The actor has been praised for his extreme dedication and ability to embody the character. People are also appreciating the director for the movie.

Chanchal revealed that playing the role of a famous person like Mrinal Sen is a significant achievement for him. "The entire credit for my acting in ***Padatik*** belongs to the director. I acted as he wanted," shared the actor with The Daily Star.

Regarding his character, the ***Hawa*** famed actor revealed that it was also challenging to portray Mrinal Sen on the silver screen. "I have given my best, and I am sure the audience will see how much effort I put into the role," said Chanchal.

'Despicable Me 4' premieres in Bangladesh simultaneously with global debut



The much-anticipated ***Despicable Me 4*** premiered in theatres worldwide yesterday, including a simultaneous release in Bangladesh at Star Cineplex. This marks an exciting moment for Bangladeshi fans who have followed the beloved animated series since its inception.

Despicable Me first captured audiences' hearts in 2010, followed by successful sequels in 2013 and 2017. Directed by Chris Renaud and produced by Universal Pictures, the fourth instalment continues the adventures of the reformed super-villain Gru, voiced by Steve Carell. The film also features voice talents from Kristen Wiig, Miranda Cosgrove, Steve Coogan, Chris Renaud, Dana Gaier, and Pierre Coffin.

In just two days of dropping the trailer of ***Despicable Me 4***, it amassed over 1.5 million views on Universal Pictures' YouTube channel.

In this new chapter, Gru and Lucy welcome their newborn son, Gru Jr. The story introduces a new antagonist, Maxime Le Mal, who has integrated cockroach parts into his body. After escaping prison, Maxime seeks revenge on Gru's family. To protect them, the Anti-Villain League (AVL) relocates the family, assigns three minions to them, and moves the rest to AVL headquarters.

ARBOVIRUS will tour Canada with original lineup

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Arbovirus is gearing up for their inaugural Canada tour, starting with Bangladesh Rockfest on August 17 at the Toronto Pavilion.

The band will perform their popular hits and debut a single from their forthcoming album, ***Nikhoj Songbad***. Joining them on stage will be Bangladeshi pop-rock band Shunno and Bangladeshi-American hip-hop band Stoic Bliss.

On August 18, Arbovirus will take the stage at the Giovanni Caboto Club in Windsor, Ontario, under the auspices of AIA Productions. Fans can expect a special treat as original drummer Farhan Tanim and bassist Ishtiaq Hossain Jishan, are rejoining the band for this tour after 16 years, marking a significant reunion.

Guitarist Asif Asgar Ranjan shared his excitement, saying, "Our Canada tour, starting with Bangladesh Rockfest, is significant in many ways. We're reuniting after a long time, and original members Ishtiaq Hossain Jishan and Farhan Tanim, who our longtime fans have missed, are joining us."

"This makes it a fantastic reunion. We haven't performed together in years, and we're thrilled to kick off our show with the debut single from our fourth album, ***Nikhoj Songbad***. Most of the album is completed; we're just wrapping up a few final takes and doing the mixing and mastering. So, this show also announces the start of our new album," he continued.

Original drummer Farhan Tanim and bassist Ishtiaq Hossain Jishan, are rejoining the band for this tour after 16 years, marking a significant reunion.

"Expect surprises, too," said lead guitarist Ranjan, "Our live shows are always an experience to remember, both for us and the audience. We give it our all every time, and this show will be no exception."

The day after, Arbovirus has another show in Windsor under AIA Productions. The band is also planning more shows in October and November.

"Our Bangladeshi fans can look forward to us performing several big shows. We're finalising details with sponsors and organisers and will return to Bangladesh for those events," stated Ranjan.

"We're incredibly excited about the Canada tour and being together again is indescribable. We're preparing diligently and will have a full week of rehearsals once we arrive in Canada. It's a fantastic time for us," he said.

Farhan Tanim, conveyed, "I'm thrilled to rejoin Arbovirus after so many years, with the original members on stage together again. This reunion feels like a merging of continents, with members joining from England, America, Canada, and Australia, all connected through their roots in Bangladesh."

"It's rare due to our busy lives, so this reunion is exhilarating. Technology and our commitment are making it possible. We're preparing through regular communication and practice, and I anticipate a wonderful evening." Jishan simply said, "I'm very excited. It's time for us to feel young again."

The current lineup of Arbovirus includes Sufi Maverick on vocals, Asif Asgar Ranjan as guitarist, Ahmed Aldnane Alam as bassist, and Nafeez Al Amin as drummer.

Arbovirus is nearly finished with ***Nikhoj Songbad***, which will be released through their label, Infected Records.

SUPPLEMENT

4TH OF JULY
CELEBRATING THE 248TH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Daily Star
DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 4, 2024
ASHAR 20, 1431 BS

We appreciate a bolstered BANGLADESH-US BILATERAL RELATIONS

Remarks by the Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, M.P. at the Celebration of the 248th Independence Day (04 July 2024) of the United States of America

DATE: 25TH JUNE 2024 VENUE: LE MERIDEN, DHAKA

His Excellency Ambassador Peter Haas,

Hon'ble Cabinet Colleagues, Hon'ble Members of Parliament,

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As-salamu Alaikum & Good Evening

It is my great pleasure to be here today to celebrate the 248th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. On behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate you and the people of the United States on this momentous occasion.

Ladies and gentlemen,
The Fourth of July is not only a date on the calendar; it is a symbol of freedom, democracy, and the enduring spirit of a nation that has continually inspired people around the world. We may be oceans apart geographically, but our shared spirit of freedom binds us closely together. Our journey towards independence under the visionary leadership of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was inspired by the same yearning for freedom and self-determination.

I recall with great conviction the contribution of the people of the United States during our Liberation war. They raised their voice against the genocide committed against our people. The concert for Bangladesh at the Maddison Square Garden in New York in 1971 touched the chords of many hearts of the American people. I recall, with great honour, Senator Edward Kennedy, Consul General Archer K. Blood and so many like them who stood up for Bangladesh in 1971.

Dear Friends,
Our bilateral relationship with the US over the past five decades is a story of cooperation and mutual respect. I must thankfully acknowledge the sustained support and assistance of the United States during both crisis and peace time.

When the southern part of Bangladesh, including my district Chattogram was devastated by a category-5 cyclone in 1991, the US government quickly deployed more than 8000 naval and marine personnel under its "Operation Sea Angel" program to help Bangladesh respond to the crisis. As I was also conducting relief operations at that time from my party, Awami League, I personally witnessed that act of support and compassion by the US.

More recently, the USA once again emerged as the largest partner of Bangladesh to combat COVID-19 pandemic. More than 137 million doses of COVID vaccines donated by the US was a mainstay of our fight against the virus.

Dear Audience,
Under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has emerged a miracle of development. During the last three terms of Awami League government, extreme poverty has fallen from 25% in 2006 to 5% today. The poverty rate has fallen from 41% to 18.6% during the same period, while life expectancy increased by 7 years. Bangladesh is set to graduate from LDC in 2026 and a forerunner in achieving SDGs.

With the rapid growth of our economy, trade between our countries flourished. Trade surpassed 14 billion dollars in 2022 and investment reached the 4 billion dollars mark. The United States is the largest single export destination for Bangladeshi goods, and a significant source of our FDI.

As we continue to march forward to realize the dream of Bangabandhu's 'Sonar Bangla'- a golden Bengal- we anticipate stronger partnership of the US in fulfilling our journey towards a smart developed country by 2041.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
The Rohingya crisis continues to loom large on us. Sheltering 1.2 million Rohingyas for 7 years has been heavily draining our resources and creating multipronged challenges. Thankfully, the United States has been a leading partner in our humanitarian response to this crisis. We seek continued and renewed support of our international friends to bring an end to this protracted crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Despite being one of the least polluters, Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Bangladesh is pledge-bound to pursue a low carbon growth path in spite of its insignificant carbon footprint and huge development need. We appreciate existing US support and look forward to a stronger and deeper collaboration in implementation of our National Action Plan 2023-50 and the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan through increased investment in areas like energy efficiency, cleantech/green energy, smart grid, transfer of technology, and climate-smart agriculture.

Dear Audience,
As we celebrate American Independence Day, let us also rejoice the strong people-to-people ties that bind our nations. The vibrant Bangladeshi-American community has enriched the cultural tapestry of the US and contributed to the economic enhancement of both our countries.

Dear Friends,
We appreciate the renewed commitment of a bolstered Bangladesh-US bilateral relations as expressed by President Joe Biden in his letter to our Prime Minister after her electoral victory this year. Together, we can continue to promote peace, stability, and prosperity for our peoples, in our respective regions, and beyond. Let us celebrate the spirit of independence and the enduring friendship between Bangladesh and the United States. Happy Independence Day to the United States of America! Long live Bangladesh-USA friendship.

I thank you all.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.
May Bangladesh Live for Ever.

AMBASSADOR'SMESSAGE

His Excellency Peter Haas
US Ambassador to Bangladesh

Today, we honor the Declaration of Independence, which was promulgated on July 4, 1776. Today, we celebrate the birth of a nation founded on the principles of freedom, rule of law, and the pursuit of happiness. And today, we renew our commitment to a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The central role of the people, of each and every American citizen, is deeply enshrined in our democracy. Our Constitution, signed almost 250 years ago, gives the idea that the basis of government derives from the people. The preamble of that document says, We, the people of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

In his very first speech as President of the United States of America, George Washington re-emphasized the point. He declared that the continuation of America's democracy was entrusted to the American people. Democracy in the United States is not, never has been, nor will ever be perfect. We are not above reproach. We must strive continually to achieve our more perfect union. Our Declaration of Independence boldly declared that all men are created equal. That was simply not the case in 1776. It took us until 1865 to abolish slavery. Women did not have the right to vote until 1920. In 1964, we finally outlawed major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national, religious minorities, and women. And only in 2015 did our Supreme Court affirm the constitutional right of LGBTQI plus couples to marry.

Clearly, our democratic journey has been a winding path, reflecting aspirations and imperfections that come with the pursuit of a more perfect union, and a more perfect democracy. 2024 is an unprecedented year for elections. More people are voting this year than at any time in history. In fact, national elections this year will involve nearly one-half of the world's population. As we know, Bangladesh's elections have already taken place, and ours will take place in November of this year. As those elections take place, it is important to ensure that the voice of the people is heard and that everyone be committed to the idea of striving for ever more perfect democracy.

Today I would also like to express the desire to build an ever more perfect relationship between the United States and Bangladesh. Both of our nations were founded on the principles of democracy, human rights, and national sovereignty. Both of our nations earned our independence through the sacrifice of brave patriots. And both of our countries need brave patriots to help us consolidate and advance our democracies.

But who are these brave patriots? They are the dissidents. They are the journalists. They are the human rights activists. They are the opposition politicians. They are civil society activists. In short, they are anyone willing to challenge the status quo, to point out our shortcomings, and to fight for change. Just because they disagree does not mean that they are disloyal.

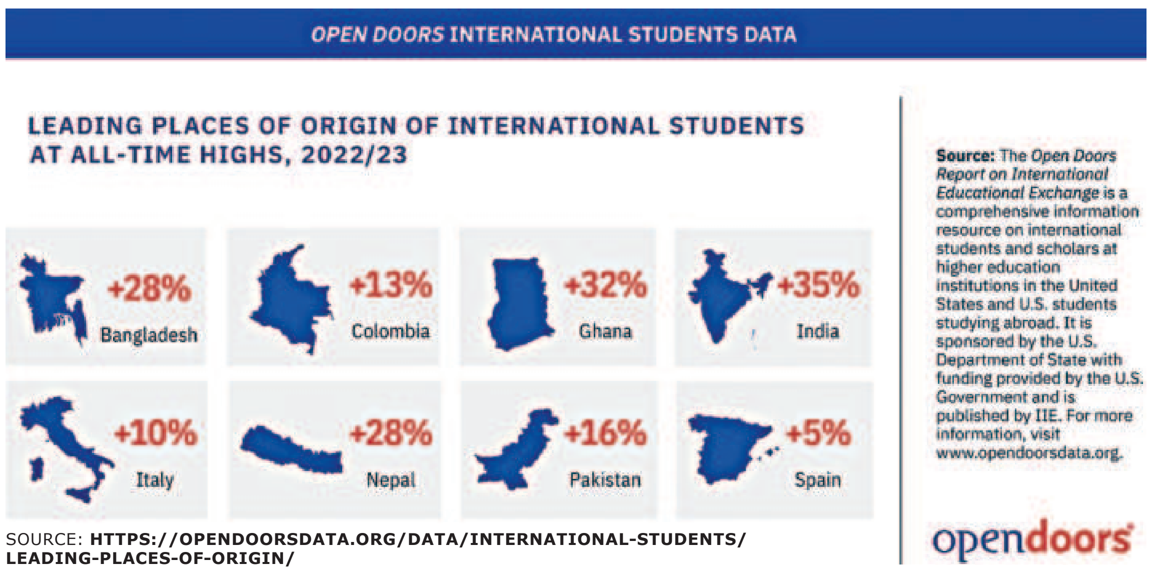
As we celebrate American independence tonight in Bangladesh, I am reminded that we are on a collective journey. As a partner, and with humility, the United States has cooperated with Bangladesh over the past 53 years to advance the rights, well-being, and prosperity and security of our respective peoples, and we will continue to do so.

Thank you very much.

STRENGTHENING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES

Bangladeshi Students in US Higher Education

THERE WERE 13,563 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM BANGLADESH AT US HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN 2022/23. A 28.0% CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR.



OPEN DOORS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DATA

LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT ALL-TIME HIGHS, 2022/23

Bangladesh	+28%
Colombia	+13%
Ghana	+32%
India	+35%
Italy	+10%
Nepal	+28%
Pakistan	+16%
Spain	+5%

Source: The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* is a comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars at higher education institutions in the United States and U.S. students studying abroad. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and is published by IIE. For more information, visit www.opendoorsdata.org.

opendoors

SOURCE: **HTTPS://OPENDOORSDATA.ORG/DATA/INTERNATIONAL-STUDENTS/LEADING-PLACES-OF-ORIGIN/**

13th Largest Sending Country: Bangladesh is currently the 13th largest sending country of international students to the United States, showcasing the strong educational ties between the two nations.

RECORD NUMBER OF BANGLADESHI STUDENTS IN THE US

All-Time High Enrollment: The U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce that 13,563 Bangladeshi students chose to study in the United States during the 2022-2023 academic year, as reported by the 2023 Open Doors Report on International EduICcational Exchange.

Significant Increase: This number represents a 28% increase from the previous academic year (2021-2022), one of the highest overall increases in the world.

Cultural and Academic Contributions: Bangladeshi students bring incredible experiences to U.S. classrooms, enriching campus life through cultural programs and engaging in groundbreaking research.

Recognition and Gratitude: The U.S. appreciates the contributions of Bangladeshi students and is grateful for their increasing presence in American universities. Their participation strengthens the people-to-people ties between the two countries.

Value of US Education: The high demand for U.S. degrees is due to the exceptional quality of the U.S. education system and the global value of an American degree.

AMERICAN SPACES IN BANGLADESH

Six American Spaces: EducationUSA operates through six American Spaces across Bangladesh, providing free access to information about studying in the United States. These are:

The American Center at the U.S. Embassy, Baridhara, Dhaka

Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Center in Gulshan, Dhaka

American Corner Chattogram (1/A O R Nizam Road Prabartak, circle), Chattogram

American Corner Rajshahi (Paba, Kharkhari Bypass Road), Rajshahi

American Corner Khulna (Shib Bari More), Khulna

American Corner Sylhet (Shamimabad, Bagbari, Sylhet)

Extensive Network: EducationUSA is part of a global network of over 430 advising centers, providing virtual and in-person sessions.

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate Growth: The number of Bangladeshi undergraduate students increased by more than 50%, with 2,500 students enrolled in undergraduate programs.

Graduate Enrollment: Nearly 10,000 Bangladeshi graduate students are studying in the U.S., making Bangladesh the seventh largest source of graduate students in the United States.

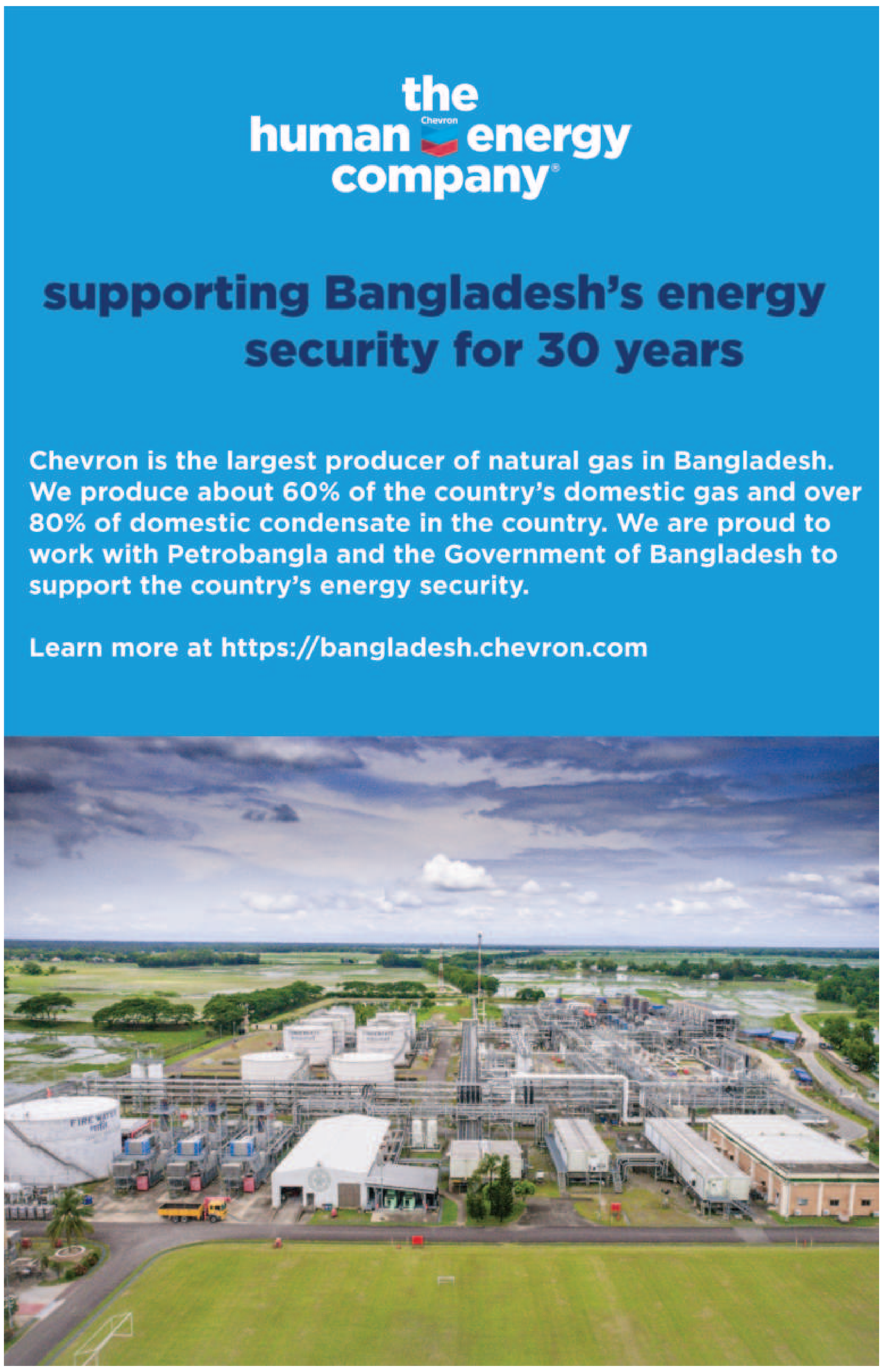
DECADE OF GROWTH

300% Increase in a Decade: Over the past decade, the number of Bangladeshi students in the United States has increased by more than 300%, from 3,314 students in the 2011-2012 academic year to 13,563 in the 2022-2023 academic year.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT AND VISITS

More US College Visits: The number of U.S. colleges and universities visiting Bangladesh has increased dramatically. In 2023, 58 HEI representatives visited Bangladesh, marking an over 200% increase from 2022.

Continued Growth Anticipated: This positive trend is expected to continue, further boosting the number of Bangladeshi students choosing to study in the United States



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4TH OF JULY
Celebrating
INDEPENDENCE
THAT SHAPED THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY
REMARK
LLC, USA
NIOR
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Labour set to surpass 1997 landslide in election: poll

AFP, *London*

The UK Labour party is 99 percent "certain" to secure more seats in today's general election than when it won a landslide victory in 1997, a major new poll said on Tuesday.

The centre-left opposition party -- out of power since 2010 -- is predicted to claim 484 out of a total of 650 seats in what would be an unprecedented victory in modern British history, pollster Survation said.

Meanwhile, the right-wing ruling Conservatives and the centrist Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems) are in a close race to come a distant second and form the country's official opposition, it added.

The prediction is the latest in a series of so-called MRP polls -- which use large national samples to forecast results for every UK constituency -- that estimate Labour will win emphatically today.

Such a scenario would see its leader Keir Starmer replace the Conservatives' Rishi Sunak as prime minister.

Labour has led the Tories in the polls by double-digit margins for nearly two years, and the gap has failed to narrow during a six-week election campaign widely seen as having gone badly for Sunak.

Survation said its data indicated that Labour would win around 42 percent of the overall vote, ahead of the Conservatives on 23 percent.

However, due to the UK's winner-takes-all electoral system in each of its 650 constituencies, that would see the Conservatives capture just 64 seats, with the Lib Dems predicted to claim 61.

Labour's estimated 484 seats would exceed the 418 won by ex-prime minister Tony Blair in 1997, and even top the Tories' landslide haul of 470 in 1931.

The pollster also predicted that Labour would again become the largest party in Scotland, winning 38 of its 57 seats.

2024 UK ELECTION

Sunak: Conservative leader still hoping for unlikely win

AFP, *London*

The UK Conservatives hoped Rishi Sunak would stabilise the party and country when they made him leader following his predecessors' chaotic tenures. Instead, he has led them to the brink of electoral wipeout.

The party's MPs installed the 44-year-old former financier in October 2022, after Liz Truss's 49-day premiership imploded when spooked markets moved against her tax-slashing plans.

Sunak succeeded to a point in stabilising the country's economy, but failed to stop bitter Tory infighting, or to make a dent in the persistent polling lead held by the opposition Labour Party. Buoyed by rare pieces of economic good news, Sunak called today's election in late May, despite not having to face the voters until early 2025.

He hoped the shock announcement would catch right-wingers Reform UK by surprise, and Labour's 20-point polling lead would shrink during the campaign.

But Sunak's campaign has lurched from one disaster to another.

By far the most damaging was Sunak's decision to leave early from D-Day commemoration events in France, provoking unilateral outrage and alienating right wing whose votes he desperately needs.

Starmer: Britain's next prime minister?

AFP, *London*

Labour leader Keir Starmer is a former human rights lawyer turned-state prosecutor whose ruthless ambition and formidable work ethic look set to propel him to Britain's highest political office.

The 61-year-old, named after Labour's founding father Keir Hardie, is the centre-left opposition party's most working-class leader in decades.

"My dad was a toolmaker, my mum was a nurse," Starmer tells voters often, countering depictions by opponents that he is the epitome of a smug, liberal, London elite.

With his grey quiff and black-rimmed glasses, Starmer remains an enigma in the eyes of many voters, who are predicted to propel him to Downing Street after today's general election.

Detractors label him an uninspiring opportunist, but supporters insist he is a managerial pragmatist who will approach being prime minister the same way he did his legal career: tirelessly and forensically.

"Politics has to be about service," Starmer said in a recent campaign speech, repeating his mantra to put "country first, party second" following 14 years of Conservative rule under five different prime ministers.

Sometimes appearing uncomfortable in the spotlight, the devoted Arsenal fan, who came to politics late in life, has struggled to shed his public image as buttoned-up and boring.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
WINNING HERE

Britain's Liberal Democrat party leader Ed Davey, *right*, and Liberal Democrat candidate for Winchester Danny Chambers pose for a photo during a visit to the Winchester Abbey Gardens, in south England, yesterday, as part of a party general election campaign event in the build-up to the UK general election today.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Key issues at stake in UK polls

AFP, *London*

Here are some key issues at stake in the UK general election today:

WILL JADED VOTERS TURN OUT?

The main opposition Labour party is widely predicted to win and has been determined not to take any risks, making for a lacklustre election campaign.

For the past two years, polling has suggested that Labour is 20 points ahead of the Conservatives, and no amount of campaigning has managed to shift the dial. But if that indicates a desire for change after 14 years of Tory government, there does not appear to be much enthusiasm for Labour's plans.

Indeed, Labour has repeatedly warned that it does not have a "magic wand" to change the country overnight.

The apathy extends to both leaders, with 72 percent having an unfavourable opinion of Tory leader Rishi Sunak and 51 percent of Labour's Keir Starmer, according to a YouGov poll this month.

That has prompted questions about whether voters will turn out in large numbers spurred on by the promise of change or remain at home jaded by years of chaos and no great love for party leaders.

LUCKY NUMBER EIGHT FOR FARAGE?

An unexpected addition to the campaign, Nigel Farage -- the Brexit figurehead who has now become the spokesperson of hard-right, anti-immigration views -- entered the race as the leader of Reform UK.

Despite a surge in the polls, the UK's first-past-the-post system makes outright victory for the 60-year-old former European parliamentarian and his party unlikely.

If he succeeds at his eighth attempt to get a seat in parliament as the MP for Clacton-on-Sea in east England, Farage -- a Donald Trump ally -- will have even more visibility.

If he fails, his startup Reform UK party, currently polling around 19 percent, would still play a decisive role in the race between the Tories and Labour in several constituencies.

TORY WIPEOUT?

Several polls suggest the party of Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Boris Johnson will win fewer seats than the 141 it secured in 1906, in what would be the worst result since its creation in 1834.

Speculation has already started about who would succeed Rishi Sunak to lead the fragmented party. It remains to be seen how many big names will save their seats and what direction the party, which was centrist under David Cameron (2010-2015) and then drifted to the right, can take. In the event of Reform's success, some Tories would not object to an alliance.

WEAKENED SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS?

Nothing seems to be going right for the Scottish National Party (SNP), which has dominated the devolved nation's politics for the last 15 years.

The surprise resignation of first minister Nicola Sturgeon in 2023 destabilised the party. Her successor Humza Yousaf only lasted a year.

The left-wing party is still the target of a probe into its finances in which Sturgeon's husband was implicated and does not have a viable strategy to deliver independence, a fight that was revived by Brexit but blocked by London.

First Minister John Swinney insists that winning in a majority of Scotland's 59 constituencies would be a green light for him to launch fresh negotiations on another referendum with the new government in London.

Russian forces advance in Ukraine's eastern region

Kill five in Dnipro strikes; dozens injured

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russia said yesterday its forces had captured a district in the key hilltop town of Chasiv Yar near Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, where Moscow has been pressing for months.

The claim from Moscow came just after Kyiv said that Russian strikes on the industrial city of Dnipro had killed five people and wounded nearly three dozen more including a 14-year-old girl.

The defence ministry said its troops had "liberated" the Novy district of Chasiv Yar, but it was unclear if it was claiming its forces had crossed a canal which runs through the eastern part of the town.

The capture of Chasiv Yar -- a prized military hub that was once a sleepy town home to some 12,000 people -- would pave the way for Russian advances towards the last Ukrainian-controlled civilian centres in the Donetsk region.

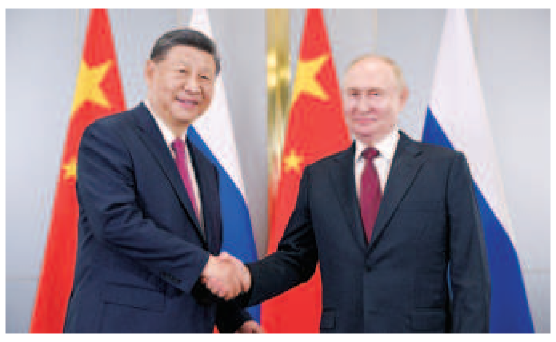
Russia's capture of the district was also reported by the DeepState military blog, which has links to the Ukrainian army.

It said the area had been flattened by Russian bombardments, and that withdrawing was "a logical, albeit difficult decision." There was no immediate reaction from officials in Kyiv.

The Russian attack on Dnipro prompted Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to call on allies to help bolster its air defences and provide more long-range weapons to thwart Russian strikes.

CENTRAL ASIAN SUMMIT

Putin, Xi vie for influence



AFP, *Astana*

The leaders of Russia and China were in Kazakhstan yesterday for a regional summit, seeking to harden anti-Western alliances and press their influence in the strategic Central Asian region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in the Kazakh capital of Astana yesterday morning for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) -- a Beijing-led regional bloc that covers Central Asia, India and Iran.

Moscow and Beijing have deepened their political, military and economic ties since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Alongside Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who arrived in Kazakhstan on Tuesday, the pair see the SCO as a key forum for advancing their strategic interests across Eurasia. "We attach great importance to partnership cooperation within this organisation," Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov told Russian state media outlets ahead of Putin's arrival.

"We believe that the SCO, as well as the second major association of BRICS, are the main pillars of the new world order, a locomotive in the context of establishing genuine multilateralism in world affairs," he added.

Both Russia and China have railed against what they call a US-led "hegemony" on the world stage.

China's Foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said earlier this week that Beijing believed the SCO summit would "help build more consensus among all parties and make contributions to promoting security, stability and development of member countries", and advance "lasting peace and common prosperity in the world".

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
Energy and Mineral resources Division
BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chittagong.
www.bpc.gov.bd

Ref.No: 28.03.0000.011.10.129.17/ Dated: 07-07-2024.

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following package from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank up to the time given below:

Sl No	Package No	Name of Goods	Tender ID	Last date & Time of Tender Security Submission	Last date & Time of Closing & Opening
01	JPE-02-23	Repair & Renovation of Bungalow nos. 05 at Joypahar Estate, Sarson Road Chattogram.	1001070	Date: 22-7-2024 Time: 15:00	Date: 22-7-2024 Time: 16:00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Muhammad Ashraf Hossain
Secretary, BPC

Size: 4" x 3 col
GD-09

BANGLADESH KRISHI BANK
Head Office
83-85 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000
ADC Management Department
Website: www.krishibank.org.bd

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Finance/Banking and Financial Institutions Division	
2	Agency	Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Krishi Bank	
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present	
5	Procuring Entity District	Head Office, Dhaka.	
6	Invitation for	Supply of Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, PIN Mailer & Card Pouch.	
7	Invitation Ref No	HO/ADC/07(5)-21(3)/24-25/04	
8	Date	02-07-2024	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Bank's Own Fund.	
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
12	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	N/A	
13	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	N/A	
14	Tender Package No.	01/2024-2025	
15	Tender Package Name	Supply of Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, PIN Mailer & Card Pouch.	
16	Tender Publication Date	02-07-2024	
17	Tender Last Selling Date	16-07-2024 within 03.00 PM.	
		Date	Time
18	Tender Closing	18-07-2024	03.30 PM.
19	Tender Opening	18-07-2024	04.00 PM.
20	Name & Address of the office(s) - Selling Tender Document - Receiving Tender Document (Tender Document can be submitted by Hand / by Mail/ By courier Services at any time before Closing time schedule.) - Opening Tender Document	ADC Management Department Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Head Office, 3rd Floor, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka	
21	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	No Pre-Tender Meeting will be held.	Time : N/A
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	According to the ITT 4 & 5 of the Tender Document	
23	Brief Description of Goods or Works	5,000 Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, 7,000 PIN Mailer & 7,000 Card Pouch.	
24	Brief Description of Related Services	N/A	
25	Price of Tender Document (TK)	Tk. 1,000/-(One Thousand) + VAT(15%) (Non-Refundable).	

	S/N	Name of Product	Quantity	Location	Tender Security	Time Schedule
26	01	Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card	5,000	ADC Management Department BKB, Head Office, 3rd Floor, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.	10,000/- (Ten Thousand Taka)	04(Four) Weeks from Date of contract signature.
	02	PIN Mailer	7,000			
	03	Card Pouch.	7,000			

27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Farid Hasan	
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Deputy General Manager(Additional Charge)	
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	ADC Management Department Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Head Office, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.	
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No. 88-02-9513691	E-mail: dgmadc@krishibank.org.bd
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.		

দুর্নীতি- অনিয়ম দূর হলে সব
দেশ জুড়ে বয়ে যাবে হাসি-কলরব।
- রমজান মাহমুদ

Sd/-
(Md. Farid Hasan)
(Deputy General Manager)
(Additional Charge)

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GD-06

80pc of Gaza people now displaced

Says UN coordinator

AFP, *United Nations*

The UN humanitarian coordinator for Gaza said Tuesday that 1.9 million people -- 80 percent of the territory's population -- were now displaced, adding she was "deeply concerned" by reports of new evacuation orders for Khan Yunis.

The United Nations has estimated that up to 250,000 people are impacted by the Israeli military order for civilians to leave parts of Khan Yunis and Rafah in Gaza, which has a total population of 2.4 million.

"Palestinian civilians in Gaza have been plunged into an abyss of suffering -- their home lives shattered, their lives upended," the UN coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag, told the Security Council.

"Over one million people have been displaced once again, desperately seeking shelter and safety, (and) 1.9 million people are now displaced across Gaza," she said.

"I'm deeply concerned about reports of new evacuation orders issued in the area of Khan Yunis," Kaag added.

"The war has not merely created the most profound of humanitarian crises. It has unleashed a maelstrom of human misery."

She said that not enough aid was reaching the war-torn strip, and that the opening of new crossings, particularly to southern Gaza, was necessary to avert a humanitarian disaster. Kaag said the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt should be reopened, and also pleaded with the international community to do more to fund relief efforts.

Aid volumes entering Gaza had "dropped significantly" since the start of the Israeli operation in Rafah, she added.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's spokesman said "yesterday's orders for the evacuations of 117 square kilometers in Khan Yunis and Rafah governorates apply to about a third of the Gaza Strip, making it the largest such order since October."

"An evacuation of such a massive scale will only heighten the suffering of civilians," said the spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

Palestinian children collect tomatoes scattered on the road after they fell from a truck delivering aid in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Biden admin has 'complicity'

Say former US officials on killing of Palestinians in Gaza

REUTERS, *Washington*

A dozen former US government officials who quit over US support for Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday accused President Joe Biden's administration of "undeniable complicity" in the killing of Palestinians in the enclave.

In a joint statement, the 12 former government officials said the administration was violating US laws through its support for Israel and finding loopholes to continue shipping weapons to its ally.

Both the White House and the State Department had no immediate comment on the statement.

There has been mounting international criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza and of US military and diplomatic support for its ally in an offensive that has so far killed nearly 38,000 people and created a humanitarian crisis.

The resignations of the 12 US officials reflects some dissent within the government over its support for Israel. Washington has pushed for the protection of civilians in Gaza and has called on Israel to improve aid access.

Among the people who signed the joint statement were former members of the State Department, Education Department, Interior Department, White House and the military.

Labour predicted to eject

FROM PAGE 1

But Johnson -- ousted by his own colleagues, including Sunak, in 2022 after a string of scandals, and who has been notably absent from the campaign -- urged supporters not to see the result as a "foregone conclusion".

The Brexit stalwart told a rally late Tuesday that Starmer would try to "usher in the most left-wing Labour government" since World War II.

Earlier, Survation pollsters predicted Labour was on track to win more than the 418 seats it won when Tony Blair ended 18 years of Conservative rule in 1997.

Labour requires at least 326 seats to secure a majority.

"There is more chance of lightning striking twice in the same place... than Rishi Sunak remaining as prime minister," Britain's pre-eminent political polling expert John Curtice said this week.

Attention in the British media is turning to what a Starmer government would look like when the results for the 650-seat parliament start dropping from about 2230 GMT today into Friday morning.

Today's vote is Britain's first July election since 1945, when Labour under Clement Attlee defeated the Conservatives of World War II leader Winston Churchill, ushering in a period of transformational social change.

Attlee's government created the modern welfare state, including the National Health Service, Britain's most cherished institution after the royal family.

Starmer's "change" agenda is not so radical this time around and promises cautious management of the country's economy, as part of a long-term growth plan that includes nursing battered public services back to health.

With an air of inevitability about a Labour win, Starmer and his colleagues are raising expectations of a turnaround in Britain's flagging fortunes.

Economists say anaemic growth should be addressed. Pro-Europeans want Brexit reversed. Everyone wants an end to the sustained squeeze on their finances over the last decade and a half that has tipped more people into poverty.

Others want a return of political integrity and stability after a chaotic period of five prime ministers, a succession of scandals and Tory infighting between centrists and right-wingers that shows no sign of abating.

Starmer -- the working-class son of a tool maker and a nurse -- has none of the political charisma or popularity of former leader Blair, who presided over that last Labour victory in 2005.

But the former human rights lawyer and chief public prosecutor stands to gain from a country fed up with the Tories, and a feeling of national decline.

Biden expresses concerns

FROM PAGE 12

speak to lawmakers to reassure them about his fitness as the party's standard-bearer after his disastrous debate last week against Trump.

Biden spoke to Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the minority leader in the House of Representatives, on Tuesday, and Senator Chuck Schumer, the majority leader in the Senate, yesterday, a White House official said.

Some supporters have expressed growing doubts about the 81-year-old's candidacy after last week's televised showdown with Donald Trump, when Biden stumbled over his words and lost his train of thought -- exacerbating fears about his age.

Congressman Lloyd Doggett became the first Democratic lawmaker to publicly call on Biden to make way for another candidate, saying he was hopeful the president would "make the painful and difficult decision to withdraw."

Nancy Pelosi, a Democratic Party heavyweight and former speaker of the House, said it was "legitimate" to ask whether Biden's debate disaster was indicative of a deeper problem rather than a one-off.

Biden has not given a live interview since the debacle, but will be interviewed by ABC on Friday with the first clips released later that day.

On Tuesday, he blamed exhaustion from international travel for his debate flop.

Speaking at a fundraiser, Biden said he "wasn't very smart" for "traveling around the world a couple times... shortly before the debate."

"I didn't listen to my staff," he said. "And then I almost fell asleep on stage."

Biden traveled to France from June 5 to 9 to commemorate the 1944 Allied landings, headed back to the United States, and then flew to Italy for a G7 summit followed immediately by a visit to California.

He then returned home and went to a presidential retreat for several days of rest and preparation for the debate.

House Democrat Jim Clyburn - a kingmaker of sorts within the Democratic Party and who was instrumental in Biden's 2020 win - told CNN yesterday that the party should hold a "mini-primary" if Biden steps aside, the first senior party member to talk publicly about how, exactly, replacing Biden as a candidate would work.

Clyburn, who said on Tuesday that he would back Vice President Kamala Harris as the presidential candidate if Biden were to depart.

BIGM

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management

Vacancy Announcement

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM), being affiliated with University of Dhaka, has been emerging as a premium knowledge hub adding value in teaching, training and research regarding policy, governance and development. It offers Master degrees in different areas of professional interest. Applications are invited from the suitable candidates for the following vacant positions:

1. **Professor/Associate Professor (2 Positions)**
2. **Assistant Professor (5 Positions)**
3. **Research Associate (4 Positions)**
4. **Assistant Librarian cum Cataloger (1 Position)**

(Number of positions can be increased or decreased based on the availability of suitable candidates).

Details of the offered job and application guidelines are given at BIGM website
(www.bigm.edu.bd)

Interested applicants are requested to apply through the link given in website on or before 31 August 2024

Plot: E-33, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher- e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207,
Phone:+ 880-2-223374040-44

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BIGMofficial
bigm_dhaka

03.07.2024
Mohammad Al-Amin
Additional Director (Strategic Planning)

GD-07

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation.
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room -919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo no. 46.207.014.09.10.296.2024/543 **e-Tender Notice** Date: 02/07/2024

e-tender are invited in e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl	Tender ID, Ref No	Description of items	Start Date and Time	Last Selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	**Tender ID: 1001645** Ref. No. 46.207.014.09.10.301.2024. Date: 27.06.2024	**Works:** Improvement and Construction works of Shahjahanpur Jheel and drainage & streets around Shahjahanpur Jheel (Contract Package: DCNUP/W-13/KB	03-July-2024 16:00 BST	31-July-2024 16:00 BST	01-Aug-2024 12:00 BST

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

02.07.2024
(Rajib Khadem)
Project Director, PIU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-2223350461
e-mail: pddenupdscc24@gmail.com

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/০৪/২০২৪-২০২৫

BANGLADESH LAND PORT AUTHORITY
Ministry of Shipping
Sthalabandar Bhaban,
F-19/A, Sherebangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Shipping	
2	Agency	Bangladesh Land Port Authority	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Traffic), Bangladesh Land Port Authority	
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not applicable	
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
6	Invitation for	Procurement of physical service (non-consulting)	
7	Invitation Ref No	18.15.0000.022.56.031.21.93	
8	Date	30 June, 2024	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement Method	Procurement of Non consulting service through open tendering method (OTM)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Own fund	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
11	Tender Package No.	BLPA/06	
12	Tender Package Name	Appointment of Cargo Handling Contractor (manually) for loading & unloading of cargoes at Akhaura Land Port, Akahaura, Brahmanbaria.	
13	Tender Publication Date	04 July, 2024	
14	Tender Last Selling Date	21 July, 2024	
		Date:	Time:
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	21 July, 2024	12.00pm
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	21 July, 2024	1.00pm
17	Information of Post & Manpower	Cargo Handling contractor (manually) activity will be operated as per বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দর ব্যবস্থাপনা প্রবিধানমালা, ২০০৭	
18	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address:	
	Selling Tender Document	Traffic Section, Level-5, Bangladeh Land Port Authority, Sthalabandar Bhaban, F-19/A, Sherebangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
	Receiving Tender Document	1. Director (Traffic), Level-5, Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Sthalabandar Bhaban, F-19/A, Sherebangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207. 2. Dhaka Divisional Commissioner's office, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000	
	Opening Tender Document	Confernce Room, Level-2, Bangladesh Land Port Authority, Sthalabandar Bhaban, F-19/A, Sherebangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207	
19	INFORMATION FOR TENDER		
	Eligibility of Tenderer	**(i) General Experience:** The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the works as a Prime Contractor/Management Contractor shall be 5 (five) years. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. **(ii) Specific experience:** The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in providing non-Consultant Service of at least ONE (1) contract of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed over a period of five (5) years each with a value of at least of Tk.38,08,608.00(Thirty-Eight Lac Eight Thousand Six Hundred and Eight -taka) shall be required. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the news paper. Contract for providing service will be treated as similar nature i.e. contract of cargo handling works at land/sea/river/BOT/dry ports in Government/semi-government/Autonomous organization.	
20	Brief Description of Services	Akhaura land port is one of the important land port with India. Mainly stones & boulders, food products are importing from Agartala of India. These imported goods are need to loading and unloading from vehicle to warehouse/open stack yard. For loading & unloading of cargoes BLPA has taken initiative for appointment cargo handling contractor at Akhaura Land Port, Akahaura, Brahmanbaria.	
21	Special Instruction	Every tenderer must be obeyed the PPA-2006 (ACT) & PPR-2008 (Rules)	
22	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk. 5000 (Five Thousand taka only)	

23	Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security	Completion time in months
	BLPA/06	Selection of Cargo Handling Contractor (Manually)	Akhaura Land port, Akahaura, Brahmanbaria	Tk. 1,09,867.00 (One lac Nine thousand Eight hundred & sixty-seven)	24 months

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
24	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid
25	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (Traffic)
26	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Bangladeh Land Port Authority, Sthalabandar Bhaban, F-19/A, Sherebangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
27	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone:02-41025306 Email: directortraffic@bsbk.gov.bd
28	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders.	

01.07.2024
Dr. Md. Harunur Rashid
Director (Traffic)
Bangladeh Land Port Authority
Phone:02-41025306
Email: directortraffic@bsbk.gov.bd

GD-05

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Another bad precedent in public service

Loosening service rules, and the grip of accountability, raises fresh concerns

In another questionable move with the potential to exacerbate corruption, the government seems set to allow public servants to engage in stock market trading, reversing a decades-old prohibition. According to a report, the law ministry has positively vetted an amendment to the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 forwarded by the public administration ministry. If or once approved, employees will be able to legally buy or sell primary shares and bonds of registered companies. This is one of the several changes billed as necessary for a "modern and time-befitting" code of conduct. But given past experiences, we must say this is the wrong way to go about it as allowing officials to trade stocks may open a Pandora's box of unethical practices.

We don't need to go that far back to understand why. Matiur Rahman, a top NBR official now under investigation for corruption, allegedly made a fortune through stock market investments, using insider information, which is illegal. He is not alone in such pursuits. Many government employees, despite current prohibitions, are believed to be engaged in stock trading. Many have already demonstrated their willingness to exploit their positions for personal gain. Against this backdrop, legalising stock trading could widen the scope for corruption. The speculative nature of stock markets means that losses are inevitable, and when faced with losses, employees might be tempted to recoup them through illegal means.

The proposed amendment, therefore, will further weaken, rather than fortify, the ethical framework governing public officials. Unfortunately, the public administration ministry seems to be going in the opposite direction. In another editorial not long ago, we commented on its proposal to relax another provision in the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules requiring officials to submit wealth statements every five years, and how the removal of such an important layer of scrutiny could encourage dishonest officials to commit crimes with little fear of detection. Over the years, we have seen how such anti-graft rules and regulations have been relaxed, sometimes even lightening penalties for proven corruption.

As we write this, news has emerged of another top official, a former additional IGP, and his wife who illegally amassed wealth worth Tk 30.35 crore while concealing information of wealth worth Tk 36.91 crore—adding to the recent disclosures of scams involving former and current security and revenue officials. The list will only grow, whether it comes to light or not, unless we tighten relevant rules, enhance existing oversight mechanisms, and enforce stricter penalties for violations. Government employees, because of the power they exercise, must be held to the highest standards of conduct. We, therefore, urge the public administration ministry and other authorities to refrain from further relaxing service rules.

Sad plight of BSMMU specialised hospital

Govt must ensure unimpeded operation of health facilities

When it comes to public healthcare in a poor country like Bangladesh, any wastage of resources and money hits particularly hard as it deprives millions of low-cost medical care. This is why it is hard to accept what has been happening at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's (BSMMU) super-specialised hospital.

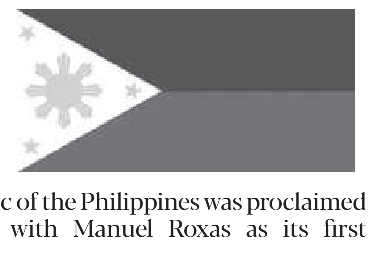
Inaugurated in September 2022—with world-class facilities capable of providing stem cell therapy, gene therapy and robotic operations, and a capacity to treat 5,000 patients a day—the hospital now receives less than 500 patients. This is due to shortage of doctors, technicians and support staff, and the corruption involved in their recruitment. We have commented on it before, and sadly, the situation has not changed much even in a year. What's more disheartening is that 90 percent of the medical equipment bought from South Korea with $33 million remains unused because of the manpower shortage. The warranty period of some of the machines is nearing expiration, requiring additional maintenance cost. Add to that the burden on the public to repay the Tk 1,047 crore loan that the government had taken from South Korea to build this state-of-the-art hospital.

In short, far from providing world-class, low-cost health service as advertised, it's turning into a white elephant. A country where out-of-pocket health expenditure is among the highest in the world, and where approximately 800,000 people travel to foreign countries for medical treatment, this super-specialised facility could have been a beacon of hope. That hope has turned into despair because of systemic negligence and corruption, with visiting patients not getting to see doctors on time or having simple diagnostic tests done there. They even have to pay almost the same doctor fees as in private hospitals.

This is not the first time that public trust in the health sector has been betrayed. Thanks to the problems mentioned above, we have often seen how well-intentioned projects like this one turned into a debacle in their operation phase. It seems the projects are valued more for the money that can be spent rather than the return on investment, or the benefits owed to the public. How else can the purchase of medical equipment without even recruiting technicians to operate them be justified? We urge the higher authorities to critically look into the case of BSMMU's super-specialised hospital and make it fully operational. Longstanding issues in public procurement and recruitment that are also plaguing other health-sector projects must be resolved too.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Republic of the Philippines attained its independence



On July 4, 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was proclaimed an independent country, with Manuel Roxas as its first president.

Coasting on the 'highway to climate hell'

Dr Quamrul Haider
is professor emeritus at Fordham University in New York, USA.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

According to Copernicus, the European Union's climate monitoring service, average global temperatures reached record highs for 12 consecutive months since June, 2023. The Director of Copernicus warned that unless planet-warming pollution caused by greenhouse gases is slashed, "This string of hottest months will be remembered as comparatively cold." The worse is yet to come, he said. Indeed, we are pummelled by the second round of blistering heatwaves across the globe that is threatening to leap to a whole new level.

This "shocking but not surprising news" has alarmed António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, to the extent that in a bare-knuckled speech in New York timed for the World Environment Day (June 5), he compared humans to meteors that wiped out the dinosaurs. Moreover, he called the fossil fuel conglomerates the "godfathers of climate chaos."

In response to Guterres' fiery speech about the future of our planet, US congressman John Curtis, a Republican from Utah, sarcastically quipped, "I'd be curious to ask him how he got to work in the morning. How he gets around when he flies, because as far as I know, there aren't any electric planes." Then again, how does Mr Curtis commute from Salt Lake City to Washington DC? Certainly not by a stagecoach, bicycle, or walking!

> **Part of what makes Earth "just right" is the interplay between carbon dioxide, water vapor and the planet's energy balance. If there is too much carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere, global warming will accelerate and energy imbalance will increase, causing more ocean evaporation and baking out of carbon dioxide from rocks and oceans.**

As a self-proclaimed "better steward" of climate change and founder of the Conservative Climate Caucus in the US House of Representatives, Curtis thinks "false narratives" that equate fossil fuels with greenhouse gas emissions are duplicitous. He speaks for approximately 75 percent of Republicans who hold that the economy should be given priority, even at the risk of ignoring climate change.

'We need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell,' said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during a World Environment Day speech. PHOTO: AFP

That is why the fossil fuel industry loves the Republicans and their like-minded hucksters worldwide so much that they donate millions of dollars to them for the sole purpose of rolling back environmental regulations.

Despite what climate change deniers believe, concentration of planet-warming carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is surging "faster than ever" to a level not seen for millions of years, the administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a statement earlier this month. In May, the concentration hit an all-time high of nearly 427 parts per million.

A key measure of global warming is the difference between the amount of solar energy absorbed by the planet and the amount of thermal infrared radiation Earth emits back into space. A positive energy imbalance means the Earth is gaining energy, causing the planet to heat up. Due to greenhouse effect, this imbalance has doubled in the past 20 years, raising concerns about the large amount of heat the oceans are absorbing.

Presumably, that is why Guterres also said: "We need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell." His reference to hell may have been metaphoric, though our closest neighbour and the brightest planet in the solar system, Venus, often called Earth's evil twin because it shares similarities with our planet in size, composition and gravity, became hellish billions of years ago.

How did Venus, once a pleasant planet, become an inferno? Without going into details, Venus' thick envelope of carbon dioxide, roughly 200,000 times the amount in Earth's atmosphere, gave rise to runaway greenhouse effect, a climatic phenomenon where the greenhouse effect became so intense that it spun out of control, resulting in unrestrainable and escalating increases in the planet's surface temperature. Today, the average surface temperature of Venus is 465 degrees Celsius, higher than that of a self-cleaning oven, and the atmospheric pressure is 90 times greater than on Earth.

Is it possible for the Earth to turn into a hothouse planet like Venus? Yes, it is almost certain that the Earth will become Venus-like in about two billion years, as the Sun increases in luminosity.

What is the likelihood of triggering a runaway greenhouse effect ourselves? That is a distinct possibility if we burn the entire "proven" reserve of fossil fuels, including shale oil and tar sands. The amount of carbon dioxide that will be released in the process could be enough to push the planet over the tipping points, which are critical thresholds that, if exceeded, will trigger devastating and irreversible changes in the surface temperature. This is a precursor to the onset of runaway greenhouse effect.

Part of what makes Earth "just right" is the interplay between carbon dioxide, water vapor and the planet's energy balance. If there is too much carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere, global warming will accelerate and energy imbalance will increase, causing more ocean evaporation and baking out of carbon dioxide from rocks and oceans. This added water vapor and carbon dioxide will intensify the greenhouse effect, driving temperatures a little higher. The higher temperatures will induce a positive feedback loop, intensifying the greenhouse effect even further. This self-sustaining process of intensification, most efficient in tropical ocean regions because large amounts of water vapor are pumped upwards by convective storms high in the atmosphere that, in turn, traps heat so effectively, will eventually snare the Earth into a vicious cycle of runaway greenhouse effect.

Against the ambivalence of China, Russia, the United States, and other countries equally committed to their fossil fuel industries, are we really coasting on Guterres' "highway to climate hell?" In a paper published last year in the journal *Astronomy*, scientists at the University of Geneva and France's CNRS laboratories in Paris and Bordeaux suggested that because of escalated global temperatures and the evaporation of water from seas and oceans, Earth could become an "uninhabitable hell" similar to Venus in just a few centuries, or even sooner.

Arguably, the general trend of catastrophic climate change we are witnessing currently is a bad omen for runaway greenhouse effect. Therefore, combating this threat to preserve Earth's climate stability and avert cataclysmic consequences requires urgent and collective efforts to stop the rapacious extraction and consumption of fossil fuels without further delay. However, world leaders and business magnates with stakes in the fossil fuel industry seem intent on continuing to gain morbidly vast wealth at the expense of every human and other creatures on our planet. Meanwhile, the average temperature will continue to rise, and millions of people will die as a result.

Finally, we cannot give our children and grandchildren the same number of years we had because we are all guilty to one extent or another for speeding on the "highway to climate hell." We are letting our jewel of a home be ruined by greed, stupidity and indifference. The Earth will still be here for a long, long time, spinning as a dead ball of rock.

What is wrong with business law education in Bangladesh?

Azhar Uddin Bhuiyan
teaches at the Department of Law, University of Dhaka. He can be reached at azhar.bhuiyan@du.ac.bd

AZHAR UDDIN BHUIYAN

Imagine a business professional who does not know the laws that govern their industry in the country they operate in. How can they make smart decisions, avoid legal troubles, or lead their company effectively? The truth is, they can't. This is why business law education is so crucial. Yet, in Bangladesh, the business education system is falling short. Our business schools are not preparing students to handle the legal challenges they will face in their careers.

So, what is wrong with business law education in Bangladesh? Firstly, there's the curriculum. Business law courses in Bangladesh heavily rely on Indian textbooks about Indian laws. Sounds odd, right? It is. Because why would Bangladeshi business schools teach Indian laws? These books focus on Indian laws, which are not relevant to Bangladeshi students. Imagine learning about laws you will never use in your career. It is like training for a cricket match with football equipment. When these students enter the workforce, they struggle with compliance issues because they have not learned the laws that apply in Bangladesh, and they are not taught how to freshly learn the laws that apply to themselves. While it is true that there is lack of good books on business law in Bangladesh, teaching Indian textbooks based on Indian laws cannot be a solution.

Secondly, who are the people teaching these courses? Surprisingly, it is not law academics. Instead, business academics, who may know a lot about business but not as much about law, are teaching these courses. This gap means students miss out on vital legal knowledge and updates that could be crucial for their careers. Because in the commercial justice sector, regulations are updated, or new regulations are introduced almost every year. Moreover, in many business schools, teaching business law is viewed as a less desirable assignment, akin to a "punishment posting" for full-time faculty members in business schools. This negative perception leads to a lack of enthusiasm and investment in delivering up-to-date, engaging, and practical education.

Thirdly, we are missing the point of teaching business law as a core course of the business curriculum in Bangladesh. Currently, business law courses are too theoretical and contentious. They focus on disputes and litigation rather than practical, everyday business transactions and compliance. Instead of learning how to avoid legal pitfalls, students are taught how to fight them in court. Shouldn't we be preparing them to avoid these problems in the first place? Moreover, there is a lack of practical training. Students do not engage in simulation exercises or real-world scenarios. Business students need similar practical exposure to understand how to apply legal principles in real-world situations.

Now, can we fix this? If yes, then how? We need a major overhaul of how business law is taught in business schools. The pedagogy for business law in business schools must be significantly different from that of law schools because these are two different ballgames.

The business law curriculum in business schools should be based on laws relevant to Bangladesh. This way, students learn what they will need in their careers. Hiring law academics to teach business law should be the way to go as they are the people who know it best. They can provide accurate, up-to-date information and practical insights. Shifting from purely theoretical teaching to include practical exercises is crucial as well. Simulations, case studies, and real-world scenarios can help students understand how to apply what they learn.

And why does this matter? Think about the impact a heightened awareness of the legal doctrine can have on the business environment in Bangladesh. Well-informed business leaders can drive compliance and ethical practices. This leads to a more stable and robust corporate sector. Wouldn't you prefer to work in a business environment where leaders understand the laws and navigate them confidently? By revamping business law education, we are not just improving individual careers, we are strengthening the entire business landscape in Bangladesh. Informed leaders can avoid costly legal mistakes, foster ethical practices, and ensure compliance. This contributes to the country's economic growth and stability. Isn't that what we all want?

Revamping business law education is more than just an academic exercise; it is a strategic move for the future of Bangladesh's corporate world. Let's equip our future leaders with the right legal knowledge and skills. Let's prepare them to lead with integrity and legal acumen.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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The illusion of inclusion

Empty policies and promises for Bangladesh's hijra community

Sara Rashid,
based in New York, is interested in how religion and politics shape art in South Asia.

SARA RASHID

In 2013, Bangladesh granted the hijra community "third gender" status, which constitutionally embedded their rights and safety, and started the process of opening economic opportunities to them. However, other than an official gender recognition, it did little to change the hijra community's historically tragic and exploited dire reality.

The acknowledgement came severely underfunded, without any policy changes, and had no impact on the social and cultural transformation needed to incorporate the historically marginalised hijra community into Bangladeshi society. In Bangla, hijras are referred to as *jouno o lingo protibondhi,* meaning "a person with sexual and gender disabilities," and this term has further ostracised the community based on their perceived sexual, physical, and gender shortcomings. Although Bangladesh has made legal changes on paper that are considered as markers of progress in a Western context, little has been done to improve the lives of the hijra community from a social and economic perspective.

Members of the hijra community in Dhaka during a World AIDS day programme. PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ISLAM KAJOL

The hijra community is the oldest transgender group in the world, and their fight for equality precedes the formation and subsequent split of the South Asian countries they inhabit. But this was not always the case. Some hijra communities were and are considered to be members of a holy caste of people, whose presumed mythical powers and physical traits led to their reverence and indispensability within the Mughal Empire.

The policing and criminalising of hijra communities stigmatised and alienated them across the Indian subcontinent, undercurrents of which continue to be found in South Asian countries today, including Bangladesh.

However, the British colonial powers' quest to civilise Indian society, and their ideas of morality and traditional gender norms were in direct conflict with the existence of the hijra community. They viewed this group with disgust and frustration due to their inability to understand and place them into rigid gender categories, causing them to implement rulings that led to the community's rapid marginalisation. This is not to claim the group did not previously face discrimination or violence, but that British colonial rule hastened and exacerbated the socio-economic, cultural and political decline of the community.

The policing and criminalising of hijra communities stigmatised and alienated them across the Indian subcontinent, undercurrents of which continue to be found in South Asian countries today, including Bangladesh. In the last decade, Bangladesh's remarkable and unexpected economic success has outpaced all its peers. As the world watches, Bangladesh's pressure to perform continues to increase. This pressure has often led to the implementation of ineffective, hasty and incomplete policies, designed mainly to appease and cater to Western ideas of growth and advancement.

Bangladesh's recognition of the hijra community as "third gender" is one such performative policy. Since its implementation in 2013, the hijra community has been strongly persuaded, and often compelled, to identify as third gender in all official documents for data collection. From the perspective of the hijra community, this push for self-identification came with a hope to reap supposed benefits tailored to them; however, shortcomings of the policy were manifold and further worsened their circumstances. The complexities surrounding the rights and recognition of the hijra community in Bangladesh highlight a tragic paradox as they navigate a socio-cultural and religious landscape that struggles to accommodate their existence beyond the traditional binary structures of gender.

Bangladesh's hijra community is complex, unique and replete with specific cultural and social features that make it difficult to translate and categorise the group's identity into a monolithic marker of gender or sexuality. The term "hijra" includes members of the intersex community, castrated men as well as transgender women, among others. In Bangladeshi society, the term hijra is used generously and with abandon; not only is it used for members of the intersex or transgender community, it is a rebuke, used to call out effeminate characteristics, shame a lack of toxic but expected machismo in men, and curb a non-conformity to traditional sexual and gender roles. Till date, the word hijra is interchangeable to a *gaali,* an insult and a curse.

Hijra entertainers in British India, circa 1865. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Colonial powers have stripped it so extensively of its depth and nuance, that today the community not only continues to be incorrectly identified, but also has become a homogenous marker of how an individual should not operate in society. The word hijra is treated as a contagion, one that is almost impossible to recover from, and this fear has been used to administer the population's behaviour and restrict freedom of expression. This fear of social and moral corruption has consequently distanced people from the community, and in turn led to a conflation of the term hijra. This ostracisation and ignorance is bred by the government as well, who have identified the community as only members of the intersex group, conveniently erasing other members of the hijra community and the rituals, disciple-guru relationship and social processes that predate the rich history of the group, and the intricate ways in which they architected the social fabric of South Asia. Not only are they relegated to the margins of society, but the policies aimed at improving these lives fail to acknowledge the existence and needs of crucial members of this group, making these political strategies ineffective, performative and superficial.

Often, hijra are assigned "male" at birth, but may identify as female later in life and prefer to be recognised as hijra or third gender, as many consider themselves to transcend the traditional rigid and binary confines upheld within society. However, this preference is based on choice, and a mandated government policy strips them of a right to choose. Depriving the hijra community of their ability to choose their preferred gender orientation and coercing them into identifying as third gender not only violates their individual authority, but diametrically opposes Bangladesh's goal of bestowing more rights on the hijra community. For a country that is not able to ensure the safety of its citizens and has a history of violence against the hijra community, the motivation behind enforcing a third gender ultimately becomes more symbolic and performative than substantive.

On the other hand, members of the hijra community who volunteer to self-identify as third gender face several difficulties as even after 10 years of implementing the policy, most government forms lack a third gender option. In 2016, the Election Commission updated their voter list to include 50,320,362 men and 49,578,191 women; however, no information was provided on the number of hijra or third gender voters who had been registered on the updated list. Thus, the hijra were effectively barred from registering under the third gender status and were excluded from participating in the election process under their chosen gender identity. In these instances, the failure of the government and their lacklustre attempts at implementing these policies to improve the lives of the hijra community become glaringly evident.

In Bangladesh, discrimination and social exclusion are a hijra's birthright. The intolerance starts at home, and stems from the family's need to preserve deep-rooted ideas of patriarchy and gender and sexual norms. The hijra community's effeminate mannerisms and cross-dressing are considered to bring shame to a traditional Bangladeshi family, and often become the reason they are banished from their homes and schools. It is naive and negligent to assume the complex barriers that have precluded the hijra community from gaining access to education, a family structure, basic needs, and equal employment opportunities can be addressed by the simplistic recognition of the third gender, without any additional work to address the bone deep prejudices extant in society. Family members prefer to completely sever ties with their hijra relatives, and this inevitable displacement makes them even more vulnerable and susceptible to violence and alienation. The hijra community faces a similar predicament in school, where they are physically bullied and verbally abused, called *maigya polas* (effeminate boy), and sexually exploited by their teachers who accuse them of violating school principles and social decorum.

Bangladesh has displayed its incompetence and impassivity by doing exactly that and a prime example of the country's inadequate and vapid policies lies in the first school it opened in 2020 for the transgender community. The aim was to provide education and eventual employment opportunities to release the group from a life of sex work, dancing, singing, or begging. However, the curriculum included only religious teachings and vocational subjects. The decision to not include subjects like Bangla, Mathematics, English, and Science only sets up the hijra community for failure.

In the last few years, Bangladesh has opened a handful of Islamic curriculum schools catering solely to the hijra community. However, does a separate school for this community truly work toward integrating them into larger society or does it further disparage and relegate them to the margins? Does the existence of a separate institution for hijra not label them as incapable and unworthy of mingling with larger society? A structurally inbred segregation inadvertently reinforces existing social biases and exacerbates the prejudices against the hijra community by alienating them from the mainstream education system. To effectively create space and equal opportunities for this community, the government needs to firmly enact anti-discrimination policies, build an inclusive curriculum and educate the masses to ensure the inclusion of hijra in mainstream institutions, and provide legal consequences for discrimination against the group.

Discrimination across the education and economic spaces inevitably bleed out to all extremities of the hijra community's existence, including their access to healthcare. Data shows that the community experiences extreme discrimination within the medical space, and impediments to accessing healthcare include harassment from hospital authority, inability to disclose conditions like STDs for fear of abuse, public derision, and the absence of medical infrastructure for the third gender. Additionally, although 80 percent of the hijra community sought assistance from government healthcare facilities, the overall success rate in achieving healthcare services was less than 50 percent. Regardless of gender identification, there have been no changes in the provision of healthcare services for the hijra community.

Due to their lack of access to the formal workforce, the group often earn their livelihoods through prostitution, which is legal in Bangladesh. However, Section 377 of the Penal Code makes homosexuality, and possibly gender nonconformity, illegal. And law enforcement agencies are given the liberty to arrest those suspected of committing a "cognisable offense." There are no set parameters for what is considered to be an offense of this nature, and an inordinate amount of power is placed in the hands of the law enforcement, who can make arrests based on subjective legal interpretations. For a system rampant with corruption, Section 377 provides the country's law enforcement with easy opportunities to perpetuate the harassment and extortion of the hijra community. The homophobic legacy of British colonialism continues to paralyse marginalised groups, and despite numerous opportunities to repeal the laws, the Bangladeshi government refuses to break away from its inherited shackles to provide equal protection and rights to all its citizens.

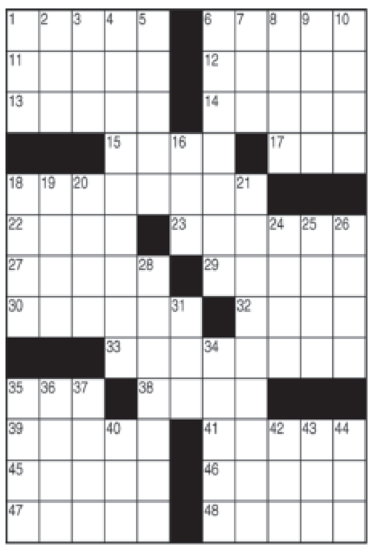
In addition to the socio-economic and casteist rhetoric surrounding the public marginalisation of the hijra community, a discourse on disability based on their putative genital status has emerged since their legal recognition as third sex and continues to perpetuate their discrimination. Labelling the hijra community as genetically disabled is baseless and confusing for the state and wider public. The hijra community themselves question being labelled as disabled, when they do not suffer from any physical, mental or sexual impediments. The government's decision to retain the term is unclear and ambiguous, as it is rhetoric around disability that has led to the group's marginalisation. Legal and state negligence toward the hijra community and a lack of motivation to bring grassroots change for the group is evident in policy implementation.

The hijra community are a systemically and constitutionally persecuted group, and the consistent attacks on them have prevented them from enjoying basic human rights. The intricacy with which these social structures are entangled require a comprehensive approach to solving the issue and a desultory legal recognition without social inclusion tools, autonomy and security, and a rights-based approach will continue to jeopardise the lives and safety of hijra people. However, this cannot be achieved without departing from the government's tokenistic approach toward them. As of now, neither the legal recognition nor the cultural understanding of the "other" has led to a communal acceptance of the group. In contrast, the hijra is perceived to be in a ridiculed state of liminality and are reduced only to their genital deficiencies. Ultimately, despite the intentions behind these policy changes, what has come to the forefront through the ostracisation and consistent conflation of this group is Bangladesh's desperate and sycophantic attempt at gaining the attention of "modern" and "liberal" hegemonies and being deemed as an upholder of neocolonial markers of progress as a means to achieve political clout.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Restaurant unit
6 Kind of point or length
11 Got to oneÕs feet
12 Chilled
13 In the middle of
14 Fashionably dated
15 Comfort
17 Japanese currency
18 Magnificent
22 Nick CharlesÕs wife
23 Swindlers
27 Plumbing problems
29 Mrs. Eisenhower
30 Frolicking
32 CairoÕs river
33 Illinois city
35 Flying mammal
38 Squeal of delight
39 Detest
41 Dark fur
45 Angry look
46 Mistake
47 Did some tailoring
48 Use the rink

DOWN
1 Airport screening org.
2 Cash dispenser
3 Scary shout
4 Lindbergh nickname
5 Painter Degas
6 UlnaÕs place
7 Start of a count
8 Metropolis
9 Lot unit
10 Writer Uris
16 Attack command
18 Machu Picchu native
19 Shed feathers
20 Item used onstage
21 Usury expert
24 Leave out
25 Metric amount, for short
26 Spotted
28 Relished
31 BasketballÕs Ming
34 Snoots
35 Sacks
36 Skilled
37 Turn to slush
40 Galena, for one
42 Lingerie item
43 Whole bunch
44 Before, to bards



2-6

TUESDAY'S ANSWERS

S	C	R	A	M	■	J	I	G	G	Y
K	O	A	L	A	■	A	D	E	L	E
A	R	D	E	N	■	M	A	N	I	A
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■	B	E	R	N	I	E	■	B	A	R
B	O	L	O	G	N	A	■	A	P	E
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'One of the brave new fiction writers who experiment with writing about sexuality, creating characters who hover on the edge of amorous engagement in unexpected but quintessentially Indian situations'
RUTH VANITA
'I'm moved to tears by the wordless spiritual stirring in Saikat Majumdar's fiction'
HOSHANG MERCHANT

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

A wound in our experience

Review of Saikat Majumdar's 'The Remains of the Body' (Penguin Random House, India, 2024)

Many readers would identify the problems of the modern-day system in Sunetra's words when she observes how the not-so-academically-bright ones made it to the top and she, the best student of her class, was merely a highly paid lab assistant. And Kaustav, another top student in his discipline was barely making ends meet despite being affiliated with the best universities.

SOHANA MANZOOR

"An exceptional novel that makes gender disappear to build unconventional love and friendship"

Ruth Vanita

Saikat Majumdar's latest novel, *The Remains of the Body,* is a deeply visceral and textured exploration of loss, desire, and identity. To an unsuspecting reader, the novel might start out as a love triangle rising out of marital discord, or betrayal of old friendships. *The Remains of the Body,* however, delves deeper into examining various forms of relationships reflecting the complex human psychology in an intricate and ever-changing world.

Set in Toronto and La Jolla, the storyline constantly moves not just between places, but more between times. The story is narrated from the perspective of Kaustav, who is a post-doc fellow based in Toronto. He is a bachelor, but it is hinted that he had had romantic relations with women throughout his life. The novel begins in the backyard pool of Avik's spacious home in La Jolla, California. A cautious reader might find it symbolic because human life begins in water—in the womb of one's mother. And then all three major characters, Kaustav, Avik, and Sunetra are seen playing in it. The complexity of their relationship is introduced right there as they thrash about the pool aimlessly, each revealing in different ways the dysfunctionality of their seemingly successful lives. Kaustav's position is perhaps the most vulnerable as he is caught between his love for both his childhood buddy Avik and his wife Sunetra.

Avik is a professional whom his childhood friend Kaustav describes as a big baby who never grew up. Their relationship goes far back into the past when they were mere boys and shared intimate moments and secrets. As adults, they are still forever attached, even though their relationship is dotted with occasional jealousy and doubt. Hence, Kaustav and Sunetra can make fun of Avik and his successful friends with houses in suburbs, who seem mad about "goat curry for dinner and sausages for breakfast and their wobbly tummies" and laugh over "sad jokes and endlessly recycled memories from their engineering college hostel days."

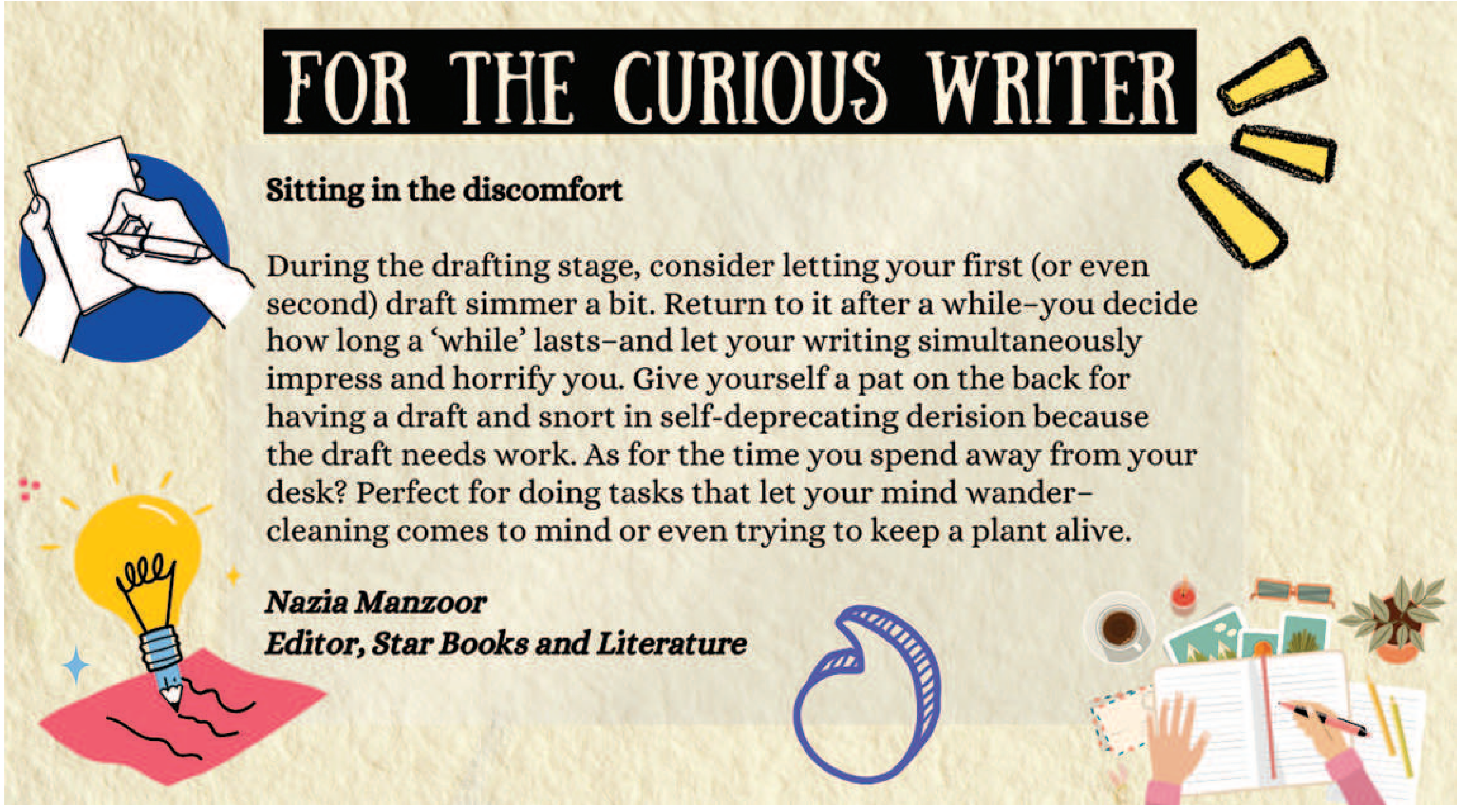
Many readers would identify the problems of the modern-day system in Sunetra's words when she observes how the not-so-academically-bright ones made it to the top and she, the best student of her class, was merely a highly paid lab assistant. And Kaustav, another top student in his discipline was barely making ends meet despite being affiliated with the best universities. When Kaustav accuses Avik of hindering Sunetra from pursuing her dreams in academia and joining instead a research-intensive biopharmaceutical company, he feels a "kick in his groin," as the latter retorts that Sunetra and Kaustav are equally impractical, and that the world does not run on theories. Here, the readers suddenly have the lens being reversed—Kaustav and Avik, the old friends, had been looking at each other through the same lens and shaking their heads and calling each other immature.

Seemingly caught between the two men in her life, Sunetra shows a strength that is characteristic of women thwarted from attaining their dreams. Bright as she is, she is quick to realise that Kaustav and her adulterous adventures were merely mistaken acts. For Kaustav, at least, it turns out to be the means to reach out to an unattainable body. Sunetra is quick to retreat because she cannot afford to make another mistake. In some ways, she may remind one of Garima Basu, a fascinating New Woman from *The Firebird,* Majumdar's second novel, who pursued her dream of stage-acting in spite of being criticised both at home and outside. Sunetra's plight and decision to finally pursue her unfulfilled dream is not altogether unusual in a world where marriages often end in divorce because the highly qualified wife refuses to be quelled by the dictatorial husband. Her struggles also touch on an important segment of women's problems in a patriarchal world where men and women are forever set across from each other simply because of power structures.

The Remains of the Body is a very short novel, barely 172 pages. But a sensitive reader would find it fascinating, not necessarily for the storyline, but for the portrayal of a world that is both vibrant and realistic. Anyone frequenting the diasporic world and familiar with the tension between academia and the corporate world would recognise the scenes depicted in this slim volume. One will also find remnants of loss, pain, and love that keep us alive. In his "Acknowledgements", the author writes: "Sometimes we write because there is a wound in our experience of life about which we can do nothing. Writing then becomes a cry of both pain and war." The words are a reminder that life is a constant battle and there are many wounds. A wound-free life might be happier, but the wounds give meaning to our lives because each one of them has a story.

In a recent interview with *Platform Magazine*, Majumdar observes, "I think this book ends up showing that what we call queer is actually a pervasive reality, and the heteronormative ideal is just that—an ideal that is forced due to the needs of the state and the market." In some crucial ways, these words capture the spirit of our world. The characters with a Dostoevskian analytic turn of mind often make ruthless assessments of the selves, and thus are a constant reminder that there are so many contradictions and conflicts in the modern world that the word "normal" has lost its traditional meaning, as have many others.

Sohana Manzoor *teaches English at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).*



FOR THE CURIOUS WRITER

Sitting in the discomfort

During the drafting stage, consider letting your first (or even second) draft simmer a bit. Return to it after a while–you decide how long a 'while' lasts–and let your writing simultaneously impress and horrify you. Give yourself a pat on the back for having a draft and snort in self-deprecating derision because the draft needs work. As for the time you spend away from your desk? Perfect for doing tasks that let your mind wander–cleaning comes to mind or even trying to keep a plant alive.

Nazia Manzoor
Editor, Star Books and Literature

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

Speaking up for the intellectual resurgence in non-cosmopolitan Bengal

Review of Bibhas Roy Chowdhury's 'Poem Continuous: Reincarnated Expressions' (Hawakal, 2024), translated by Kiriti Sengupta

MALASHRI LAL

"My reader, I dip into the water just for you."

Bibhas Roy Chowdhury

How does a poet capture a boatman singing words to the gentle wind, a child bewildered by war, and a woman identified with rain? Bibhas Roy Chowdhury is a legendary poet who is known for the strength and diversity of his Bengali poetry. The translator into English, Kiriti Sengupta, has achieved an immense feat in bringing 60 poems into a 10th anniversary edition. Roy Chowdhury writes a nuanced Bangla, often focusing on rural Bengal, haunted by memories of Partition, and remains a highly private person. *Poem Continuous: Reincarnated Expressions* is a fortuitous title as it gestures towards the challenging act of translation and the desirable creativity of a refined translator.

One can offer a specific example by commenting on the exquisite poem, "In the Monsoon", which begins with the lines, "The algae float in the song / of my tender age. / I wonder if the river / is nearing death." Bengal's dramatic kaal baishakhi and barsha defy any easy description—and here, the association with algae, which is a parasite, and water, which is an element associated with the final rites of ash immersion, are collocated to yield a magnificent spectrum. This short poem ends with a startling image: "In the song of my younger age / two blind come / across each other quite often", packing a cryptic coding of "blind" relations among people. Is the Monsoon downpour from heaven a witness to social interludes, the maya or illusion of action? Such a poem is open to multiple interpretations, and I present mine as an example of the complexity of Roy Chowdhury's writing and Kiriti's translation.

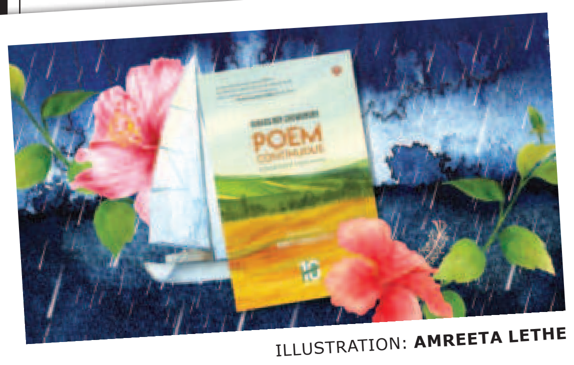


ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

If water, earth, and fire are the core elements defining human existence—as in the poems "I can Leave, but Why", "Lunatic", "The Lighthouse", among others, do the poems take a philosophical stand in re-casting this eternal interdependence? Perhaps the answer is in the negative because Roy Chowdhury never repeats himself, nor does he preach. The book's "Epilogue" comprises a significant interview between the author and translator. Kiriti asks: "Your poems mostly deal with agony and emotions...Why is this agony an essential component of your poems?" Roy Chowdhury answers obliquely, "Let my poetry capture the journey of the refugee boy from extreme distress to where I stand now. I have let my life ply behind the metaphors.

Metaphors are the greatest challenge to translators, and several poems build upon a key phrase or word. "The Poetry of a Hibiscus Flower" is a striking example, and if one reflects upon the lines, "The hibiscus lives in solitude as expected. / Lost people do exist, more or less in a similar way", a plethora of cultural references will show up. Though a common flower, the hibiscus, called 'joba' in Bangla, is sacred to Maa Kali and offered in worship at the temple; Santhal women often wear it in their hair, and Jaba-Kusum is a popular cosmetic brand. These allusions float in the literary aura of the word. Roy Chowdhury astutely associates the hibiscus with a lost mother—perhaps pre-Partition Bengal—isolation, abandonment, yet hardy survival. Interestingly, the translator, Kiriti Sengupta, has independently written a poem, "Hibiscus", with the lyrical lines: "I'll bloom / like a hibiscus: / the blush will endorse / my bloodline" that I read in the *Amethyst Review*. My point is that metaphors are powerfully suggestive, and insightful poetry hints at a backstory through a key image and allows the reader to ponder over the consciousness it generates.

This is an excerpt from the essay. Read it in full at *The Daily Star* and DS Books' websites.

Malashri Lal, *a Former Professor in the English Department at the University of Delhi, has published 21 books, the most recent being* Mandalas of Time: Poems and Treasures of Lakshmi: The Goddess Who Gives. *She has also received several research and writing fellowships. She is currently the Convener of the English Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi.*

Star SPORT
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What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Live from 3:30 pm

Argentina hope for MESSI BOOST

AGENCIES

Defending champions Argentina will hope for their star man and skipper Lionel Messi to be back for their crucial Copa America 2024 quarterfinal tie against Ecuador at the NRG Stadium in Houston on Friday morning.

Messi returned to training on Monday as they prepare to face Ecuador in a rematch from the 2021 Copa America quarterfinals, in which they breezed past Ecuador 3-0 and eventually lifted the trophy.

Messi had not trained since sustaining a groin/thigh injury during his side's 1-0 win against Chile on June 25. He sat out Argentina's 2-0 victory over Peru on Saturday.

The Argentine football federation said the 37-year-old did some kinesiology work before training and was with the rest of the group afterwards.

The Albiceleste topped Group A with a 100 percent record while Ecuador held Mexico to a 0-0 draw, finishing second in Group B.

Statistically speaking, the opening phase of this tournament was nearly flawless for Lionel Scaloni's men, who won their three encounters and did not concede.

All five of their goals scored in the opening phase came in the second half, and they have not fallen behind in a Copa America match since the 2019 semifinals (2-0 loss versus Brazil).

What augurs well for Argentina is the potential return of Messi in this game, even though coach Scaloni will be cautious about not overusing the little magician. But even without Messi, Argentina should have very little problem against Ecuador, a team against which the Albiceleste have dominated over the years.

Argentina have never lost to Ecuador at the Copa America while the World Cup holders have advanced beyond this stage on four successive occasions.

Argentina's pedigree in the competition will also make them hopeful of cruising to last four.

The Argentines have won eight consecutive matches across all competitions and have only conceded two goals over that stretch.

Their last three appearances in the quarterfinals of this tournament have been a breeze, with Argentina winning those encounters by a combined margin of 9-1.

Only once in this century have we seen them lose a quarterfinal fixture at this tournament, when they hosted this event in 2011 and were beaten on penalties by Uruguay (5-4).

Meanwhile, Ecuador are capable of pulling off an upset on their day but will have to outdo themselves to stand any chance against Scaloni's troops.

Despite being on the back foot for a good portion of their previous encounter, Ecuador did enough to hold off the Mexicans and claim a spot in the knockout phase on goal difference.

It is the second successive time that La Tri have qualified for the last eight of this tournament, while they have now made the quarterfinals in three of the previous four Copa Americas.

COPA AMERICA 2024 QUARTERS

MATCH	DATE	TIME
Argentina v Ecuador	Jul-05	7:00 AM
Venezuela v Canada	Jul-06	7:00 AM
Colombia v Panama	Jul-07	4:00 AM
Uruguay v Brazil	Jul-07	7:00 AM

All fixtures are as per Bangladesh time

The Taskin scenario and its timing

SPORTS REPORTER

Before an important board meeting on Tuesday, which was set to shed light on how Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) assessed the just-concluded T20 World Cup performances of the national team, news broke that pacer Taskin Ahmed had missed the India game for having overslept.

A series of poor performances in World Cups is nothing new, and an explanation for the team's poor approach, especially in the Afghanistan game, should have been a top priority for the board. The timing of the news about Taskin was curious, as it took the limelight away from what was, in fact, a poor World Cup performance despite securing a place in the Super Eights.

What happens inside the team environment usually stays out of public knowledge, but this time the news about Taskin was leaked quite some time after the World Cup game in question.

Shakib Al Hasan, meanwhile, who usually keeps mum regarding anything inside the team's environment, had talked about Taskin missing the team bus on Tuesday evening before leaving for USA.

Thus, when BCB president Nazmul Hassan attended the press conference following the board meeting on Tuesday, it could be surmised that the board felt content with what the team achieved despite carrying 'new' players. In fact, after questions related to the team's performances came one after another, Hassan said they were not willing to be too critical.

Inevitably, the question of Taskin came up. The BCB chief remarked: "I also heard that he missed the team bus. Why he didn't come on time, until I ask him directly... but I feel this report should come from the concerned department."

Why the board has not yet discussed the team's disciplinary issues before sitting down for a meeting is anyone's guess. If one were to venture a guess, it would be that the board has not sought an explanation seriously enough.

Taskin himself acknowledged in yesterday's Facebook post that he had, in fact, overslept. But he felt there was a huge "outcry" over this particular event. It would have made sense had Taskin been issued any fines or punishment.

No development has come till now on the penalty Taskin will be handed, as the board is still awaiting the coach and team manager's report regarding the matter. Instead, the news of him having overslept became public knowledge and made the rounds on social media, crucially grabbing the spotlight.

Moreover, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's report for the World Cup is due. Bangladesh's planning in the Afghanistan game lacked conviction that they were, in fact, going for a win. Instead of addressing what caused the bad performances, it appeared BCB was content to allow a story to fuel.

While the BCB president said there were things that cannot be discussed with the media, the focus had somehow shifted to Taskin, which may have been intended.

Crown-favourite Gauff on redemption run

REUTERS, *London*

Coco Gauff did not look at her imperious best under the roof on Wimbledon's Court One on Wednesday, but she was always in control of an error-strewn second-round 6-2, 6-1 victory over Romanian qualifier Anca Todoni.

The US Open champion slipped and fell twice on the slick court and muttered to herself during the one-hour, six-minute match against an opponent ranked 140 places below her.

Second seed Gauff, a crowd favourite at Wimbledon after announcing her arrival on the big stage with a fourth-round run as a 15-year-old five years ago, produced 16 unforced errors in the short match and managed to land only 43% of her first serves.

But her nervous opponent, at 19 six months Gauff's junior, hit 23 unforced errors and could not find her range against the fleet-footed American, who wrapped up the match with a drop shot that Todoni could only send wide.

Gauff, who suffered a humiliating first-round exit last year at the hands of compatriot Sofia Kenin, said she had learned from that disappointment and from her triumph at the US Open to manage expectations and emotions.

"Overall, I just learned about life a lot. What I do, I'm very passionate about but it's not ever that serious," she said.

"It's a game, it's sport. Sometimes the world can make you feel like there is so much pressure and expectation."

The draw has opened up for Gauff after the first-day withdrawals of Belarusians Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion, and former world No. 1 Victoria Azarenka. She will next play British qualifier Sonay Kartel or France's Clara Burel.

Stacked fixtures await cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the T20 World Cup, it seems Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is waiting for their coaches and players to finish the ongoing break in order to start preparation for their next international assignment -- a two-match Test series against Pakistan, scheduled to be held in August.

Although Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is yet to confirm the itinerary of the series, which is also part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle, Bangladesh are expected to tour Pakistan for the first time since 2020.

According to chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, they are planning for some practice matches during their camp for the Pakistan series in order to prepare themselves for red-ball cricket -- a format which they last played in March-April against Sri Lanka.

"The players are on a break now and after that, the schedule of the camp will be announced formally. There are some suggestions from our head coach. There are plans to play some warm-up matches," Ashraf told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BCB is currently running two camps -- High Performance (HP) unit in Rajshahi and Bangladesh Tigers in Chattogram -- simultaneously. Nearly 50 cricketers are preparing for two scheduled High Performance and A team tours in Australia and Pakistan, respectively.

According to camp officials, national players like Shadman Islam and Shahadat Hossain Dipu, who are part of the Bangladesh Tigers camp, are set to feature in both Australia and Pakistan tours before the Test series.

The first contingent of HP unit, which will play two four-day matches against Pakistan Shaheens between July 19 and 29, is expected to leave Dhaka for Australia on July 14. HP unit will also play a 50-over tri-series and a T20 series, featuring a different set of players.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh A will leave for Pakistan, with a few players from the HP unit joining the team from Australia, to play two four-day matches and three one-day matches on August 6.

"The A team will leave for Pakistan on August 6. During the tour of the A team, our national team will arrive in Pakistan. We are actually operating all three programmes at the same time," said national selector Hannan Sarkar, who also mentioned that the HP squad will be announced in two-three days.

ROAD TO EURO QUARTERS

Showdowns, young guns and own goals

AFP, *Stuttgart*

Euro 2024's quarterfinals kick off on Friday with a blockbuster match between hosts Germany and Spain as the tournament heads towards its decisive final week.

Big boys clash

Germany's clash with Spain in Stuttgart pits the Euros' two best performing sides against one another at least one round earlier than fans would have liked, due to an unbalanced knockout bracket which has four serious candidates for overall victory on one side.

The winner of Friday's tie will face either Portugal or France, both former European champions.

Meanwhile, England face Switzerland on Saturday after having scraped past Slovakia in the last 16 and find themselves in the last eight having played way below expectations in each of their four matches.

Big name flops

The Euros has brought together some of the best footballers on the planet but none of the biggest stars have shone so far as the big teams -- Spain and Germany apart -- have mostly been below-par.

Cristiano Ronaldo looks like he's gone one tournament too far while Kylian Mbappe has just a group-stage penalty to his name and is a long way from the phenomenal form which won him the golden boot at the last World Cup.

England pair Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane, respectively La Liga player of the year and the Bundesliga top scorer, have played way below expectations despite scoring all four of England's goals.

Young guns & ageing icons

Records have fallen in Germany at both ends of the age spectrum. Spain winger Lamine Yamal, 16, is dazzling having become the youngest player ever to feature at a European Championship. Should he strike in the quarters or beyond, he will become the youngest scorer in the tournament's history.

By contrast Croatia's Luka Modric set a new record for the oldest at 38 by netting against Italy and Portugal duo Ronaldo, 39, and Pepe, 41 (now the oldest-ever Euros player), could yet surpass the Real Madrid midfield maestro.

Own goals on fire

While the continent's star strikers have failed to fire, there have been nine own goals at this Euros and the record of 11 set at the last championships three years ago looks sure to be broken.

Prior to Euro 2020, there had just been 11 in the tournament's history.

The most comical came in Turkey's 3-0 thumping at the hands of Portugal, when Samet Akaydin unwittingly doubled the deficit by playing a sloppy back pass which ended with Zeki Celik and goalkeeper Altay Bayindir bundling into the net in a vain attempt to keep the ball out.

The majority, though, have come from dangerous crosses, like Riccardo Calafiori handing Spain a 1-0 win over Spain in one of the most-anticipated games of the group stage.

Spain's Robin Le Normand, Czech defender Robin Hranac and Austria's Maximilian Woeber all found their own net in similar fashion as attempted clearances to low crosses have gone wrong.

Underdogs shine

The plodding, static performances of France, Belgium, England and Portugal -- FIFA's four highest-ranked sides before the tournament -- have been offset by some brilliant underdog showings.

Despite being the lowest-ranked team, Georgia's run to the last 16 lit up the tournament, particularly their 2-0 victory over Euro 2016 winners Portugal.

Romania had won just one of their 16 games at the championships heading into Euro 2024 but topped a group featuring Belgium, Ukraine and Slovakia, before going down to the Netherlands in the last 16.

Turkey have however emerged as the tournament's true dark horses, booking a spot in the quarterfinals with a brilliant 2-1 win over fellow upstarts Austria on Tuesday.

Vincenzo Montella's Turkey and Georgia also played the best game of the group stage, a 3-1 win for the Turks in front of a pulsating crowd in Dortmund.

EURO 2024 QUARTERS

MATCH	DATE	TIME
Germany v Spain	Jul-05	10:00 PM
Portugal v France	Jul-06	1:00 AM
England v Switzerland	Jul-06	10:00 PM
Turkey v Netherlands	Jul-07	1:00 AM

All fixtures are as per Bangladesh time

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KURIGRAM

Over 50,000 stranded as flood hits new areas

STAR REPORT

The flood situation in the northern districts deteriorated yesterday due to heavy rainfall and the onrush of water from upstream.

Vast tracts of low-lying areas were inundated due to the rise in the water level of the Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers.

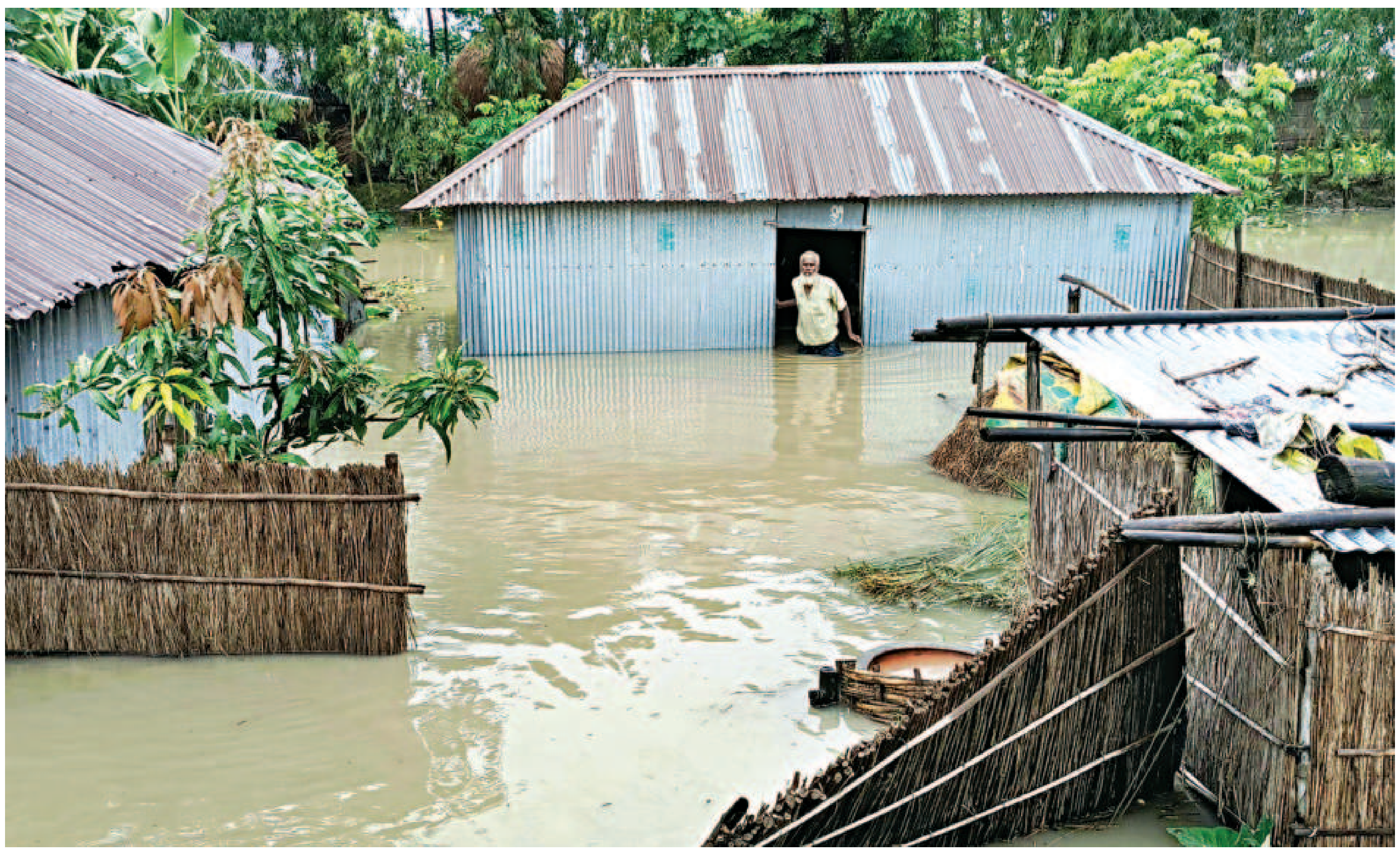
"Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma rivers are on a rising trend, which may continue in the next 72 hours," a bulletin from the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said yesterday.

In the next 24 hours, the water level at some points of the Jamuna River along Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Bogura, and Sirajganj districts may rise and cross the danger levels," it added.

The flood situation in the low-lying areas in Kurigram along the Brahmaputra River may deteriorate at the same time, the bulletin warned.

Abdul Hai Sarkar, district relief and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



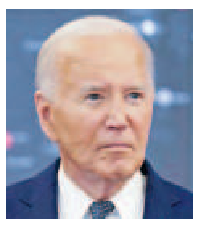
An elderly man walks out of his submerged home in Char Bhagabatipur in Kurigram's sadar upazila. With the Brahmaputra swelling due to incessant rain and onrush of water from the upstream, at least 450 chars in the district have gone under water, causing a severe food and drinking water crisis for the locals. As of 6:00am yesterday, the Brahmaputra was flowing 12cm above the danger level. PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Biden expresses concerns over his candidacy to ally

Says NYT report

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden has told an ally that he knows he may not be able to salvage his candidacy if he cannot convince the public in the coming days that he is up for the job after his debate performance last week, the New York Times reported yesterday.



After the report was published, White House spokesperson Andrew Bates wrote on social media: "This claim is absolutely false".

The Times quoted the ally as saying that Biden "knows if he has two more events like that, we're in a different place" by the end of the weekend. The report described the ally as "key" but did not name the person.

The headline of the report said that Biden told the ally he is weighing whether to continue in the race. The text of the report did not include any reference to those comments.

Biden was due to hold a meeting with Democratic governors yesterday and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Anti-quota demos rage on across the country

Students block several highways; SC to hear appeal today

DU CORRESPONDENT

University students yesterday stepped up their protest demanding the reinstatement of the government's 2018 circular that abolished the quota system in public service.

Students of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, and Bangladesh Agricultural University and more took part in the protest for third consecutive day. They brought out processions, blocked roads and highways, and held sit-ins.

Meanwhile, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is scheduled to hold a hearing on the government's appeal challenging the High Court verdict that declared the 2018 circular illegal.

On June 5 this year, the HC declared the verdict, consequently restoring the 30 percent quota system for the children of freedom fighters in government jobs. It did so after disposing of a 2021 writ petition that challenged the legality of the quota abolishment.

The SC is scheduled to hold a hearing on the government's appeal challenging the HC verdict that declared its 2018 circular, which abolished the quota system for government jobs, illegal.

The government had issued the circular in the wake of student protests for quota reforms.

PROTESTS IN DHAKA

Thousands of students gathered at the capital's Shahbagh intersection for the second straight day yesterday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

No provision for staying conviction if appeal pending

HC says in full verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that there is no provision for staying the conviction of an individual in a case while an appeal against it remains pending.

A conviction can either be scrapped, affirmed or modified upon disposing of the appeal, said an HC bench in the full text released yesterday of a judgement.

The bench on March 18 delivered the verdict scrapping the Labour Appellate Tribunal's stay order on the conviction and sentence of Grameen Telecom Chairman Prof Muhammad Yunus and directors Ashraful Hassan, Nurjahan Begum, and M Shahjahan and granted them bail in a case filed under the labour law.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadot Hossain, however, stayed their sentences and fines until disposal of the appeals filed by the Nobel laureate and three others, challenging the verdict of the Third Labour Court in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Gaza families seek shelter amid fresh Israeli strikes

Complain of water shortages, inflated prices for basic foodstuff; 28 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Gaza*

Many Palestinians were seeking shelter yesterday after fleeing their homes in southern Gaza and complained of water shortages as Israel pressed on with its military offensive in the densely populated enclave.

Israeli forces carried out new military strikes in the southern city of Rafah amid fierce fighting with Hamas fighters overnight, residents said. At least 12 people were killed in new strikes in central and northern Gaza.

- » Hamas fighters shell Israeli tanks in west of Rafah
- » Five Palestinians killed in Israeli raids in West Bank
- » Gaza death toll rises to 37,953

Israel's leaders have said they are winding down the phase of intense fighting against Hamas, and will soon shift to more targeted operations in the nearly nine-month-old offensive in Gaza.

But fighting continued overnight in two locations at the centre of Rafah, where tanks have seized several districts and advanced further west and north of the city in recent days, and concerns about the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced people are growing.

The Israeli military said its forces had continued targeted, intelligence-based operations in Rafah, dismantled several sites and killed Hamas members.

Hamas' armed wing said it had shelled two Israeli tanks in a neighbourhood west of Rafah and fired mortar bombs at Israeli forces attacking Shejaia, an eastern suburb of Gaza City in the centre of the enclave.

The armed wing of Islamic Jihad, an allied group, said it had shelled an Israeli military bulldozer in Rafah, and fired on Israeli army positions east of Shejaia.

In Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, two Israeli airstrikes killed five Palestinians, health officials said. In Shejaia an airstrike killed four and wounded 17, medics said.

BNP leader stabbed on way to rally

Fingers pointed at AL men

STAR REPORT

Acting convener of Natore BNP Shahidul Islam Bachchu was stabbed allegedly by ruling Awami League men in front of the BNP office at Alaipur yesterday morning while he was going to attend a rally near the office.

Shahidul Islam

The attackers also beat up and injured five other leaders in different areas of the district town on their way to the event organised by the district BNP as part of its central programme demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her treatment abroad.

Shahidul came under attack near the party office around 9:45am. Mashiur Ferdous Hitlu, general secretary of BNP ward-5, who was with Shahidul, was also beaten up by the assailants, said Dewan Shahin, joint convener of the district BNP.

He alleged that AL activists Rashidul Islam Koyel, Golam Kibria Selim, and Amirul Islam Jony carried out the attack.

Shahidul was moved to Dhaka from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in the afternoon as his condition was stated to be critical.

Three other injured -- Hitlu, Natore Sramik Dal Secretary Rafiq, and Natore municipality unit Swechchhasebak Dal

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'We have to be prepared for anyone'

AFP, *Santa Clara*

Colombia came from behind to grab a 1-1 draw with Brazil on Tuesday, ensuring their qualification to the Copa America quarter-finals as group winners.

Raphinha

An equalizer from Daniel Munoz in first half stoppage time was enough to earn Colombia a share of the spoils after Raphinha had fired Brazil into the lead with a sublime 12th-minute free-kick at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

The result means Colombia advance to the knockout rounds as winners of Group D, where they will face Group C runners-up Panama in Glendale, Arizona, on Saturday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Colombia defender Daniel Munoz (M) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against Brazil during an action-packed Copa America group D fixture which ended 1-1 in Santa Clara yesterday (Bangladesh time). The result leaves Colombia as group leaders, while second-placed Brazil set up clash with Uruguay in quarterfinals. PHOTO: REUTERS

Scientists discover moss can grow on Mars

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have discovered that a type of desert moss found in Antarctica can survive the extreme conditions of Mars, making it a promising candidate for colonising the planet.

The moss, Syntrichia caninervis, was already known to be able to withstand drought conditions, but tests by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences revealed that it can also tolerate temperatures as low as -196˚C and similar levels of gamma radiation to that found on the Martian surface.

"Our study shows that the environmental resilience of Syntrichia caninervis is superior to that of some of the highly stress-tolerant microorganisms and tardigrades," the researchers wrote.

"Syntrichia caninervis is a promising candidate pioneer plant for colonising extra-terrestrial environments, laying the foundation for building biologically sustainable human habitats beyond Earth."

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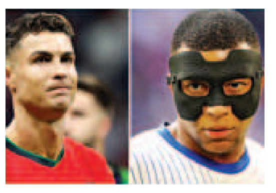
Govt reveals austerity measures for FY25
B1



Mbappe or Ronaldo: Who will prevail?
P11

India, China FMs agree to work on border issues
P7

One murder, too many questions
P3

Anti-quota protests swell across univs

For now, HC verdict not stayed; protesters vow tougher demos

STAR REPORT

Anti-quota protests intensified across the country yesterday as students of more universities joined in, and the demonstrators announced fresh programmes to press for scrapping of the quota system in government jobs.

Earlier in the day, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court decided to uphold until further orders the June 5 High Court verdict. The HC verdict reinstated the quota system after terming illegal a 2018 government circular that abolished it. The decision was announced around 10:00am.

Protesters said they will bring out processions on college and university campuses on Saturday and boycott classes and exams on Sunday, demanding the reinstatement of the government's 2018 circular.

University students in and around Dhaka were demonstrating against the HC verdict for the last several days.

As part of the demonstrations, they blocked key intersections in the capital and highways for several hours, causing sufferings to the commuters.

Nahid Islam, an organiser of the movement, said the mainstay of the country's constitution and spirit of the Liberation War is equality for all.

"The crisis over the quota system should be resolved keeping in mind the public opinion. But we are seeing the system is being reinstated, ignoring public opinion. We'll continue our movement until our demands are met," he said during a procession at Dhaka University.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Graft suspects getting promoted in civil service

Allege secretaries during meeting

BAHARAM KHAN *and* **MD ABBAS**

Secretaries at a meeting yesterday said some government officials facing allegations of corruption were getting promoted and posted to key positions at different ministries, divisions, and departments.

They observed that secretaries must take strict measures to ensure those officers are not considered for promotion in the future, according to sources present at the meeting held at the secretariat.

"We have enough laws and regulations to stop corruption, but these are not properly implemented, which is why corruption has become a burning issue," said one of the speakers.

"Officers who indulge in irregularities while providing public service need to be identified and held accountable," said a secretary.

A few corrupt officers are tainting the reputation of all government officials and they are the cause of criticism in the media, said another speaker.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

$14b export data puzzle is unnerving

AHSAN HABIB

You can lie with data or illuminate the truth with data. And there's something in between -- half-truths.

A $14 billion correction in export figures by the central bank is necessary because it addresses one economic half-truth.

But half-truths are unnerving.

The data revision that came on Wednesday through a regular update on the balance of payments raises disturbing questions about the country's economic performance and the policy that revolved around it.

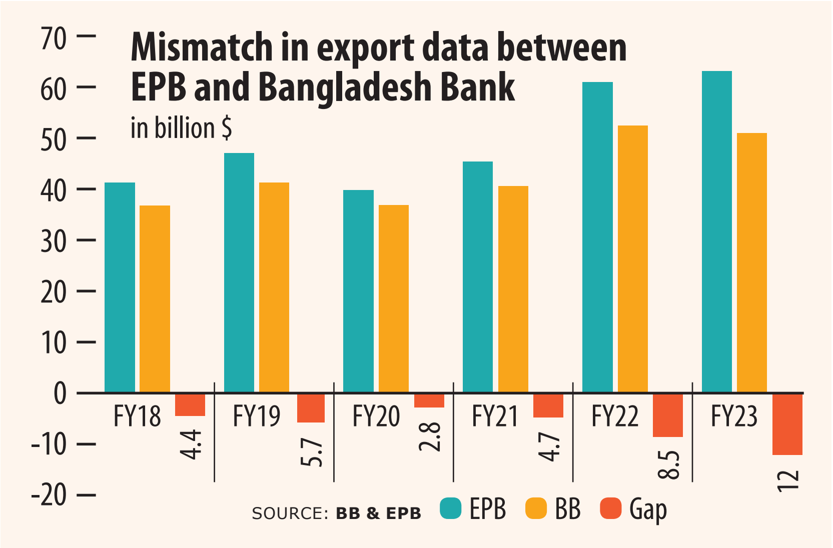
The shocking revelation has sent economists scrambling for answers, but there are more questions than answers as the authorities are almost silent.

What's clear is that the discrepancy in export figures again underscores the importance of accurate macroeconomic data. A lack of statistical accuracy can upend many indicators. The calculation of gross domestic product is one of them.

Such a big discrepancy is "unbelievable", said MK Mujeri, an economist and former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

Export and import data calculation is a simple task, but big mistakes such as this by officials raise questions over the authenticity of other components of the economy. "Entire GDP estimates should be revisited," said Mujeri.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



SOURCE: **BB & EPB**

NEWS ANALYSIS

It's time for serious stocktaking

ZINA TASREEN

Bangladesh Bank has opened a can of worms with its revision of the balance of payment data. There is no better way to put it.

It turns out that exports, too often billed as the shining light of the Bangladesh economy, were not as outstanding over the years as they were made out to be by the official government statistics.

As is standard practice, export data is recorded when the consignment is cleared by the customs for shipment.

But in Bangladesh, three different government bodies were recording the export data: the Export Promotion Bureau, the commerce ministry wing responsible for developing the nation's exports; the National Board of Revenue by way of customs; and the Bangladesh Bank, which logs in the actual proceeds from the shipments.

In theory, all three approaches should lead to more or less similar figures. In reality, the three yielded different numbers.

But, it was the Export Promotion Bureau's data, which showed the rosiest picture, that was published as the official export figures. Why did the EPB's methodology yield the highest number of the three? There were too many incidences of double or triple counting the same consignment.

Now, on the insistence of the International Monetary Fund, Bangladesh has decided to go with the customs data as the official export figure -- as it should have been the case always.

This correction has answered an

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

People using a bamboo raft to go to the WDB dyke for shelter at Hatirmela village in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila yesterday. Almost all the homes in the village have been flooded due to continuous rains and an onrush of water from the upstream.

PHOTO: **S DILIP ROY**

TEESTA PROJECT

Beijing open to working with Delhi

Says Chinese envoy ahead of Hasina's China visit; Dhaka's proposal seeking budget support likely to be considered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese ambassador yesterday hinted that Beijing may consider Bangladesh's proposal seeking budget support that will ease pressure on the country's foreign reserves.

China is open to working with India for the Teesta restoration and management project, but it is Bangladesh which has to make the decision in this regard, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen told reporters at the Jatiya Press Club.

It is expected that during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to China next week, multiple "cooperation documents" will be signed and the two countries will jointly announce major cooperation achievements, according to the ambassador.

Bangladesh sought around $5 billion from China in budget support in addition to loans for a number of mega projects, finance ministry officials said.

Regarding this, the ambassador said, "We too talk about these issues. We too have some new proposals from Bangladesh. I should say it is very new for both of us. Some initiative we never came across before.

"But, China, we are open. We are still on the discussion. That is my position that whatever China can do, it we will do as per the request from Bangladesh side. Let's see, hopefully we can make some breakthrough in this regard."

About Teesta project, he said "The Teesta river is within the territory of Bangladesh. So, it is your river. Any

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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2018 BNP PROTEST

Charges framed against Alal, Tuku, 87 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court framed charges yesterday against 89 leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations in a case filed over instigating destructive activities during a demonstration in 2018.

The demonstration was held ahead of a court's verdict on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case in 2018.

Alal

Tuku

BNP leaders Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, AKM Fazlul Haque Milon, Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Habibun Nabi Khan Sohel and Saiful Alam Nirob are among the accused in the case filed with Ramna Model Police Station in February 2018.

Alal, Milon, Shimul Biswas, Tuku, Solel, Nirob and 82 others, now on bail and Enamul Haque,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

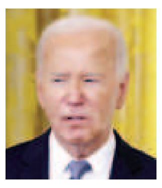
Palestinians walk past the rubble as others search for belongings in the aftermath of an Israeli strike near a UN-run school sheltering displaced people in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Biden vows to stay 'to the end'

Rejects pressure to quit race

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden vowed to stay in the 2024 presidential race during calls with campaign staff and meetings with Democratic lawmakers and governors on Wednesday evening, as he sought to shake off calls for him to drop out after his shaky debate performance last week.



Biden dialed in to a call with worried members of his campaign team and told them he wasn't going anywhere, according to two sources familiar with the call.

"No one is pushing me out. I'm not leaving. I'm in this race to the end," Biden said in a separate email blast by his campaign, urging supporters to "pitch in a few bucks" to help defeat his Republican rival Donald Trump in the November 5 presidential election.

The president met virtually and in person with 24 Democratic governors and the mayor of Washington, DC, on Wednesday evening to reassure them he is up to the job of standard-bearer for the party after the faltering debate performance.

Only three of the governors - the leaders of New York, Minnesota and Maryland - met with reporters afterwards, vowing to stand with Biden after what they called an honest discussion about his bad performance in last week's debate.

Anti-quota protests swell across univs

FROM PAGE 1

He added, "We're not against the freedom fighters; rather, we have no objection to increasing the facilities for those who are real freedom fighters. But we want the quota system gone."

Their demands include the formation of a commission to reform the quota system and also to ensure vacant positions are filled with candidates selected on merit in the absence of quota candidates.

Also, they demand that individuals be allowed to use the quota system only once in their lifetime for any type of competitive public examinations, including university entrance tests.

THE SC SAYS

Yesterday morning, a six-member bench of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, held a hearing on the government's petition for a stay on the HC verdict that termed its 2018 circular abolishing quotas illegal.

However, much to the dismay of the protesters expecting a stay, the apex court asked the government to submit a leave-to-appeal petition after the full text of the HC judgment is released.

The HC verdict came on June 5 this year, following a 2021 writ petition that challenged the legality of the quota abolishment.

Since then, students have taken to the streets demanding the reinstatement of the government circular.

PROTESTS ESCALATE

Once the news of the Appellate Division's decision spread, students of Dhaka University began gathering in front of the Central Library from 11:00am.

They brought out processions on different roads on the campus and around 12:20pm blocked the Shahbagh intersection, for the third consecutive day. They stayed there till 6:00pm.

Despite bouts of rain, the students stayed put, chanting slogans like "Bury the quota system", "No place for discriminations in my golden Bangla", "No more tears for the meritorious", and "Keep the country's talent in the country, abolish the quota system".

They also sang patriotic songs and recited poems.

Meanwhile, traffic came to a halt on the roads leading to Bangla Motors, Science Lab and Kakrail due to the blockade.

On the other hand, leaders and activists of Chhatra League, the pro-ruling party student body, took position at different dormitories, including Zahurul Huq Hall and Surja Sen Hall, to prevent students from joining the protests.

Asaduzzaman Farid, joint secretary of Zahurul Huq Hall BCL, said they were on alert to prevent the anti-quota demonstrations at the hall.

Sharjis Alam, a master's student of Zoology and one of the leaders of the anti-quota protesters, was allegedly forced to vacate the Amar Ekushey Hall of DU around 10:00pm.

He claimed that Chhatra League leaders in the dorm forced him to leave.

As the news spread, hundreds of students from different halls gathered in front of the dorm around 11:45pm and started chanting slogans.

Hall provost Prof Ishtiaq M Sayed was seen trying to calm the students.

Saddam Hossain, president of Amar Ekushey Hall unit of Chhatra League, said they did not force anyone to leave the dorm. "Who stays or not depends on the hall authority, not them."

Around 1:00pm, students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked the Agargaon thoroughfare for an hour, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Jagannath University students also blocked roads near their campus on Chittaranjan Avenue and Ray Saheb Bazar for over an hour and half since 12:00pm.

They too shouted anti-quota slogans such as "No place for discriminations in Bangabandhu's Bangla", "Rise again with the spirit of '18", "Let the meritorious be free!".

The blockade caused traffic congestion on both roads.

Helal Ahmed, one of the protesters, said, "We'll continue our movement until the quota system is abolished."

Students of Jahangirnagar University brought out a procession on campus and then blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway around 12:20pm for almost an hour, leading to traffic jams.

AFM Sayeed, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said though the blockade was lifted around 1:00pm, it took time for traffic to go back to normal.

Cumilla University students blocked the busy Dhaka-Chattogram highway, a commercial artery between the capital and the port city, in Beltali area of south sadar upazila for three hours from 12:30pm.

They lifted the blockade only after Deputy Commissioner Khandaker M Musfiqur Rahman and Superintendent of Police Abdul Mannan ensured that the protesters' message would be conveyed to the higher authorities.

After a procession on their campus, several thousand students of Rajshahi University braved the rain and blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for over two hours from around 10:00am. Slogans like "Let the weapon of 2018 roar again", "We want merit-based recruitment, no quotas except for the disabled" were chanted.

Hundreds of Chittagong University students blocked the Chattogram-Khagrachhari highway for around two hours from 11:45pm.

Fatema, a sociology student, said, "Because of the quotas, meritorious students are not being recognised. It's unacceptable that a talented student with high exam scores may not get a job while some others can, benefiting from the quota system."

The Barishal-Kuakata highway was also blocked by students of Barisal University for five hours.

QUOTA SYSTEM

The quota system has long been criticised as the reason for bureaucracy being devoid of merit in the long run.

While giving a lecture at Dhaka University in January 2018, the late Akbar Ali Khan, a former adviser to a caretaker government and former cabinet secretary, had said it was "the biggest problem in the cadre service".

He said, "No other country in the world has such a bizarre system."

A study conducted by Akbar Ali Khan and Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, also a former secretary and former chief election commissioner, recommended reducing the number of quotas.

In the report, which they submitted to the Public Service Commission in 2008, they termed the system "unjust".

In 2018, the government issued the circular, abolishing the quota system, in the wake of massive student protests for reforms.

Until then, about 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas. Of this, 30 percent were for the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters; 10 percent for women; 10 for people from underdeveloped districts; five for members of indigenous communities, and one percent for persons with physical disabilities.

The quota system was introduced through an executive order in 1972 and had been amended several times since.

From 1972 to 1976, 20 percent were recruited on merit.

Merit-based recruitment then increased to 40 percent in 1976, which continued till 1985 before it was further upped to 45 percent.

Beijing open to working with Delhi

FROM PAGE 1

project regarding the Teesta river is for Bangladesh to decide upon. That decision must be respected by all of us."

In 2020, Bangladesh's water resources ministry wrote to the Economic Relations Division seeking a $983.27 million loan from China to implement the Teesta project that includes dredging, creating reservoirs, and building townships along the river.

But, after her India visit last month, Hasina told reporters that her government will implement the Teesta project with assistance from India and it has got assurances from the neighbouring country in this regard.

At yesterday's event organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, the Chinese envoy replied in the negative when he was asked whether there was tension between India and his country over the project.

He said China placed a proposal regarding the Teesta project following a request from Bangladesh and was awaiting a response.

When asked if India and China could work jointly on the Teesta project, he said: "We are ready. We are open...But it's Bangladesh [which has] to make decision in this regard. China is open about whatever proposal Bangladesh gives."

Asked how many documents could be signed during Hasina's China visit, the ambassador said he could not comment on the specifics.

Discussions between the two countries will focus on infrastructure, trade, the financial sector, the digital economy, education, media cooperation, and the development of Bangladesh's southern region, he said.

Through the PM's visit, the envoy said, the two sides will further enhance coordination and cooperation on regional and international issues.

He said China supports Bangladesh's bid to become a partner country of the BRICS and hopes Bangladesh will be a BRICS member soon.

China highly appreciates Bangladesh's humanitarian spirit in sheltering more than one million Rohingya refugees, he said.

He said China is actively persuading all parties involved in the conflict in Myanmar to achieve a ceasefire and dialogue, thus paving the way for the repatriation at an early date.

Asked whether Bangladesh and China are going to sign any defence deals during Hasina's visit, he said he was not sure.

The countries will have more defence cooperation in future, he said, adding that defence cooperation serves as a pillar of the relations of the two countries.

DCAB President Nurul Islam Hasib and General Secretary Ashiqur Rahman Apu also spoke at the event.

$14b export data puzzle is unnerving

FROM PAGE 1

His stance concurs with the views expressed by other economists.

"If the ratio of this discrepancy has significantly increased over time, then that should necessitate revisiting the growth estimates," said Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

With the disclosure, some other issues came to a head as well.

The statistical revision suggests that Bangladesh Bank and the finance ministry have finally accepted that no significant export earnings are retained abroad as exporters have claimed for years. That means the trade deficit is much larger than originally presumed. That also indicates that the target of reaching $110 billion in exports by 2027 is far from realistic.

"In other words, we should now formulate a more realistic export strategy and identify what exact constraints are hindering our export performance," Ashikur said.

The difference between export figures calculated by the Export Promotion Bureau and Bangladesh Bank persisted for at least 12 years, with the gap crossing $12 billion in fiscal 2022-23.

Economists have long been referring to the puzzle. Finally, the central bank woke up and reconciled the mismatch for the July-April period of fiscal 2023-24. As a result, exports fell 6.8 percent during this period, a sharp contrast with a 3.93 percent growth shown in the EPB's figures released earlier.

What's more, Bangladesh runs the risk of reputational damage abroad. The country's image as a garment powerhouse defined by the sheer volume of shipments will be seriously dented. Clothing exports, which make up about 10 percent of the economy, are an important indicator that sets the country apart from its peers.

SOME ESTIMATES ARE OBSOLETE NOW

It is going to create serious data chaos. Whatever Bangladesh has estimated in the past has now become "mostly irrelevant", said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The EPB publishes figures based on the data from the customs department. Apparently, for procedural reasons or otherwise, the customs department took into account the same export data more than once in many cases, known as double or triple counting.

As per the EPB data, exports were $47.47 billion in the July-April period of fiscal 2023-24. However, the amount stood at $33.67 billion after the correction, according to data released by the central bank on Wednesday.

But it's not clear for how long such wrong data entry has been going on.

Good policy framing depends on authentic data. Poor quality data gives wrong signals to the policymakers.

"If policymaking is done based on unreliable data, then policies become irrelevant and defunct," Fahmida said. Unfortunately, citizens have been misled about the real economic situation due to such anomalies perpetuated by government organisations, she said.

These errors show the extent of data governance or a lack of it in Bangladesh. Without quality information, informed policy-making is difficult, said MA Razzaque, chairman of the Research and Policy Integration for Development.

The export data mismatch will have an impact on GDP estimates because value addition from exports is included in the GDP calculation. The ratio of value addition is nearly 60 percent. So, the GDP impact will be as much as $6 billion, Razzaque said.

Md Deen Islam, associate professor of economics at Dhaka University, said this correction would lower the GDP growth rate, with exports contributing less to overall economic output, GDP growth rates for the period will need to be revised downward, and future projections for economic growth will need to be adjusted to reflect the more accurate export figures, potentially leading to more conservative growth estimates.

The significant revision could create temporary confusion and mistrust among stakeholders, including businesses, investors and international partners, he said.

"Revisions might lead to questions regarding the credibility and reliability of economic data published by national agencies," he added.

Deen Islam said policymakers may need to reassess their strategies to stimulate economic growth and stabilise the macroeconomic environment as the revised export figures indicate a significant decline.

However, the reconciliation of export data provides a more accurate picture of Bangladesh's economic landscape, which is crucial for effective policy-making and strategic planning, said Deen Islam.

Birupaksha Paul, a professor of economics at the State University of New York, said it was a positive move toward a proper accounting of the balance of payments.

A senior official of the EPB said it does not produce export data. The agency compiles export data based on numbers it receives from the customs wing of the National Board of Revenue and the central bank.

"We only see export data once the goods are shipped. If any consignment is returned, the EPB does not have the chance to find that out," he said, adding that it is monitored by the BB and NBR.

"Still, if we need to correct any data, we will do it," said the official. There is a committee comprising representatives from the EPB, the BB, the NBR and other agencies.

The EPB is yet to release data for the July-June period of FY24 although it usually publishes the figures early every month.

Saiful Islam, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, said from now on, the central bank will base the calculation on the corrected export data.

Asked about the previous mismatch in data between the BB and the EPB, he said there was no problem with the past data. There was a problem with the method of reporting. He did not elaborate.

Despite the big reset, the economy's health remains unchanged. The correction addresses anomalies but does not fundamentally alter the economic landscape.

[Refayet Ullah Mirdha and Md Mehedi Hasan contributed to this report]

It's time for serious stocktaking

FROM PAGE 1

important riddle: despite reports of solid showing in the export market month in and month out, why was the foreign currency reserves not bouncing back?

At the same time, the dwindling dollar stockpile was not due to rampant capital flight through trade mis-invoicing: the discrepancy between the NBR data and the central bank data is not too wide.

More importantly, the balance of payment adjustment has raised a few uncomfortable questions.

Was there no oversight on the EPB's data collection practice? Why did the EPB and the NBR not sit down at the close of a fiscal year to reconcile their entries? Who should be held responsible for this scandal? Or, was this intentional all along and the authorities are doing a mea culpa now that they were caught by the IMF?

The event also gives rise to a bigger existential question: was the oft-peddled narrative of Bangladesh being an economic star performer over the past decade or so a sham?

Exports and remittance are the two big drivers of the Bangladesh economy. The stellar GDP growth reported over the years was pinned on the impressive growth registered by the two sectors.

Surely, Bangladesh's actual GDP is markedly lower than what was reported all this while. About one-third of the country's GDP comes from industrial output, which is dominated by merchandise for the export market.

This also raises another question: is Bangladesh really ready for graduation from the least-developed country bracket in 2026?

Bangladesh's LDC graduation was determined by its economic performance and now that it needs revision, surely the scheduled timeframe for graduation should be calibrated too.

With graduation from the LDC bracket, Bangladesh will lose all the trade benefits it currently enjoys. With the trade privileges, Bangladesh's exports flattered to deceive. Will the exporters be able to manage without it? Can the Bangladesh economy afford a further drop in exports?

There must be serious stock-taking by the Awami League government of more than 15 years to this end.

And yet, the biggest damage the readjustment of the balance of payment data has done is not material -- there is no change in the net balance of payment and foreign exchange reserve scenarios -- but psychological: it raises questions on the credibility of all data provided by the government.

If the export data was inflated, what about the other components of the economy? What about the reported progress on poverty alleviation and remarkable gains made in social development indicators?

All the achievements made over the past decade will be called into question -- all that glitters may not be gold.

Acknowledgement is the first step to recovery. Now that the government has admitted its mistake, it must call for re-computation of all official records connected to export data.

At the very least, the past GDP figures must be reset. Other than regaining the lost credibility, there is another silver lining: Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio, which has long been among the lowest in the world and often touted as an Achilles heel of the economy, would most definitely improve to a decent number.

There is another gain to be had with the resetting of the GDP figure, which would entail a massive swallowing of pride for the current government.

A sizeable portion of Bangladesh's sovereign debt portfolio is non-concessionary due to its reported GDP figure. Interest payments on those loans are progressively turning out to be an albatross around the government's neck.

Things can only look up from here onwards if the government takes the episode as a sobering lesson.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with Spanish Ambassador Gabriel Maria Sistiaga Ochoa de Chinchetru at Gono Bhaban yesterday. At the meeting, the premier stressed the need for robust trade and commerce between Bangladesh and Spain for mutual benefits. PHOTO: PID

FIRST 6 MONTHS OF 2023, 2024

Political killings tripled, custodial deaths doubled

Shows ASK report

RAFIUL ISLAM

At least 41 people were killed in incidents of political violence in the first six months of 2024, which is three times higher than first six months of 2023, according to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

Fourteen people were killed and 2,422 were injured between January and June last year. The number of deaths rose to 45 by December last year.

ASK prepared the report on information based on news reports published in national dailies, alongside its own findings.

The rights body said the killings in political violence increased this year centring the general election on January 7, city corporation elections, and upazila polls held in four phases across the country.

Many opposition parties, including BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, boycotted the polls.

So, the killings mostly took place among supporters of Awami League candidates and independent AL candidates during national polls, while during local elections, they took place among supporters of candidates affiliated with AL.

Besides, the deaths in custody of police and Rab have doubled between January and June this year, compared to the same period in 2023, it also said.

The rights body said the killings in political violence increased this year centring the general election on January 7, city corporation elections, and upazila polls held in four phases across the country.

At least eight individuals, including two women, died in custody. One of the victims, Afroza Begum, 40, died in police custody of Jashore's Abhaynagar, hours after she was picked up from her residence on June 2.

Family members alleged that police first implicated Afroza in a false drug case and tortured her to death for money. Police, however, denied the allegations.

Thirteen people were killed and 11

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Happy that I was not put in a cage'

Bail of Prof Yunus extended till Aug 14

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday extended bail of Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and three directors of Grameen Telecom till August 14 in a labour law violation case.

MA Awal, chairman (in-charge) of Labour Appellate Tribunal, passed the order, Khaja Tanvir Ahmed, a lawyer for Yunus, told The Daily Star.

Around 11:00am, Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, along with his three colleagues appeared before the tribunal and filed a petition, the lawyer said.

Talking to journalists afterwards, Yunus said, "The complaints against me are that I laundered money, set up many companies abroad, evaded taxes etc. These are matters for investigation, not for debate. It is a judicial matter... I think I have nothing to say about it."

"The things she [PM] raises as complaints, we have answered those many times... we made a list of 29 Grameen Bank questions and answers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

One murder, too many questions

3 out of 6 retract confessions; family yet to get authorisation for DNA test; probe into gold smuggling link stalled

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The detectives have come up with multiple theories since Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar was killed over a month ago.

Initially, law enforcement officials said the MP was killed due to a gold smuggling-related feud, placing suspicion on a fellow lawmaker and a powerful businessman -- both allegedly part of the same syndicate as Azim.

The probe into the gold smuggling issue remained stalled.

The investigation has taken so many twists and turns since then that it has raised some doubts and confusion in the public mind.

Suddenly, political rivalry came into the mix as a possible reason for the murder following the arrest and confession of Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League.

Suspects appeared and were held from far-flung corners of the country, each with a purported motive for the MP's demise.

Adding to the confusion is the mystery surrounding the remains found in a Kolkata apartment.

Though suspected to be Azim's, his family is yet to get the green light to visit Kolkata for DNA tests.

Abdur Rauf, a personal assistant of Azim, told The Daily Star, "We were supposed to go Kolkata on July 3, but we did not get any authorisation. We do not know when the authorisation will come."

Further complicating matters, three individuals who initially confessed to the crime, yesterday recanted their statements, claiming they were coerced in custody.

Was Azim eliminated in a gold-smuggling power struggle? Was he killed by his political rivals? Or is there something more sinister at play? -- these questions now surround the murder mystery.

MP AZIM
MURDER

Babu yesterday applied to a Dhaka court to withdraw his confessional statement. He was coerced, he claimed.

Two others, including the alleged killing mission coordinator Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan and his cousin Tanvir Bhuiyan also applied to withdraw their confessional statements over similar reason.

Their confessional statements were pre-written by the cops, they just put their signatures on them due to torture, the three said.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbubul Haque ordered the applications to be kept on record.

Confirming the developments, Advocate Ehsanul Haque Samaji said the accused applied for treatment as they were sick due to torture in remand. The court ordered the jail authorities to provide treatment as per the jail code, he added.

Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of (Wari division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that he is unaware of the matter.

Meanwhile, Mustafizur Rahman Fakir and Foysal Ali Sahazi have given confessional statements in the court on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In addition to arranging for their visa, passports and travel arrangements, Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds behind the murder, also provided the two with chloroform and other weapons used for the murder through his personal assistant Siam.

The two also cleaned the flat after murdering the MP, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP.

Drives are underway to arrest more suspects whose names are emerging from the investigation, he added.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the next day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, police from India and Bangladesh said Azim was killed in a Kolkata flat.

Metro fare won't increase this month

Govt forms committee on VAT-related issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a technical committee to submit a report on VAT-related issues for metro rail service.

The committee, led by Neelima Akhter, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), will have to submit the report within a month.

The authority will not increase metro rail fares until a decision is taken following the committee's report, said ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD).

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting held at the division yesterday with Nuri in the chair. Representatives of National Board of Revenue, Finance Division, and Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), among others, participated in the meeting.

The meeting was held when confusion arose regarding whether the metro rail fare would be hiked, as NBR decided not to extend the 15 percent VAT exemption for metro rail service after June 30 this year.

The NBR in April

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Relatives of MPs dominated UZ polls: Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wealthy individuals and businessmen with close ties to the members of parliament govern the majority of upazila parishads across the country, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

This raises concerns about huge power being concentrated in the hands of a few people, they added.

Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik held the event at Jatiya Press Club, presenting an analysis of the sixth upazila parishad election.

They examined data obtained from 470 elected upazila chairmen. It showed 360 (76.6 percent) are businessmen, followed by 48 agriculturists, 19 lawyers, and 15 teachers.

Out of 470 elected upazila chairmen, 360 (76.6 percent) are businessmen, followed by 48 agriculturists, 19 lawyers, and 15 teachers.

Additionally, 42 of these chairmen have an annual income exceeding Tk 1 crore.

Shujan highlighted that lower-income candidates had a significantly lower chance of winning, while higher-income candidates had double the success rate. The report also pointed out that the elections were neither participatory nor competitive, with voter apathy being a major issue.

The results might lead to internal conflicts within the Awami League, as around 90 percent of the winning chairmen are from the ruling party.

The report said 114 of the elected chairmen currently face cases, 182 had cases in the past, and 75 have both past and current cases.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar expressed concerns about the large amounts of money spent illegally in elections.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Biman only profits from 11 out of 21 int'l destinations

Reports national flag carrier to JS body

RASHIDUL HASAN

The national flag carrier is only earning profits in 11 of its 21 international routes.

They are: London, Toronto, Dubai, Jeddah, Madina, Riyadh, Dammam, Bangkok, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines is incurring operational losses in six international destinations -- namely Manchester, Kuwait, Delhi, Kolkata, Guangzhou and Narita.

The other four international routes -- Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Doha and Sharjah -- are gradually turning profitable by reducing the load penalty through coordination of excess baggage weight with airfare.

The airline placed the information before a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation ministry yesterday.

Awami League MP and chief of the parliamentary watchdog Sajjadul Hassan chaired the meeting.

Efforts to increase profitability including optimising revenue per passenger, improving on-time performance, and minimising operational costs were discussed at the meeting.

Besides, how to maximise and utilise newly-acquired Boeing aircraft and enhancing passenger service quality were also discussed.

The lawmakers expressed concerns over service quality, flight punctuality issues, and technical faults affecting schedules.

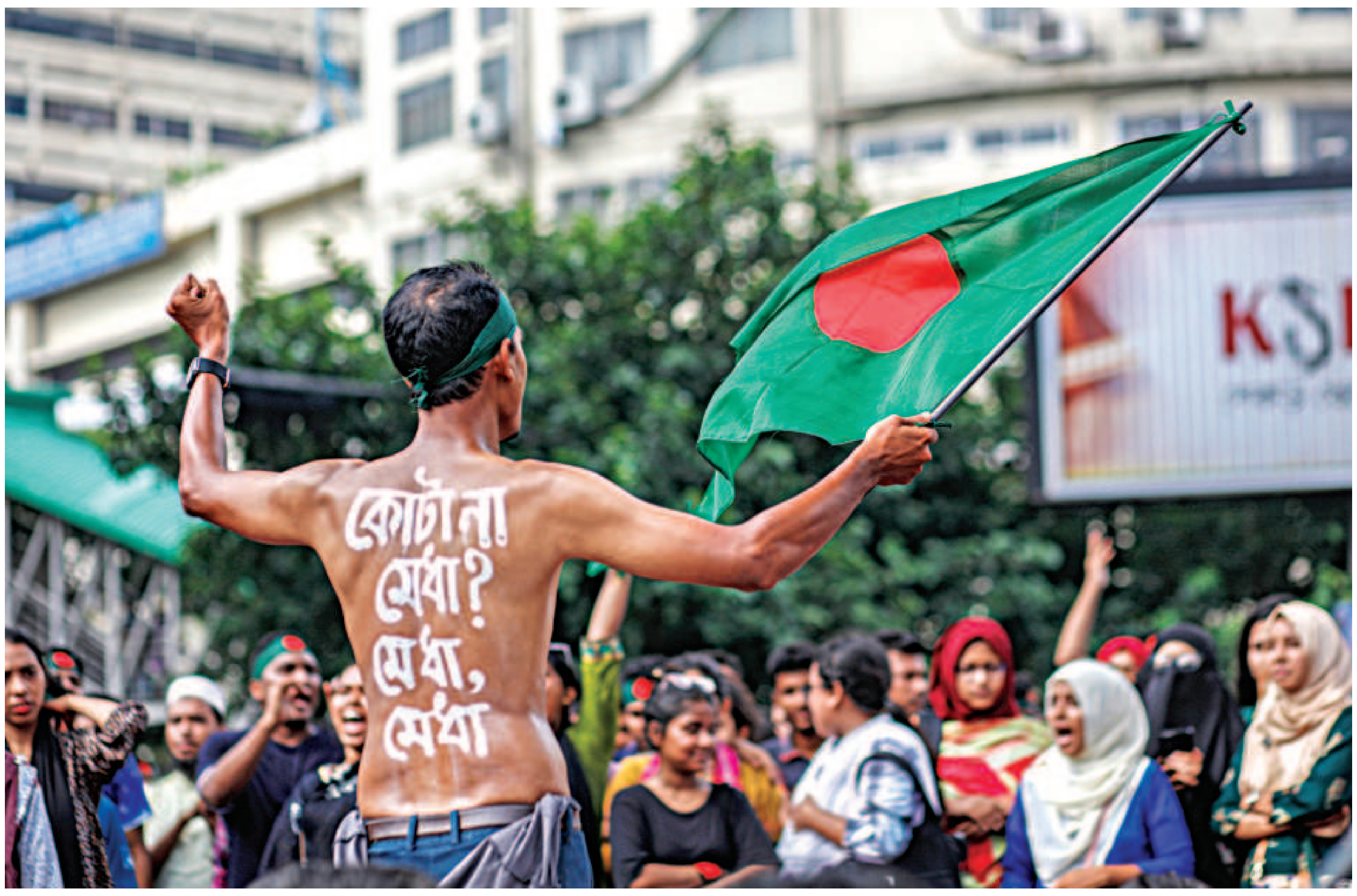
They urged Biman management to address these promptly.

Looking forward, Biman aims to expand its network with new international routes to destinations like Male, Sydney, and Seoul, alongside efforts to resume the Dhaka-New York route.

Domestically, plans are underway to introduce new flights connecting major cities including Chattogram, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar.

Civil Aviation Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, alongside committee members and Biman officials, emphasised the need for stringent supervision to tackle challenges and optimise operational efficiency.

Discussions also focused on manpower structure and recruitment processes to streamline operations further.



Hundreds of university students thronged the Shahbagh intersection in the capital for the third consecutive day yesterday, protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Justice Ansar Ali's death anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 29th death anniversary of Justice Muhammad Ansar Ali.

Ali passed away while he was on duty at the Supreme Court on this day in 1995.

Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil will be held at his home in Naogaon and at Banani graveyard in Dhaka to mark the occasion.

3, including mother and son, die inside septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Three people, including a mother and her son, lost their lives after falling into a septic tank in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur yesterday.

The deceased are Delwara Begum, 55, her son Ida Mia, 35, and their neighbour Iblul Mia, 35.

According to Abdur Rashid, chairman of Gopalpur union, the incident occurred early in the morning when Delwara Begum set a ladder beside the septic tank and climbed it to collect vegetables from the tin roof.

She slipped and fell into the open tank.

Her son Ida Mia entered the tank in an attempt to rescue his mother.

When both failed to respond to the calls of locals, Iblul Mia, their neighbour, also entered the tank to help them, but he met the same tragic fate.

Fire Service and Civil Defence recovered the bodies around 7:30am, said Moshiur Rahman, inspector of Mithapukur fire service.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 5

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-30	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Want to order a boat? Just give a call

Boat makers in Bagerhat embrace technology

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, *Bagerhat*

Boat makers in Kachua upazila of Bagerhat have turned to digital platforms using their mobile phones to sell dinghy boats, thereby transforming the way to reach out to their buyers.

Samples of the boats, crafted from wood of Chambal and Mahogany trees, are prominently displayed at Badhal Haat (bazaar), with contact details of the artisans.

Interested buyers would use the contact numbers to place orders over phone, said Altap Hossain and Sobhan Sheikh, two artisans from Tangrakhali village in the upazila who are at the forefront of this approach to market their products.

The approach not only saves their time but also increased their sales, they also said.

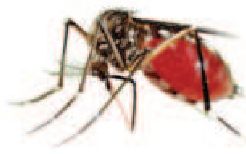
"Usually, we can make a dinghy in a single day. However, following this approach, we sold 60 boats each from our homes in one month. Based on the size and quality, each boat fetched Tk 3,000- 5,000," said Altap.

"Our customer base has expanded beyond the locality to Morrelganj, Rampal, Polerhat, Doibaghyahat, and Vatkhai in Bagerhat, and Bhaijor and Indurkani in Pirojpur district," said Sobhan.

Sharing his experience, one satisfied customer, Rafiqual Sheikh from Rampal, said, "We use these dinghy boats in the fish enclosures for feeding fish. The process of ordering over phone is very convenient."

Another buyer, Laizu Sheikh, who had ordered three boats for fishing, echoed him.

Altap and Sobhan's initiative serves as a model for other artisans in the region to follow suit and thereby improve their livelihoods, said Abu Bakar Siddque, a resident of Tangrakhali village.



AEDES LARVAE

DSCC fines 9 establishments Tk 1.71 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday fined owners of nine establishments Tk 1.71 lakh for finding Aedes mosquito larvae on their premises.

Seven mobile courts conducted the drives at Kamrangirchar, Panthapath, Narinda, Shwamibag, Kratia Road, Surulia, Demra, Ranimahal, Nandipara M Block, Banasree and Khilgaon.

DSCC mobile teams visited 458 houses and structures and found Aedes mosquito larvae at nine houses including a construction building.

Meanwhile, 32 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of dengue cases this year rose to 3,844 while the total number of deaths stood at 46 till yesterday.

CTG ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

Probe committee finds error in construction work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A parliamentary probe body -- formed to investigate irregularities in the Chattogram Expressway project -- found some errors in the work during its investigation yesterday.

The committee also found inconsistency in the works while visiting the under-construction expressway.

MA Latif, an Awami League lawmaker and head of the sub-committee, told reporters after visiting the expressway that they will include technical experts in their committee to investigate these errors.

"Then we will submit our report to the ministry concerned through parliament," he said.

Latif said they informed the project officials about the errors, who assured them of rectifying those soon.

After some cracks were found at multiple pillars of the expressway, the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Housing and Public Works on June 10 formed the probe body.

Contractor firm Max-Ranken (Joint Venture) is constructing the expressway.

Mahfuzur Rahman, director of the project and executive engineer of Chattogram Development Authority, said there are some air cracks in pillars but nothing major. "We already examined and asked contractors to level the cracks. We also found some errors in the finishing work. We will solve them as soon as possible."

The construction work of the much-awaited Chattogram Elevated Expressway is nearing completion. The project was initiated in 2017. The project's original cost was Tk 3,250 crore and was scheduled to be completed in June 2020.

However, the government had to extend the deadline as the CDA failed to implement the project within the stipulated time. At present, the cost of the project is Tk 4,298.95 crore.

Metro fare won't

FROM PAGE 3

decided to cancel the tax exemption it has been given since the beginning of the metro rail operation in December 2022.

But DMTCL, through the RTHD, wrote to NBR to review the decision. But NBR did not extend the exemption order, which means the 15 percent VAT on metro rail fares would be applicable from July 1.

Amid the situation, yesterday's meeting decided to form the technical committee to look after the entire issue, Nuri told The Daily Star last night.

The committee will have representatives from NBR, Finance Division, DMTCL, RTHD, and Bangladesh Computer Council, he said.

"The committee will recommend whether VAT has to be imposed on metro rail service or not, and if imposed, how the VAT would be collected, etc," he said.

Upon receiving the report, they will sit again and take a final decision in this regard, he added.

Relatives of MPs

FROM PAGE 3

Dr Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, said the AL's strategy to not nominate any candidate was somewhat successful, resulting in a 36 percent voter turnout on average.

Dilip Kumar Sarker, central coordinator of Shujan, said there is a lack of public confidence in the electoral system. He said if the trust is not restored, the future of democracy is bleak.

Three traffickers held

FROM PAGE 5

the accused first forcibly took her to Chattogram from Rangamati on June 19 and then to Dhaka.

On June 25, they took her to a restaurant and asked her to marry a man who speaks Chinese. As she refused, they confined her.

Meanwhile, a human chain was formed in Rangamati yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to the arrested trafficking gang members.

Earlier, two women from Chakma and Marma communities filed similar separate cases with Rangamati's Naniarchar and Khagrachhari's Laxmichhari police stations on May 1 and April 26 respectively.

Political killings

FROM PAGE 3

others were injured in shooting by Indian Border Security Force in the last six months, while the number was 11 from January to June last year.

A total of 250 women were raped across the country from January to July this year, among whom 14 were killed after rape and three died by suicide. The number was 294 in the same period last year, according to ASK.

The ASK report also revealed that 631 children have become victims of killings, torture, and repression so far this year. Among those, 239 were killed, and 50 died by suicide.

In the first six months of 2023, at least 806 children became victims of killings, torture, and repression, and 109 of them were killed.

The cases of attacks on minorities, including the Hindu community, so far this year have included the attack and vandalism of 21 Hindu idols, temples, and puja mandaps, alongside the arson and vandalism of 25 houses.

The last six months also saw 32 people killed in mob lynching, the report said.

Happy that I

FROM PAGE 3

and printed them in the form of advertisements in newspapers. If you read it, you will get the answers there. It is not necessary to search for new answers now," he said.

"I have never been prosecuted by the government or the NBR regarding my taxes. So I do not understand where did the issue of tax evasion come from. So, these are the subject of investigation," he continued.

He also said, "I am feeling good as I was not inside the cage today. There is no cage system here. The cage system should be removed permanently from courts."

Meanwhile, the tribunal set August 14 for hearing the appeal filed by Yunus and three Grameen Telecom directors against a labour court's sentence in the case.

On January 1, the Labour Court-3 of Dhaka sentenced the four to six months' imprisonment and fined Tk 30,000 each for violating labour laws.

Mother, daughter die as microbus hits auto-rickshaw

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and two injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday.

In Natore, a woman and her three-year-old daughter were killed in a head-on collision between a microbus and a battery-run auto-rickshaw in Lalpur upazila.

The accident happened around 1:00pm on Lalpur-Bagha regional highway at Rahimpur Jamtla, said police.

Rubina Khatun, 33, from Udhanpara area in Lalpur; and her daughter Rokeya Khatun -- who were on the auto-rickshaw -- died on the spot, said Lalpur Police Station OC Nasim Ahmed. The microbus was seized but the driver fled the scene.

In Dinajpur, a microbus driver was killed and two people were injured as his vehicle and a pickup collided head-on on Dinajpur-Phulbari regional road at Buritola village.

Jewel Mondal, 49, of Ghoraghat upazila, died at M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital, said Sadar Police Station OC Farid Hossain.

জমি বিক্রয়

খাগড়াছড়ি জেলার মানিকছড়ি ও মাটিরাঙ্গা উপজেলায় আমার নিজ নামে রেজিঃ করা খামার ও বাগান সহ জমি বিক্রয় করা হবে। প্রকৃত ক্রেতাগণ যোগাযোগ করবেন।
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BGCCI
Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BGCCI) is an independent, member-driven bilateral trade organization which promotes bilateral economic trade relations between Germany and Bangladesh since 2003. BGCCI provides services to Bangladesh and German companies and acts as a strategic partner between the two economies

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Position : Executive Director
Location : Dhaka, Bangladesh
Reports to : Board of Directors
Job Type : Full-Time

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with Government agencies, International development agencies, German/ European Agencies working of Sustainable development, Trade promotions and other relevant organizations for business development between Bangladesh and Germany.
- Organize and manage trade promotional events, including conferences, seminars, and networking events.
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Interested Candidate can send their CV along with recent Photograph within July 10, 2024
To:
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Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI)
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(e-mail: maksud.corona@gmail.com , wps@weberbd.com)

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL BANGLADESH
Social movement against corruption

RE-ADVERTISEMENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is inviting applications for filling up the following vacancy.

Sl. No.	Position	No.	Posting Place
01.	Deputy Executive Director	01	Head office

For detailed job description and to apply, please visit: **https://career.ti-bangladesh.org/** TIB follows an equal opportunity policy and actively encourages diversity. Applications from women, ethnic, religious and other minorities and people with disability are especially welcome. Age limit at the time of application is maximum 60 years. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interviews.

Last date of application: July 20, 2024

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The deserving candidates will be offered attractive remuneration package with world class working environment. Your complete Resume should reach the following address on or before July 11, 2024:

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EXCEL TELECOM (PVT.) LIMITED
House # 11/B, Road # 55, Gulshan # 02, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh.

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/024 (Re-1):** To provide support on "Vulnerability and adaptation assessment of climate change impact on nutrition in Bangladesh".

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 10 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**

2. **RFP/BAN/2024/026:** Development of Implementation Roadmap to Promote Active Living in Bangladesh.

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 18 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: **https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.**

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

Chittagong Independent University
Minhaj Complex, 12 Jamal Khan Road, Chattogram-4000, Bangladesh.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Chittagong Independent University (CIU), one of the leading private universities in the country, invites applications for the position of **Director, Finance & Accounts.**

Experience and Qualification:

- Minimum Master's in Finance / Accounting, MBA or equivalent
- Preference will be given to the candidates with full or partial certification in CA/CMA /FCA/FCMA/CC
- At least 10-12 years experience in the field of Finance & Accounts at a public or private university

Responsibilities:

- Provide fiscal leadership with budget development and management
- Decision-making of budgetary and financial affairs
- Execute and monitor the university's treasury functions
- Be responsible for meeting all statutory compliance issues as well as reporting timely to the University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education, Tax Authorities, and other statutory bodies
- Deal with the auditors, bankers, regulatory authorities, external & internal advisers, and other representatives of different bodies effectively
- Execute any other assignment as and when required by the University authority

Others Skills:

- Excellent interpersonal, communication, negotiation and presentation skills in both English & Bangla
- Detail oriented, excellent time management and organizational skills, ability to develop priorities and meet deadlines
- The candidate is expected to be familiar with concurrent accounts related software.

Remuneration: Negotiable

Application should reach: The Registrar, Chittagong Independent University
12 Jamal Khan Road, Chattogram on or before 15 July 2024

Any form of persuasion will lead to disqualification

Retired cop, wife sued over graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday sued a former senior assistant superintendent of police of the Industrial Police and his wife for accumulating wealth illegally beyond their known source of income and concealing information in their wealth statements.

They are Abul Hashem, who retired recently, and his wife Taherina Begum.

Musabbir Ahmed, assistant director of ACC Chattogram Integrated Office-2, filed two separate cases with ACC Chattogram Integrated Office-1 against the two after finding irregularities in their wealth statements during an initial probe, said Nazmus Sadat, deputy director of ACC in Chattogram.

According to the case statements, Abul Hashem concealed information on Tk 4.45 lakh wealth and accumulated wealth worth Tk 18,60,298 beyond his known source of income.

His wife showed a boutique house to her name but failed to show relevant verified documents.

She also concealed information on Tk 6.84 lakh wealth and accumulated wealth worth Tk 43.32 lakh beyond her known source of income, the case statements revealed.

Abul Hashem started his career as a sub-inspector of the police force in 1988 and retired in 2022 as senior ASP of Industrial Police.

While returning from school, a girl sticks her hand out to touch the rainwater while her guardian tries to shelter her with an umbrella. The photo was taken in front of Khalishpur Navy School in Khulna yesterday. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Three traffickers held in Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Police have arrested three members of a human trafficking gang from Dhaka's Uttara and Bashundhara residential areas.

The arrestees are: gang leader Sajeev Chakma, 21, of Rangamati's Barkal upazila; his sister Jassi Chakma, 23; and Mamiya Talukder, 21, of Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila.

A Rangamati court yesterday sent them to jail after they were produced before it shown arrested in a case filed with Baghaichhari Police Station for kidnapping a 19-year-old girl from an indigenous community in Rangamati. They confined her to Bashundhara and Uttara areas of Dhaka, and tried to force her to marry a man who speaks Chinese.

Police said the arrestees admitted their involvement in organised human trafficking.

Earlier, Rangamati police arrested them on Wednesday following a two-day drive after the girl filed the case accusing four gang members and few others including Chinese nationals.

Another accused member of the gang, Ankhi Chakma of Rangamati, is absconding.

Uttara Paschim police rescued the victim from house in Uttara on June 25 a day after her father lodged a general diary with Baghaichhari Police Station.

In the case statement, the victim said

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Flood situation worsens in the north

Major rivers in Sylhet still overflowing

STAR REPORT

The flood situation in the country's north continues to deteriorate due to an onrush of water from the upstream, while two major rivers in the Sylhet region are still flowing above the danger level.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) warned that floods may worsen at some low-lying areas near the Brahmaputra and Jamuna rivers in Kurigram, Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Bogura and Sirajganj districts.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected in the north and areas adjoining the upstream in the next 48 hours, an FFWC bulletin released at 9:00am said yesterday.

However, the flood situation in the low-lying areas of Sylhet region may remain steady in the next 24 hours, it added.

Yesterday, fresh areas were inundated in Kurigram as the Brahmaputra's water level further rose by 48cm in 24 hours from 6:00pm on Wednesday. Earlier, it was 60cm above the danger level at the Noonkhawa point, according to the local Water Development Board (WDB).

"If the water level continues to rise at this rate, the flood situation may take a severe turn," said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of Kurigram's WDB.

Meanwhile, the flood-hit people have been suffering immensely.

Tofazzal Hossain, 60, a resident of Char Bhagabatipur in Kurigram Sadar, said, "My house has gone at least 3-4 feet under water. The tube wells and toilets were also submerged. My 10 chickens and two goats floated away."

Majibur Rahman, 60, of Barabhita village in Phulbari upazila, said, "We can't get out of home and we have no work due to the flood. How will we survive?"

Some also lost their paddy fields to the flood.

In Sirajganj, low-lying and char areas have been inundated as water levels of the Jamuna rose 20cm above the danger level at Hard Point last evening.

According to Nazmul Hossain, sub-divisional engineer of Sirajganj WDB, it will continue to rise for the next 2-3 days due to the onrush of water from the upstream.

In Gaibandha and Bogura, floods further intensified as the Jamuna flowed 77cm above the danger level at Gaibandha's Fulchari upazila around 6:00pm yesterday.

At least 80,000 people were affected in both districts combined, according to the district relief and rehabilitation officers.

In the northeast, the Surma river was flowing 70cm above the danger level at Sylhet's Kanaighat point at 3:00pm, while the Kushiyara was flowing 155cm above the danger level at the Amalshid point.

However, the water levels of the Sari-Gowain and Manu rivers in Sylhet and Moulvibazar were flowing below the danger levels.

"Water will continue receding if there is no rainfall in the upstream," said Dipak Ranjan Das, executive engineer of Sylhet WDB.

However, many people still remained stranded.

Moinul Islam, a resident of Bademansur area in Moulvibazar, said, "We can't even get out of our house as the entire village remains under water."

(Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Bogura and Pabna contributed to this report.)

A submerged village in Kurigram. People trying to cross an inundated bridge in Jamalpur. PHOTO: **STAR**

889 schools closed in Sylhet division

PHOTO: **STAR**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

At least 889 primary schools in Sylhet division have kept their academic activities suspended indefinitely due to ongoing floods.

According to the Divisional Primary Education Office, there are 5,054 primary schools in the division, many of which are either submerged or being used as shelters for flood-affected people.

The floods, a recurring issue during monsoons due to torrential rain and downstream waters from India, have impacted 6,49,378 people in the division.

Currently, 19,820 people are staying at 366 shelters across four districts -- 164 in Sylhet, 59 in Sunamganj, 75 in Moulvibazar, and 68 in Habiganj. Most of these shelters are set up in primary and secondary schools, said Jalal Uddin, deputy director of the Directorate of Primary Education.

In a recent visit to Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar, this correspondent saw at least 28 government primary schools kept their doors closed due to flood damage.

Many schools are submerged, with some standing like isolated islands in the middle of waterlogged roads.

"There is over a foot of water in classrooms, making it impossible to conduct classes," said Rontu Ranjan Chanda, headteacher of Ghourkoron Government Primary School.

As floodwaters persist and inclement weather continues, the situation may worsen.

Khushi Mohan Sarkar, chief executive engineer of the Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sylhet, said around 20 rivers in the region would be excavated to mitigate future flooding.

EMBEZZLING TK 60.72 LAKH

Former state minister among 3 issued legal notice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Zakir Hossain, former state minister for primary and mass education, and two of his family members have been issued a legal notice for allegedly embezzling Tk 60.72 lakh.

The money was allocated for providing solar-powered houses to 263 poor families in Kurigram's Roumari upazila, as per the allegations.

The other accused are Hossain's wife, Suraiya Sultana, and cousin, Ahsan Mandal alias Babu Mandal.

Moksed Ali, a resident of Char Gaytapara and an Awami League activist, sent the notice through his lawyer. Ali said Tk 60 lakh was collected from 191 families for houses and Tk 72,000 from 72 families for solar facilities in FY 2020-21 from Char Gaytapara, Dantabhanga, Char Shoulmari, and Bandaber villages.

Many families alleged that they did not get homes or solar facilities. PHOTO: **STAR**

He claimed the money was delivered to Hossain and his wife through Babu Mandal but neither houses nor solar facilities were provided.

Akbar Ali, a day labourer from Char Gaytapara, said he paid Tk 36,000 but received neither a house nor a refund. Multiple victims shared similar stories.

Contacted, Zakir Hossain claims the allegations are part of a conspiracy against him.

Babu Mandal, who is sub-publicity secretary of Roumari upazila AL, denied knowing Moksed Ali and refuted the allegations.

Moksed's lawyer, Khademul Hasan, said the legal notice was sent on June 26, and they have supporting documents. If the money is not returned within 15 days, a case will be lodged.

Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited
Road Transport & Highways Division
House-04, Road-21, Sector-04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230.
www.dhakabrt.gov.bd

DHAKA LINE
TRANSFORMING TRAVEL

Corrigendum-01

Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.002.24-**545** Date: July 04, 2024

The Invitation for Tender (IFT) for "Supply and Installation of Galvanized Steel Rolling Shutter Gates in Station Front (Docking Locations) of 25 BRT Stations", vide IFT Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.001.24-506, dated: 26/06/2024 is hereby amended as follows:

ITT Ref.	Title	Original Text	Amended Text
ITT 14.1(b)	Specific Experience	The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least **one (1)** contract successfully completed within the last **five (5)** years, with a value of at least **Tk. 4,20,00,000.00 (Taka forty-two million)**.	The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least **three (3)** contracts successfully completed within the last **five (5)** years, each with a value of at least **Tk. 10,00,000.00 (Taka One million)**.
ITT 14.1(c)	Supply/Production Capacity	The minimum supply and/or production capacity of Goods is/are: **Similar type of metal goods with 5,000 square meter or equivalent quantity supply** and/or production capacity per year.	**None**

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum will be an integral part of the published IFT.

SD/-
Md. Kamruzzaman
Deputy General Manager
E-mail: dgmmaint.dbrtcl@gmail.com

GD-12

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, এর কার্যালয়
সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা ।
ফোন ও ফ্যাক্স নং-০২৪৭৭৭-১০৩১৮
email : eerhdmagura@gmail.com

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৫৫০০.৪৪৩.০৭.১৩৮.২৩.৯৮১ তারিখঃ ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রি:

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে প্রতিক্ষেত্রে ৫০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ) লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের অভ্যন্তরীন ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্তি/নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, মাগুরা হতে আগামী ০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৭/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, মাগুরা সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করত: আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণ পূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ৩১ আগস্ট ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে মাগুরা সড়ক বিভাগীয় অফিসে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভূক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহ্বান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

উল্লেখ্য যে, ইতিপূর্বে অত্র দপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি বাবদ টাকা = ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার টাকা) + ১৫% ভ্যাটসহ বিনা জরিমানায় আগামী ৩১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখের মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা পূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

৩০/০৬/২০২৪
(মোঃ আশিকুল ইসলাম)
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২২৬১
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী(চ: দা:), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা।

GD- 11

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

I've received more than I expected in my acting career: Totini

Tanjim Saiara Totini, a rising showbiz star of her generation, has quickly garnered immense popularity and critical acclaim in the Bangladeshi entertainment industry. Despite her relatively short career, Totini has already made a significant impact with her remarkable performances in various dramas.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Her recent drama ***Nayantara***, which aired during Eid, was a massive hit, with Totini's stellar performance captivating audiences. Directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, the drama resonated deeply with viewers.

Reflecting on her success, Totini shared, "Playing the role in ***Nayantara*** brought me immense love and praise from the audience. It touched the hearts of many, and that makes me very happy."

Another notable drama featuring Totini, ***Vitore Bahire,*** directed by the acclaimed Mizanur Rahman Aryan, also received a warm reception during Eid.

The actress expressed her satisfaction, saying, "Honestly, only a few dramas aired last Eid. Among them, ***Vitore Bahire*** gave me a sense of fulfilment and joy. It resonated with everyone just like ***Nayantara*** did."

Discussing her journey in the media industry, Totini remarked, "Overall, I've been in the media for five years, but I've only been acting for a few years."

When asked what she has received in her relatively short acting career, Totini humbly replied, "I've received more love than I ever expected in my acting career. Considering the few years I've been working, the amount of love from people has been overwhelming and humbling."

Regarding her dreams and aspirations, Totini said, "I want to continue acting and remain in the audience's hearts. I aspire to become a complete artiste."

She also expressed her desire to work on OTT platforms, mentioning an upcoming web-series shoot. "I'll share more once the shooting begins. I haven't started shooting anything significant post-Eid, but I'm hoping to kick off work with something great soon," she revealed.

Throughout her career, Totini has worked with several actors, but her pairing with Yash Rohan has been particularly well-received by viewers. Speaking about her co-actor, Totini commented, "Yash is a very calm person and an excellent actor. I enjoy working with him."

When asked about her view on the concept of on-screen pairs, Totini stated, "The concept of on-screen pairs isn't bad. It's actually good. It depends on the audience's preference. If they like it, then it's possible. From this perspective, I see it positively."

Earlier in February, Totini took on leading roles in four Valentine's Day special projects-- Jahid Preetom's directorial ***Buk Pocketer Golpo***, Ragib Raihan's ***Pori***, Rafat Mazumdar Rinku's ***Bolte Chai***, and Vicky Zahed's ***Chinho***.

The actress began her journey in the showbiz world in 2019. Her popular works include ***Ei Muhurte, Bachibar Holo Tar Sadh,*** and ***Shomoy Sob Jane,*** among others.

Meher Afroz Shaon to return to screen after 17 years

Meher Afroz Shaon, a media figure since her debut in ***Notun Kuri*** and known for her roles in Humayun Ahmed's works, is returning to cinema after 17 years. She stepped back from acting to focus on family and, since Ahmed's passing in 2012, has made occasional musical appearances.

Now, she is set to return with the government-funded Fakhrul Arefeen Khan directorial film ***Neel Jochona***. The film is adapted from Mustak Ahmed's parapsychology novel ***Neel Jochonar Jibon***.

She starts shooting ***Neel Jochona*** in Dhaka today, with co-stars Tariq Anam Khan, Intekhab Dinar, Partha Barua, SM Naeem, and Paoli Dam.

Fawad Khan to return to Bollywood after eight years

Famed actor Fawad Khan is all set to return to Bollywood in a romantic comedy film opposite Vaani Kapoor.

According to reports by the Indian news agency IANS, the still-untitled film, directed by Aarti Bagdi, will be shot entirely in the UK.

Fawad Khan's last appearance in a Hindi-language film was eight years ago. The versatile actor has featured in Indian movies like ***Ae Dil Hai Mushkil***, ***Kapoor & Sons***, and ***Khoobsurat***.

Fawad Khan, a top Pakistani actor, starred in 2022's ***The Legend of Maula Jatt***, the highest-grossing Pakistani film ever, while also debuting in the Marvel Cinematic Universe with ***Ms Marvel***.

NEWS

He was in plain sight

FROM PAGE 12

directors Ayrin Islam and Shariful Islam; director Rashel Mirza; and shareholder Ziaur Rahman to recover due licence fees and revenue share.

BTRC took the decision to file the case against in the 161th Commission meeting. It also decided to send a letter to the ministry concerned for cancellation of its licence, documents show.

The court issued arrest warrants against Asif, Ayrin, Shariful, and Rashel between September 23, 2021, and November 30, 2021.

Since then, the four have been fugitives, according to the case records.

Locals said Asif has regularly attended various political and government programmes, and election campaigns between May 2022 and June 23 this year.

A Facebook page named "Adv Asif Shams Ronjon" shows Asif was live at least on 120 occasions in Bera between the time the arrest warrant was issued and yesterday.

According to locals, a rally led by Asif Shams paraded Bera streets, marking the AL founding anniversary on June 23. He also sought votes for candidates in the Bera upazila parishad polls on May 6.

He took part in his father's campaign for the 12th national elections.

According to BTRC documents, Vision Tel Ltd got its licence on April 12, 2012.

A BTRC official said the case was filed to recover the dues arisen from revenue sharing and annual licence fees, which has now become over Tk 235 crore with interest.

Asif in a procession marking the founding anniversary of Awami League in his hometown in Pabna on June 23.

PHOTO: SOCIAL MEDIA

The last hearing on the case was on June 26, said a court staffer, adding that since there were no developments regarding arrests, the court set August 25 for the next hearing.

Contacted, Asif yesterday said, "I have severed links with Vision Tel Ltd in 2013 with the BTRC's permission. The case was filed against the company.

"I was not informed about the court's notices and the arrest warrant earlier," he told The Daily Star by phone.

"Today [yesterday], I appeared before the court and the problem has been solved. I will return to Bera soon," he said, adding that he reached Dhaka from Bera a few days ago.

Vision Tel Ltd's licence was cancelled on June 16, 2015.

Recently, some media outlets reported that Asif went abroad, fearing that he would be arrested.

However, The Daily Star has a video clip in which Asif was seen inside a car in the capital's Ramna on Wednesday.

His personal assistant told this newspaper that the mayor last worked at his Bera office on June 28.

Labour landslide

FROM PAGE 12

forecasting its biggest-ever victory.

But Starmer was taking nothing for granted as he urged voters not to stay at home. "Britain's future is on the ballot," he said. "But change will only happen if you vote for it."

Voting began at 7:00 am (0600 GMT) in more than 40,000 polling stations across the country, from church halls, community centres and schools to more unusual venues such as pubs and even a ship.

Sunak was among the early birds, casting his ballot at his Richmond and Northallerton constituency in Yorkshire, northern England. Starmer voted around two hours later in his north London seat, shortly before Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey.

Hannah Tinsley, 26, a trainee lawyer who was voting in south London, told AFP that it was "important" for young people to cast their ballots.

"The voter turnout for young people compared to older people is really low and obviously, it's going to affect us in the long term," she added.

In Saint Albans, north of London, 22-year-old student Judith told AFP: "I don't really trust any of them but will vote. A lot of my friends feel the same."

Fun trip turns fatal

FROM PAGE 12

He drove to his village home in Azampur village a day earlier. He then met up with his friends, they wanted to go to Ishwardi in his car.

They went on a drive in the evening, said police.

On the way back home, Nayeem was driving fast. At one point, he lost his control over the steering and the vehicle skidded off the slippery road and hit a tree.

Three of them died on the spot, said OC Rafiqul, adding that the two others were declared dead at Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.

Nayeem and Shahid were transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said the OC.

Charges framed against Alal, Tuku, 87 others

FROM PAGE 2

who is now in jail custody, pleaded not guilty after Judge Md Aminul Islam of Dhaka Metropolitan Special Tribunal-16 read out the charges to them yesterday.

Before that, the tribunal dismissed the petitions seeking to have them cleared of the charges in the case.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that around 12:25pm on February 8 of 2018, a group of leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations led by Alal held demonstration in the city's Moghbazar area ahead of a judgment against Khaleda Zia, her elder son and BNP's then senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman and four others in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

They also chanted slogans against the government, instigated destructive activities, obstructed movement of vehicles and prevented law enforcers from discharging their duties, the prosecution said.

Following the incident, Sub-Inspector of Ramna Model Police Station Abdul Kuddus filed a case against Alal, Shimul Biswas and 178 others in this connection.

After an investigation, police pressed charges against 90 people, including Alal, Tuku, Sohel and Shimul.

Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel

FROM PAGE 12

areas near Khan Yunis and Rafah after the military on Monday issued a sweeping evacuation order that the UN said impacted 250,000 people.

Witnesses reported air strikes and intense artillery shelling in western Rafah yesterday.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 38,011 people have been killed during nearly nine months of offensive. The toll includes at least 58 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

US President Joe Biden, under growing domestic pressure over Washington's support for Israel, in late May outlined a roadmap for a six-week ceasefire and exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

There has been little progress since, but Hamas said later on Wednesday it was communicating with officials in Qatar and Egypt as well as Turkey with an eye to ending the conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to convene his security cabinet yesterday evening to discuss new Hamas positions on a possible ceasefire deal in Gaza, reports Reuters.

Before the cabinet meets, Netanyahu will have consultations with his ceasefire negotiations team, a source in Netanyahu's office said.

Israel received Hamas' response on Wednesday to a proposal made public at the end of May by Biden that would include the release of about 120 hostages held in Gaza and a ceasefire in the Palestinian enclave.

A Palestinian official close to the mediation effort told Reuters that Hamas has shown flexibility over some clauses, that would allow a framework agreement to be reached should Israel approve.

Univ teachers carry on strike

FROM PAGE 12

Though academic buildings remained open in most of the universities, students were hardly seen. Most classrooms and examination halls were locked.

Additionally, the university authorities either kept the transport service suspended or significantly reduced trips to and from campuses.

Teachers at the public universities said that they will continue their indefinite work abstention until their demands are met.

Teachers of 35 public universities under the banner of FBUTA have been refraining from work since Monday demanding reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

They have been demonstrating against the government decision to include all officers and employees, joining the service of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or similar organisations and their subordinate institutions on or after July 1 in the "Prottoy" pension scheme.

Teachers said the newly recruited teachers will suffer financial loss, and many will not take up teaching at universities if the new pension scheme is introduced. They also demanded a separate pay scale for university teachers and inclusion of professors in the pay grade equivalent to that of a senior secretary.

Messi, Ronaldo and plenty more

FROM PAGE 12

Messi had hurt his right hamstring and skipped Argentina's final Group A match against Peru, which the defending champions won 2-0 to qualify for the last eight as group champions.

Even if Messi ends up a no-show, Albiceleste fans will feel optimistic about their side's chances of progressing to the semifinals as the reigning world champions are playing like a well-oiled machine under long-serving coach Lionel Scaloni.

After watching some of the best football action South America has to offer, football fans are set to tune in at night to watch four heavyweights clashing in two high-stakes matches of the Euro Championship.

First up, two former World Cup and Euros champions, hosts Germany and Spain, will face off in Stuttgart at 10:00 pm.

Both teams topped their respective groups before Germany broke down a resolute Denmark to pick up a 2-0 win, while Spain came from behind to trounce Georgia 4-1 in their respective Round of 16 fixtures.

The weekend of fascinating football fixtures will end with Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal taking on Kylian Mbappe's France in Hamburg, starting at 1:00 am.

2024 UK ELECTION

Left, Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak arrives with his wife Akshata Murty to cast their votes at a polling station in Kirby Sigston, Northallerton, England yesterday as Britain holds a general election. *Right*, Britain's opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria arrive to cast their votes at a polling station in London yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

What do govts abroad want from UK polls ?

AGENCIES

The UK is not the diplomatic powerhouse it once was, with Brexit leaving it looking inward and years of economic failures meaning the Conservatives and Labour are both sidelining foreign policy in their campaign messaging. Still, leaders around the world will be taking an interest in the election. Here are some of the key issues:

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Kyiv is desperately fighting off the battlefield for money, weapons and diplomatic support and the backing of the next UK government could be critical. London still retains diplomatic sway in Europe and is a vocal member of Nato.

Stakes are high for the Ukrainian leader, Volodymyr Zelensky, as he faces the prospect of Donald Trump winning the US presidential election in November. Trump is expected to cut off US military support to Ukraine.

The Tories claim they have "led the world in support of Ukraine against Putin's aggression" and will continue to do so, but it is expected that Keir Starmer would be equally supportive of Kyiv if Labour came to power.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

In previous elections, Israeli governments would have probably favoured conservative candidates, who have traditionally followed Washington in near-unconditional backing of Israel over Palestine.

Starmer, however, could prove the exception to the rule as his policies on the occupation have been seen through the prism of the Labour party antisemitism scandal, which he promised to fix.

Whatever his personal views on the destruction of Gaza, Starmer has been criticised by party members for a Middle East stance that could be seen as more pro-Israel than that of the Tories. More than 38,011 Palestinians have been killed and 87,445 have been injured in Israeli military offensive on Gaza since October 7, reports Reuters.

For Palestinian officials, neither a Tory nor a Labour government will give hope for the radical policy change they have been calling for.

TA HALL
&
BUTTERCUPS
POLLING
STATION

THE UNITED STATES

The White House is too focused on its own election to be concerned about the smaller half of the "special relationship". Joe Biden has maintained good ties with both Labour and Conservative politicians, although Trump has a soft spot for the more extreme, populist wing of the Tory party. Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has the most Trumpian politics of all the UK parties, playing up migration as a threat. Farage has previously joined Trump on campaign rallies.

CHINA

Relations between Beijing and London have nosedived under Conservative administrations. Sunak has said that "authoritarian" China, the world's second-largest economy, is the "greatest state-based threat to our economic security", reports The Guardian. Bejing's embassy in London condemned what it called Sunak's "malicious slander against China" and urged British politicians "to end their belligerent rhetoric" and "instead, focus more on domestic economic and social issues".

In a sense, that has happened, with Sunak largely avoiding international issues on the campaign trail. Still, Labour has not indicated any big policy shift in Asia. The party's manifesto promises its policy on China will be to "cooperate where we can, compete where we need to, and challenge where we must".

THE EUROPEAN UNION

As a supranational body, the political and economic union across Europe will be facing the prospect of the first non-conservative government in London since David Cameron called the referendum that led to Brexit.

All three big parties are seeking to improve their relationship with the EU, but Labour – and certainly the Liberal Democrats – may find that easier to achieve.

Senior Brussels sources said this week that while the EU leadership would welcome a change of UK government, it would not revise its Brexit red lines, but was open to improving existing agreements.

What has Labour promised to do if elected?

REUTERS, *London*

Britain's Labour Party was projected to win yesterday's national election with a large majority. Below are some of the party's main domestic policy plans, set out in its manifesto ahead of the July 4 vote:

ECONOMY

Labour has said sustained economic growth will be its first mission for government. Its plan focuses on wealth creation. It has said it will be "pro-business and pro-worker" and introduce a new industrial strategy, which will end short-term economic policy.

TAXES

It has pledged not to raise taxes "for working people", with no increase in the basic, higher, or additional rates of income tax, insurance, or VAT. It will cap corporation tax at the current level of 25 percent.

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE

Labour plans to cut waiting times in the National Health Service by adding 40,000 more appointments every week. This will include incentivising staff to carry out extra appointments out of hours, pooling resources across neighbouring hospitals and using spare capacity in private sector.

IMMIGRATION

Labour has pledged to reduce net migration. It wants to reform points-based immigration system, by bringing in restrictions on visas and by training workers where there are domestic shortages.

SCO SUMMIT IN ASTANA

India, China FMs agree to work on border issues

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar yesterday met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to step up talks to resolve issues along their border, New Delhi said in a statement.

India and China share a long Himalayan border, much of it poorly demarcated, and relations between the two countries have been sour since a military standoff in July 2020.

India said Jaishankar met Wang on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana where they agreed that "prolongation of the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side."

The two agreed to enhance meetings between their diplomatic and military officials "to resolve the remaining issues at the earliest," the Indian foreign ministry said. China and India should properly handle their differences and ensure relations advance on a stable track, a Chinese foreign ministry statement quoted Wang as saying during the talks.

"We must maintain a positive mindset, properly handle and control the situation in the border areas on the one hand, and actively resume normal exchanges on the other hand," Wang said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in April that the two countries should urgently address the "prolonged situation" on their border.

Modi to visit Russia for talks with Putin on July 8-9

AFP, *Moscow*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Russia on July 8 and 9, the Kremlin said yesterday, in his first trip to the country since Moscow launched its military offensive in Ukraine.

That campaign has tested relations between Moscow and New Delhi, even though India has ramped up its purchases of Russian oil and not joined Western sanctions.

Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin will discuss "prospects for further development of traditionally friendly Russian-Indian relations, as well as relevant issues on the international and regional agenda," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin sees Modi as a key potential diplomatic and economy ally, with Russia isolated in the West. But Ukraine has complicated ties.

In a September 2022 meeting between Putin and Modi at a regional summit in Uzbekistan, the Russian president told Modi he understood he had "concerns" about the conflict and that Modi wanted it to end "as soon as possible."

Earlier this year, India said it was pushing Russia to release some of its citizens who had signed up for "support jobs" with the Russian army, following reports some were stranded in Russian border towns and forced to fight in Ukraine.

New Delhi has not been a staunch backer of Kyiv, notably declining to sign a joint statement at a peace summit in Switzerland last month that called for Ukraine's territorial integrity to be respected in any peace agreement.

Court orders confiscation of customs officials assets

FROM PAGE 12

the case, accusing Enamul of amassing Tk 9.76 crore, which is inconsistent with his income and beyond his known sources of income.

According to the case statement, the accused bought land, flats, and commercial spaces at 64 places for Tk 21.52 crore between 1993 and 2022. He had gold ornaments, savings, and investment in share market, and fish farm worth Tk 58.32 lakh.

In another development, the same court directed the authorities to confiscate four flats and 866 decimals of immovable assets of Matiur Rahman, former member of the National Board of Revenue, and his family members over graft allegations.

The properties are in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area and Dhanmondi, Barishal's Muladi, and Narsingdi's Raipura.

The family members are Matiur's wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, also upazila chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura; his son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman Arnob; daughter Farzana Rahman Ipshita; and second wife Shammi Akhter Sheuly.

Judge Joglul Hossain made the order after ACC Deputy Director Md Anowar Hossain, also the inquiry officer, submitted a petition, said an ACC lawyer.

Anti-graft body Public Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam moved the application on behalf of the graft watchdog.

In the appeal, the ACC said Matiur, former president of NBR's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, amassed hundred crores of illegal money. He and his family members were trying to hand over their properties. So, an order is needed to stop their move.

The ACC has formed a three-member committee to enquire into the allegations.

On June 24, the same court issued a travel ban on Matiur, his wife Lucky, and son Taufiqur.

Graft suspects getting promoted in civil service

FROM PAGE 1

It should be demonstrated before the public that not all government officials are corrupt and that the government is taking visible steps to combat corruption.

The two-hour-long meeting was presided over by Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain and attended by most of the 83 secretaries.

Even though government-sponsored foreign trips are currently suspended, "mid-level officers are making frequent foreign trips in the name of pre-shipment inspection of goods. And it must stop", said a source.

Additional secretaries and above have to get permission from the Prime Minister's Office to travel abroad. "But joint secretaries and those below them need permission from the ministry concerned. That's why the number of foreign trips has been surging," the source added.

The bureaucrats unanimously agreed to submit their wealth statements as per the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, another secretary present at the meeting told this newspaper.

There should be a cell to monitor whether officers are submitting their wealth statements. The cabinet division, public administration, legislative division, and National Board of Revenue will decide how the cell will function, they said.

It is common knowledge among bureaucrats that many officers do not come up with their wealth statement every five years as per the conduct rules.

There were also talks of whether such statements should be required every year, sources said.

Since Covid-19, all the ministries were asked to take steps to maintain austerity to keep the economy afloat, but no visible steps have been taken so far, said another secretary.

In a circular yesterday, the finance ministry called for lowering expenses by ministries, state agencies, and public corporations.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mahbub said the conduct rules were being updated.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর।
☎ ০২৫৮৮৮৭১২৭০ ফ্যাক্স : ০২৫৮৮৮৭৩৮১০
e-mail: rhdnatore@gmail.com/ eenat@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৬৯০০.৪৫৩.০৭.০০২.২৩-১৬৫৪(১৯) তারিখ ঃ ০৪/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে অভ্যন্তরীন ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২, নাটোর হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/চালান নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করত: আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণ পূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ নিম্নে বর্ণিত (ছক-০১) সময়ের মধ্যে নাটোর সড়ক বিভাগে জমা প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি-৬৩ ও ৬৪ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহবান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

উল্লেখ্য যে, ইতিপূর্বে অত্র দপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়ন (Renewal) ফি বাবদ টাকা-২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) মাত্র + ১৫% ভ্যাটসহ নিম্ন বর্ণিত (ছক-০২) তারিখের মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা পূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ছক-০১

বিবরণ	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরমের মূল্য	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরম সংগ্রহের সময়সীমা	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরম জমা প্রদানের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি	১০০০/-	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৭/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৮/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

ছক-০২

বিবরণ	নবায়ন ফি	বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	১০০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার লাইসেন্স নবায়ন	২০০০/- টাকা + ১৫% ভ্যাট	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৪/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত	১৬/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৫/০৯/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত	১৬/০৯/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৫/১০/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত

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নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (চঃদাঃ), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর।

GD- 13

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Flood victims need urgent support

Govt must ensure adequate food and shelter for them

It is worrying to see the flood situation in northern districts, especially in Kurigram, worsen due to continuous rainfall and onrush of water from upstream. According to a report by this daily, vast low-lying areas have been inundated due to the rise in the water levels of Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers. In Kurigram, along the Brahmaputra, some 450 chars and low-lying areas have been flooded, leaving an estimated 50,000 stranded. This is a fluid situation as the water level is projected to continue rising before it recedes. What this means for the affected and at-risk populations is that they have a dual crisis in hand—flooding and erosion—which demands proper attention from the authorities.

The evolving situation with the simultaneous rise and fall in water levels at different river points, and consequent erosion along their coast, is something that the authorities should be observing closely, considering the intensity of such events in recent years. But the immediate priority, of course, is to ensure proper relief efforts. Reports indicate a significant gap between the needs of the affected and available aid. Many flood victims are struggling without adequate relief supplies. Lack of shelter is another major issue, especially in parts of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram where floodwater is showing a falling trend. According to a report, erosion is active at 20 points in five upazilas of the two districts. As a result, many villagers there are taking shelter on government khas lands, roads, boats, or embankments. Ensuring that relief materials, including food, clean water, and medical supplies, promptly reach them all is imperative.

The increasingly frequent cycle of flooding and erosion in Bangladesh also demands a proper response from the higher authorities. There is a clear need for more resilient infrastructure in flood-prone areas that doesn't make people so helpless, or destitute overnight. While erosions occur every year, its growing trend, especially along the Ganges, Jamuna, Padma, and Lower Meghna rivers, highlights the urgency of more comprehensive and long-term interventions, such as enhancing drainage systems, constructing sufficient flood shelters, reinforcing embankments with durable materials, and regulating river flows.

In short, the government's approach needs to be twofold: immediate stabilisation of the most critical areas and the development of a comprehensive, sustainable plan to mitigate the impacts of future floods. For now, it must direct local authorities to improve their response to the evolving situation in northern districts. Besides ensuring sufficient relief materials in flood-hit villages, particularly those in remote locations, they should also consider deploying additional resources and personnel to manage the crisis more effectively.

We must stop abuse of public offices

Expedite justice process, apply strict measures to root out corruption

The narratives of corruption coming out of public offices nowadays would defeat any movie script. The slyness of tactics that corrupt officials often use to misappropriate public funds and then exempt themselves from legal consequences would shock anyone. The alleged shenanigans of Cox's Bazar's former deputy commissioner Ruhul Amin to exonerate himself from corruption charges is a case in point.

According to a *Prothom Alo* report, in 2014, Amin, along with 27 others, had been charged for misappropriating approximately Tk 20 crore in the land accusation process of a power plant project in Matarbari of Maheskhali. Taking the case into cognisance, the court ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate it. But several court officials, including the then District and Sessions Judge Sadiqul Islam Talukdar, allegedly colluded with Amin to delete his name from the list of accused in case documents and forged the plaintiff's signature before sending the documents to the ACC. When the plaintiff learned about the alleged forgery, he filed another case against Amin and seven others, including the judge and his own lawyer. The ACC found proof of forgery subsequently and filed the investigation report with the court on Monday—10 years after the case was filed.

In 2017, Ruhul Amin, suspended from office by then, was sentenced to jail in another corruption case in relation to land acquisition for the Matarbari power plant. The case was about misappropriation of compensation funds allocated for shrimp farms affected by the acquisition, which was apparently done by showing 25 non-existent shrimp farms on paper. Amin and several others were accused but they are all currently on bail in that case.

The extent of the abuse of office in Amin's story starts from the land acquisition process and climbs all the way up to the court, the ultimate place of trust for ordinary citizens. But if a DC can use his power to influence even a judge and forge case documents, who would the public turn to for justice? This fits with the ongoing trends of lack of accountability mechanisms in public institutions, lenient and protective provisions for government employees, collusion among public officers to cover up each other's wrongdoings, lengthy judicial processes, etc.—which are all equally troubling as they make a mockery of rule of law. We must break these trends. Abuse of public offices for any personal gain, legal or financial, must be prevented at any cost.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Israel's Law of Return passed

Passed this day in 1950 by the Knesset, the Law of Return granted Jews the freedom to immigrate to Israel and receive immediate citizenship, but it proved controversial when the question "Who is a Jew?" raised other issues.

'Govt should not be swayed by the opinion of an extremist minority'

In light of the recent removal of 'Sharifa's Tale' from the seventh-grade textbook, **Maheen Sultan***, senior fellow of Practice, Gender and Social Transformation at BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), shares her insights with* **Tamanna Khan** *of* **The Daily Star** *on an ongoing study on the backlash against promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Bangladesh.*

What led you to explore the resistance against comprehensive sexuality education?

All over the world, we have been noticing a backlash against the progress made by the women's movement to ensure women's rights and gender equality, and measures taken by the government to protect and promote them. Our research team is part of a regional programme which includes four South Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. In each country, we have chosen different case studies in areas where we think there has been very strong opposition to what women's movements are trying to achieve. For example, we looked at the case of rape law reform, child marriage, struggle for decent wages in the RMG sector and CSE as well.

The latest controversy with the Sharif-Sharifa text shows that teaching CSE is still a sensitive matter. Opposition to CSE is always not as visible or outspoken as it was in this case. However, it is very evident that teachers do not want to teach the curriculum, parents are often resistant, and people sometimes stigmatise teachers who teach these courses. There is a collective reluctance to talk about issues which go beyond health. Most people do not want to talk about issues surrounding sexual health, sexuality or access to contraception. They keep the discussions limited to reproductive health instead of talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

What's your reaction to the removal of "Sharifa's Tale" from the national curriculum?

Including Sharifa's story in the curriculum, I think, was a very positive step to try and introduce the concepts surrounding gender diversity. It was a well-researched piece of text. The idea was that students should be aware of the various gender identities and be more open to others who find themselves unable to fit into the binary identities of "boy" or "girl". The hope was that that teachers would introduce the topic sympathetically and sensitively.

The government in its policies is very open to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and is committed to including CSE in the curriculum. However, it is sometimes scared of the reaction of people that it considers extremists. And often, it is only the most conservative people who get heard on social media. They have been loud enough for the authorities to hear them, but they might still be a minority in this matter. Most people might not have any issues with the text. So, the question remains whether the government should be swayed by the opinions of a small extremist minority. People who have been opposing the text have said that it promotes homosexuality. This is a clear misrepresentation of the message of the story. Unfortunately, the government was influenced by this kind of reaction. I believe that the committee which took the final decision in this matter did not include a wide range of people with a diverse set of opinions. If more people had been consulted, perhaps the committee wouldn't have recommended removing the story from the curriculum.

MAHEEN SULTAN **STAR FILE PHOTO**

Do organisations working to promote CSE receive threats of violence?

BRAC, Naripokkho, and Nagorik Uddyog are all part of the Right Here Right Now coalition that promotes CSE in schools and increased access to adolescent health services. The coalition also contributes to changing social and gender norms by developing influencers and mobilising the youth to interact with the local government authorities, teachers and schools to promote CSE. It has been very careful in not exposing the youth volunteers to any kind of risks. In their outreach programmes, they talk about reproductive health education and topics like menstrual health regulation, and access to services. They don't go around talking about sexual orientation and gender identity. Those topics are avoided because they know that they might face very strong reactions from the community, the authorities and the schools.

However, organisations that are more explicitly dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity have to be very careful. A lot of misinformation was spread on social media following the Sharif-Sharifa debacle. Both individuals and organisations were labelled and threatened for their work on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Unfortunately, there's not much legal recourse available for such hate crimes and cyber harassment, which have detrimental effects on activists' physical and mental well-being. Citizens don't usually file cases under the Cyber Security Act for fear of not protecting their privacy and personal data.

Why is it important to talk about CSE?

It is important because there is so much misinformation surrounding the issue. Adolescence is a period of life when young people are curious about their bodies. It is a period when they are discovering themselves and others, and they need to have access to the right kind of information regarding their sexuality and reproductive health. They need to know how to protect themselves. They need to understand the concept of consent and their rights to decide with whom, if and when to have a relationship, as well as the kind of relationship to have.

Another reason why CSE is so important and urgent is that we still have very high rates of child marriage. Early marriages lead to early pregnancies because young women don't have access to birth control and are discouraged from using it. Oftentimes, these pregnancies are unwanted and they resort to unsafe abortions.

When they cannot get abortions, they have to go through the process of childbirth when their bodies and minds are not ready for it. This leads to increased rates of maternal and child mortality. So, there are severe health-related consequences as well of ignoring CSE.

What is the way out?

Parents have to be involved in the process, so that they do not resist when their children receive CSE. If they understand what it is about, they are more likely to want schools to teach it. This would also lead to the eventual phasing out of the stigma surrounding the issue.

It is also important that youth leaders and volunteers with correct information and proper knowledge reach out to other young people. I think the youth are more likely to talk and listen to others in their age group. They will face fewer barriers there. Youth volunteers can also educate adults in their community to destigmatise the issue of CSE.

> **There is a collective reluctance to talk about issues which go beyond health. Most people do not want to talk about issues surrounding sexual health, sexuality or access to contraception. They keep the discussions limited to reproductive health instead of talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights.**

Can teachers use respect as a substitute for money?

MAHABUBA RAHMAN

Mahabuba Rahman
is an assistant professor, Department of English, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

READERS' VOICE

"You are teachers. Shouldn't you be satisfied with the respect you get from students in classrooms? Why are you on the streets, running after money?" This a common statement we are being bombarded with from people of other professions following the teachers' strike, which makes us uncomfortable and surprised at the same time.

Coming from a family where my father is a retired administrative officer of a public university, and my brother is an assistant professor at a college, my one and only dream was to be a teacher. I never sat for the BCS exams or worked in any sector except education, because all I wanted to do was spread the little knowledge I acquired from my teachers, and to learn more from my students.

I remember my father and my brother whom I never saw leading a luxurious life, driving a fancy car, or living in a bungalow; and that, I knew from childhood, is the way of life of a middle-class family. As a teacher, I started in the ninth grade, and the salary I received was barely enough to maintain a family of two. In fact, I had to ask for money from my family, even though I was living alone. That is when I realised how necessities most often become luxuries to the family of a teacher.

Many teachers from different public universities, including my friends and colleagues, are pursuing higher degrees abroad, which is needed for further promotions at their workplaces. The financial struggle a lecturer or assistant professor faces even after getting fully funded scholarships—from applying to different international universities to buying plane tickets—is almost never understood by others because, according to many, the passion for learning should be paying the bills!

DU teachers' sit-in programme at the Arts Building as part of the protest.
PHOTO: **PROTHOM ALO**

The questions that come to mind are, why should we feel embarrassed for wanting a secure financial future? Why are we being trolled for asking for a salary without any deduction? Why are we being mocked for supporting the existing pension scheme?

Yes, we have already accepted that our policymakers assume that we do not need a fancy car or a bungalow with numerous domestic help. All we want is to be financially secure after our retirement and for our nominees to feel safe when the pensioner is no more. Isn't that the bare minimum we are asking for?

It shouldn't come as a surprise that the respect we receive does not pay our bills, nor does it allow us to bargain a lower fare with a CNG driver. The admiration and nobility of this profession alone cannot ensure a secure future for our next generation. And, sure, it does not suit "honourable" teachers to be on the streets month after month to regain the minimum rights they had. If it is too difficult to grant us what we deserve, may we use our "passion for learning," "respect for teaching," and "our dignity" as a substitute payment method, please?

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
bangla.thedailystar.net/

The incredible 'goatness' of being

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

The saga of a Tk 15 lakh goat with an impressive pedigree, followed by the unfolding of the jaw-dropping accumulation of wealth of an NBR official, may make us rethink our derisive attitude toward this misunderstood animal. I mean the goat, of course.

After all, we cannot deny that in Bangalee culture, we often refer to people who do dumb things as a "chhagol" (goat), going as far as calling someone the offspring of a goat (chhagoler bachcha), a term lost in translation: in English, it would be calling someone a "kid" (baby goat), which does not carry the same degree of humiliation.

We may have to rethink our "goat dismissiveness".

The town is abuzz about how the astronomical price of a goat the size of a small horse led to the opening of a gigantic can of worms and, for the media, a treasure trove of sensational stories. It was the son of the mysterious NBR member who had spilled the first beans that led to the revelation of his father's enormous real estate acquisitions and piles of cash made from shares. Like a typical rich spoilt brat, he made the mistake of bragging about the Tk 15 lakh goat he had acquired at a bargain price of Tk 12 lakh. A video clip of this went viral on social media, leading to intense speculations about the source of his father's wealth. The NBR official was eventually transferred to a post in another ministry as a reprimand for the embarrassment he caused his organisation, one presumes.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is investigating allegations of corruption against the official whose basic salary was Tk 78,000 a month. According to media reports, the person under investigation and his family's wealth include luxury resorts, a shooting spot and multiple bungalows. A report by *The Daily Star* reveals he also has three crore shares in at least 10 companies. He even talked about his success in the stock market in an earlier TV interview, surprisingly revealing that he had inside information about these companies, which is a violation of capital market regulations.

The goat incident also sparked off quite a bit of family drama when the official against whom these allegations were made initially claimed that the young man was not his son (just like the Michael Jackson song "Billie Jean") naming only the two children from his first wife. The media reported that the young goat connoisseur was his second wife's son. While he may have reacted badly to the stupidity of his offspring for exposing him, albeit unintentionally, it cannot be denied that he has been a generous father giving him a bevy of fancy cars and enough cash to allow him to buy 50-plus lakh taka worth of sacrificial animals, which obviously he also bragged about and was gleefully reported by the media.

He is also, no doubt, a generous husband considering the queenly lifestyle of his first wife, a retired government college teacher and upazila parishad chairman who lives in a white, two-storied mansion in Raipura and has even managed to get the road that leads to her home named after herself, according to a *Daily Star* report.

GOAT of all goat
Badhon

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

In fact, all the highly placed public officials against whom there are allegations of acquiring illegal wealth through dubious means (corruption is such a boring, overused word these days) seem to be ultra-devoted to their families. They buy luxury flats and resorts for their wives and children and go as far as bestowing lavish "gifts" upon their in-laws. Another official the ACC is investigating bought Tk 30 lakh and Tk 29 lakh worth of saving certificates for his father-in-law and brother-in-law, respectively. Meanwhile, his mother-in-law, a homemaker, has 10 bank accounts with transactions amounting to Tk 7 crore, as detected by ACC, no doubt thanks to her charming son-in-law. Now who wouldn't want a "jamai" like that?

These individuals are also champions of local tourism, building luxury resorts in the unlikeliest of places on acres and acres of land, giving the fun-starved public a nice place to go to. Sure, some of them may have forcefully taken away the lands of the poor and marginalised, but one must look at the bigger picture and see the bigness of their hearts (and wallets) that have given us these beautiful spots to visit.

The series of reports on the unaccounted-for wealth accumulation of public officials, some being the top bosses of very important government entities, gives the impression that the state's "zero tolerance for corruption" policy is finally in action. Maybe, but one cannot help but be a little sceptical of the official repercussions these individuals have faced—transfers to a different ministry, or a slight demotion to a lower grade, which seem a mere slap in the wrist for what would be considered a serious crime. The ACC, meanwhile, seems to be the lone hero in this saga—investigating the cases, freezing assets and accounts and sharing its juicy findings with a hungry media. Oh, and of course, let's not forget the unlikely heroes like our giant, magnificent goat which has definitely given these neglected animals a far more elevated status than ever before.

Heroes and villains of the climate crisis

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ZAIN OMAR ALI AND
BAREESH HASAN CHOWDHURY

In Alexander Ward's book *The Internationalists*, there is an account of a debate between the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on how the United States should address the issue of China in climate negotiations. Kerry argues that America and China must cooperate. Sullivan disagrees—they should focus on "boxing China out" and make deals with other countries. Sullivan argues that they should instead present China as the main climate villain, and force them to the negotiating table on US' terms.

Economist Raghuram Rajan recently wrote an article for the *Financial Times* in the aftermath of the Indian elections, arguing that the Modi administration's focus on expanding manufacturing is misguided: "The world does not have political or climatic room for another China-sized economy exporting manufactured goods." Notably, the lack of room is both "political" and "climatic". The unspoken "political" factor here is the recent American anxiety around Chinese overcapacity—G7 economies are worried about losing advanced manufacturing capacity to competitors in all emerging markets (not just China).

The "climatic" factor brings us back to the question of climate justice.

Who is the real "climate villain?"

Historical emissions and global inequality

How can one measure climate villainy? If we were to take annual carbon emissions, then the primary villain is very clear—it is the People's Republic of China, followed by the United States of America. If we measure "climate villainy" on this scale then one can even present the US as a relative "climate hero"—it's an example of a large, high-population economy that can sustain a higher quality of life than China while producing fewer emissions. Thanks to the radical green agenda in Biden's Inflation Reduction Act (glowingly endorsed by progressives) and the visionary entrepreneurialism of Elon Musk, it will be the US that saves the world from the climate crisis, just as it saves the world from every crisis.

This is the story US progressives would like to tell—of the climate hero America saving the world from the climate villain China.

The problem with looking only at annual carbon emissions is that carbon has accumulated over time. The climate crisis is not caused by present-day emissions, it is caused by the sum total of historical emissions. Once we account for the issue of historical emissions, we confront the heart of the matter: the benefits of historical carbon consumption are restricted to a small handful of advanced economies, former Warsaw Pact countries and Gulf Arab petrostates, but the costs have to be borne by us all.

Consider the figure given, taken from a Nature Sustainability paper by climate scientist Jason Hickel:

The y-axis shows the cumulative GDP per capita from 1960-2018. The x-axis measures how much each country has overshot or undershot the global carbon budget needed to restrict warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to a hypothetical world where historical carbon consumption was divided equally according to population—a value of 1 represents a country that has consumed exactly its fair share of global carbon.

A striking pattern emerges almost immediately—almost 70 percent of cross-national differences in cumulative per capita GDP can be explained solely by differences in cumulative emissions over time. Thus, it is impossible to disentangle the issue of global inequality from historical carbon emissions. With the exception of primarily the Gulf petrostates, the entirety of the Global South is in the bottom left of the chart, coloured in green. The figure ends in 2018, rapid economic development in the intervening period has since caused China to slightly overshoot its fair share. But the main climate villain when we take historical emissions into account is very clear—it is the US.

Liability vs generosity

The solution to the problem of historical emissions is quite straightforward—Global North (red in the graph) countries owe liability payments to Global South (green) countries for exceeding their fair shares of the atmospheric commons. This would enable emissions reductions while still allowing for "catch-up" growth in the Global South, and help solve long-standing issues of global inequality. COP would be the ideal venue to negotiate these payments.

However, the topic of liability payments at COP is consistently blocked by the Western negotiating bloc, particularly the US. The concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) was enshrined into international climate law in the Paris Agreement to acknowledge the issue of historical emissions but is under attack every year from Western nations. CBDR acknowledges that while all countries must act on climate change, the nature of our responsibilities is different and corresponds to our historic emissions. This framework is essential to protecting every sovereign nation's inherent human right to development. It is also essential to preserve as we pursue climate justice. Jake Sullivan's strategy for climate negotiations with China suggests that senior American policymakers have abandoned it completely, choosing instead to use climate politics to suppress economic development in Global South competitors.

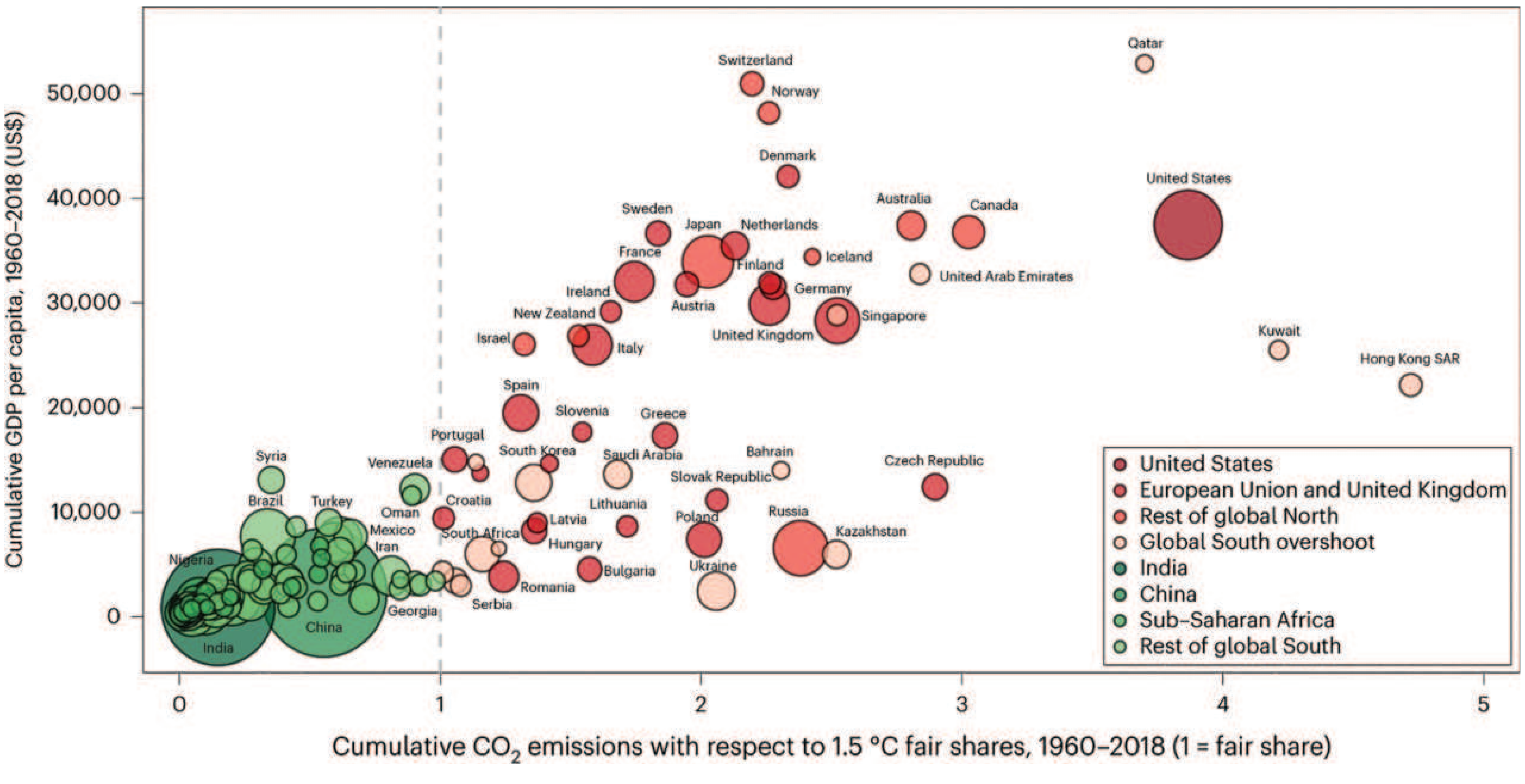
Let us return to Raghuram Rajan's prescriptions for the Indian economy. "Climatic" factors are only a barrier to industrial development in India if we take the US position that only present-day emissions matter in determining climate responsibility.

A historical emissions framework gives countries in the Global South room to grow and to reach some kind of parity in economic prosperity with the advanced economies. Liability payments offer a mechanism to achieve that parity.

By now I hope the readers can fully comprehend the dark motivations behind the consistent blocking of liability payments at COP. We should recognise this for what it is—an attempt by the Global North to use the climate crisis to lock in current patterns of global inequality and maintain their position of privilege in the commanding heights of the world economy. In the context of China, it was even to be used as a way to neutralise an economic competitor.

We speak of Bangladesh in terms of "climate vulnerability". This is how the Global North would like to see us, as "vulnerable" people who exist only to be saved by their generosity and benevolence. This is the language of NGOs and aid dependency. This language also directs us away from the issue of liability payments that we are owed by the Global North. The climate crisis was not caused by Bangladesh, but the lives it claims will be disproportionately from Bangladesh. When you are not owed liability, you can only be grateful for generosity. We need to break out of this paradigm.

Look again at the figure given.Don't look at it through the lens of personal self-sacrifice and bleeding-heart activism. Don't look at it through the eyes of NGOs. Look at it through the lens of your material self-interest. The emergence of China as a peer competitor to the United States creates the scope for the formation of a counter-hegemonic Global South bloc that can exercise coercion on Global North countries to demand liability payments and an acceptance of the historical emissions framework. In the present moment, this is the clearest path forward to climate justice.



Cumulative CO2 emissions with respect to 1.5 degrees Celsius fair shares versus cumulative GDP per capita, 1960-2018.

SOURCE: **JASON HICKEL**

LAW VISION

Challenges and prospects of enforcing foreign decrees in Bangladesh

SHISHIR MANIR

The recognition of foreign decree is essential for fostering cross-border trade and investment and protecting the rights of foreign investors in Bangladesh. Recognition of foreign decree contributes to building confidence in foreign traders and acts as a deterrent to borrowers who attempt to dishonor their obligations towards the creditors or evade the jurisdiction upon default.

In today's globalised world order, cross-border transactions and consequent disputes have been a common phenomenon. Bangladesh as a developing country has witnessed the same in recent years. The disputes that ensue from cross-border transactions are dealt with in foreign courts. The decree thus awarded can then be executed in the native country of the parties. The Code of Civil Procedure 1908 (CPC) defines foreign court and foreign decree in sections 2(5) and 2(6), respectively. Essentially, foreign decree means a decree of a foreign court and a foreign court means a court established outside the jurisdiction of Bangladesh. This article delves into the challenges and prospects of enforcing foreign court decrees in Bangladesh taking into account the legal framework and the practical realities of the country.

Bangladesh lacks an exhaustive legislation on the enforcement of foreign decrees. At present the process is governed by the CPC. Sections 13, 14, and 44A of the CPC deal with the process of execution of foreign decrees in Bangladesh. Section 13 points out six exceptions when foreign decrees will not be conclusive. Additionally, section 14 ensures the presumption of competency of the foreign courts unless the contrary appears on the records. Section 44A stipulates the process of executing a decree of a reciprocating country in Bangladesh if it does not fall within the exceptions specified in section 13.

The rule of conclusiveness of foreign decree is founded upon the principle of sanctity of decrees. Where a foreign court of competent jurisdiction has adjudicated upon a claim, a legal obligation arises to satisfy that claim in the country where the decree needs to be enforced. The general rule is that the native court shall presume that the decree is awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction upon the production of a certified copy of a foreign decree. However, this presumption must follow two pre-conditions. First, the decree is pronounced by a superior court of the reciprocating countries of Bangladesh. Hence, the foreign decree of non-reciprocating countries is not executable in Bangladesh. Before enforcing a foreign decree, a reciprocating agreement with that country is required.

Next, the judgment must survive the exceptions outlined in section 13 of the Code. If the judgment fulfills these two preconditions, then the executing court shall presume that the judgment is given by a court of competent jurisdiction and it shall be executable in Bangladesh. The foreign decree will fall into *res judicata* under section 11 of CPC if the decree has been previously awarded by a Bangladeshi court.

Generally, the recognition and enforcement of foreign decrees takes place in two ways. First, by instituting an execution proceeding as mentioned in section 44A of the CPC. The party enforcing the foreign decree has to file a suit in line with the subject matter in the Court of District Judge for the execution of the foreign decree and submit a certified copy of the decree in support of an application for recognition and enforcement of a foreign decree. Second, by instituting a fresh suit on such foreign decree. Where a decree is not of a superior court of a reciprocating territory, a suit has to be instituted in a court of competent jurisdiction in Bangladesh.

The general principle of law is that any decision of a foreign court, tribunal, or any other quasi-judicial authority is not enforceable in a country unless such decision is embodied in a decree of a court of that country. Moreover, the limitation period for enforcing the foreign judgment has been specified in the Limitation Act 1908. Article 117 of the First Schedule of the Act stipulates that an action to enforce a foreign decree shall commence within six years of the date on which the foreign decree was pronounced. The decree will be executed per section 51 of the Code.

Inadequate legal framework and lack of clarity pose a great challenge towards enforcing foreign decrees in Bangladesh. Bangladesh should enact a specific legislation on this matter similar to the Foreign Judgment Enforcement Act 1933 of the UK. There are some practical difficulties too. Excessive delays, bureaucratic red tapism, and corruption beat the process and hinder efficient and timely enforcement of foreign decrees. Moreover, no specialised courts or tribunals exist on this matter in Bangladesh. The unavailability of the list of reciprocating countries of Bangladesh is another glaring example of complete disregard of the responsible authority.

In sum, the recognition of foreign decree is essential for fostering cross-border trade and investment and protecting the rights of foreign investors in Bangladesh. Recognition of foreign decree contributes to building confidence in foreign traders and acts as a deterrent to borrowers who attempt to dishonor their obligations towards the creditors or evade the jurisdiction upon default. Despite the challenges, there is still room for improvement. By reforming the legal framework, establishing specialised courts, and advancing international cooperation, Bangladesh can overcome the obstacles and create an effective and efficient system for enforcing foreign decrees.

The writer is Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

Member
ICC International Court of Arbitration
Ex Officio Member
ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR
2024-2027 Mandate
Moin Ghani

LAW UPDATE

Barrister Moin Ghani, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, has been appointed as member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Court of Arbitration for its 2024-2027 mandate. The ICC Court of Arbitration is widely considered to be the world's leading arbitral institution. Since 1923, it has been helping to resolve international commercial and investment disputes. Members of the ICC Court are appointed by the ICC's supreme governing body, the World Council, on the recommendation of ICC national committees.

DETANGLING LAWS

Navigating jurisdictional complexities in the Anwarul Azim murder case

FARJANA YESMIN

Recently, there has been significant press coverage in Bangladesh and India regarding the heinous murder of Bangladeshi Member of Parliament Anwarul Azim in India. The majority of the accused individuals are of Bangladeshi origin and have been apprehended in Bangladesh. However, the primary culprit, who happens to be a Bangladeshi American, escaped to the United States. Therefore, three countries are now involved with this case, prompting a discussion on jurisdiction over crimes in international context.

Section 3 of the Penal Code of Bangladesh establishes the principle of extraterritorial jurisdiction, asserting that the Code applies to any person liable, by any Bangladeshi law, who commits an offence outside the country as if the act had been committed within Bangladesh. This provision allows Bangladeshi authorities to prosecute its nationals for offences committed abroad. Moreover, the Passive Nationality principle is a doctrine that confers a state with the authority to prosecute specific crimes committed beyond its borders against its citizens by individuals who are not citizens of that state. Essentially, it grants a country the authority to pursue legal action for offences committed against its citizens, even if such offences took place beyond its borders. Bangladesh can invoke this doctrine to assert jurisdiction over the offender since the victim is Bangladeshi.

India would likely have primary jurisdiction because the crimes were committed within its territory. According to section 2 of the Indian Penal Code, anyone who performs an action or fails to perform an action that is against the rules of the code will be subject to penalty. In this context, any individual who commits an offence is held accountable for punishment regardless of their nationality, social status, caste, or religious beliefs. The sole prerequisite for incriminating an individual under this section is that they must engage in the act or omission within the geographical boundaries of India. Therefore, a non-native individual who commits an offence within the borders of the country cannot claim unfamiliarity with the legal system of India.

Again, the principle of territoriality is the dominant principle of criminal jurisdiction that allows states to exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed on their territory. Moreover, the principle of subjective territorial jurisdiction allows states to exercise legal authority over actions initiated within their territory but completed or having effects elsewhere.

The *United States* v *Yousef (1996)* is a pivotal case demonstrating the application of the subjective territorial principle in criminal law. The court upheld the conviction of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, a mastermind behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the Bojinka plot. Despite Yousef's argument that much of his planning and preparatory actions occurred outside the United States, the court affirmed US jurisdiction based on the principle of subjective territorial jurisdiction. This case is significant as it reinforced the ability of the United States to prosecute international terrorists whose actions, though initiated abroad, have direct and harmful consequences within the US borders.

Therefore, while India has clear territorial jurisdiction over crimes committed within its borders, Bangladesh may also have an interest based on the nationality of the principal accused and the victim. On the other hand, the primary assailant and alleged mastermind of the crime escaped to the United States. It is imperative to bring him and ensure his presence for trial to conduct a thorough investigation and uphold justice. Obtaining custody of him in Bangladesh will be challenging since there is no extradition treaty between Bangladesh and the USA. However, the current extradition relationship between India with the USA gives them an advantageous position in apprehending the culprit. Even if the offender flees to Bangladesh, India may request extradition under the extradition treaty between India and Bangladesh. Bangladesh would then need to decide whether to extradite or prosecute the accused under its laws.

In conclusion, the complex case surrounding the murder of Anwarul Azim in India has brought to light intricate jurisdictional challenges involving multiple countries. While Bangladesh asserts extraterritorial jurisdiction over offences committed by its citizens abroad, India maintains primary jurisdiction due to the location of the crimes. The application of principles such as the Passive Nationality principle and Subjective Territorial Jurisdiction further complicates the matter, highlighting the need for careful analysis and diplomatic cooperation.

The writer teaches law at the University of Chittagong.

LAW IN DENIAL

Genocide, denial, and Gaza

SADIKA NOUSHEEN

Genocide denial is deeply rooted in socio-political, and historical complexities and manifests in many forms across instances like the Armenian, Holocaust, Roman, Rwandan, Bangladesh, and Rohingya genocides, to name a few. The genocide unfolding in Gaza is live streamed before the world and yet its continuance is being vehemently denied by Israel and its allies.

Gregory Stanton, founder and President of Genocide Watch, argues that genocide is a complex process that unfolds across ten predictable but non-linear stages (often occurring simultaneously), where preventive actions at any stage can halt its progression. Even though argued as "the final stage" of genocide, "denial" is a continuous process that happens before, during, and after persecution. Understanding it is essential as it indicates that more atrocities will continue.

Genocide denialism has a deep-rooted connection with the narratives of groups that justify harmful beliefs, perpetuates prejudices, distorts historical facts, and misrepresents social realities. Stanley Cohen, sociologist and criminologist, argues that *"the social conditions that give rise to atrocities merge into the official techniques for denying these realities—not just to observers, but even to the perpetrators themselves."* This denial includes outright rejection of information, disputing the significance of events, minimising responsibility, shifting blame to victims, moral disengagement to justify dehumanisation, and fostering belligerent violence in disguise of defense.

The textbook example of the above is unfolding in the context of Gaza. Denial is exhibited in the Israeli government's use of jargon of International Humanitarian Law to justify genocide, as identified by Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese. Concepts such as "human shields", "collateral damage" and "proportionality" are distorted and misused to justify actions in Gaza. Articles 48 and 52 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions mandate attacks to be limited to military targets. Specific military advantage must be weighed against foreseeable civilian harms. Article 51(5)(b) emphasises proportionality, disallowing attacks where civilian harm is excessive relative to military advantage. By accusing Palestinian armed groups of using civilians as human shields, Israel justified disproportionate killings and infrastructure destruction. The concept of collateral damage was misused to justify indiscriminate attacks as intentional harms. By twisting legal language, Israel blurred the distinction between civilians and combatants, portraying the entire population as legitimate military targets, and proceeded to obliterate the people of Gaza.

Following the US university protests, the US House of Representatives has gone on to pass a bill that would expand the federal definition of antisemitism potentially curtailing freedom of speech. The recent amendment to the State Department Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2025 prohibits US officials from using agency funding to cite any casualty figures provided by the Gaza Ministry of Health, which is often the sole source of information about the situation on the ground in Gaza. Hence, it can be argued that Israel's biggest ally, the US, has further institutionalised the genocide denial in the context of Gaza.

While the internet makes literal denial tough, in many instances, it intensifies the process. Big data regimes create filter bubbles, isolating individuals in ideological echo chambers, and reinforcing biases, particularly evident in narratives about Palestine. Tech companies wield immense control over content dissemination, potentially prioritising propaganda aligned with certain ideologies, leading to censorship of dissenting opinions and news, threatening freedom of speech. Among tech giants, Meta has been accused of censoring Palestinian voices through arbitrary content removal, suspension of accounts, and restriction of certain accounts' reaches and visibilities, without explanation or notification (i.e., shadow banning).

Genocide denialism constitutes a form of dehumanisation and oppression by creating conditions that coerce the narratives into silence. Questioning genocide denialism is crucial as it upholds the dominant group's narrative, affects the oppressed, and hinders both genocide prevention and justice for the victims. In Palestine, denial of genocide perpetuates systematic inequality and historical oppression through settler colonialism, continuing intergenerational discrimination since 1948.

The writer is an LLM candidate, University of Dhaka.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Euros
Quarterfinal
Spain vs Germany
Live from 10:00 pm
Portugal vs France
Live from 1:00 am (Saturday)

Copa America
Argentina vs Ecuador
Live from 7:00 am
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Third round
Live from 3:30 pm

PHOTO: **FACEBOOK/AFP**

Toughest task yet for Spain

AGENCIES

- This will be the fourth meeting between Germany and Spain at the Euros. Spain hold the edge having won in 1984 and the 2008 final, while Germany clinched the contest in the 1988 edition.
- Spain are unbeaten in their last four major tournament matches against Germany (W2 D2).
- Germany went through to the semifinals in 15 of their 19 quarterfinals at major tournaments (World Cup and Euro), including wins in all four last eight appearances at the Euros (1996, 2008, 2012, 2016).
- No host nation has ever been eliminated in the quarterfinals of the Euros.
- Spain have scored nine goals, while Germany have 10, which is already their joint-most in a single edition of the competition.
- Toni Kroos has completed 95% of his passes at the tournament (411/431), the highest by a player to attempt 300+ passes at a European Championship since 1980. He also leads this edition for line-breaking passes (125).

Spain have looked in imperious form in their four straight wins so far at Euro 2024, giving their eagerly anticipated quarterfinal match-up with hosts Germany on Friday the air of a "final before the final".

The squad have moved on from the possession-based "tiki-taka" style that helped them win the World Cup and back-to-back European Championships over a decade ago to a ferociously attacking approach over a year under the guidance of manager Luis de la Fuente.

This transformation may have surprised many fans, but players like midfielder Mikel Merino have seen it coming for almost a decade, as have many of his teammates who have worked with De la Fuente in their national academy system.

And that camaraderie is what gives Spain the edge, Merino felt.

"It is a huge advantage for us," Merino said. "It's a chemistry that I have only seen in club football."

Indeed, Spain have been playing with relentless high pressure combined with lightning one-touch moves and precise passing, giving the impression of a squad where each player has an almost instinctive feel for the positioning of his teammates.

"I have a lot of great memories about playing against Germany. Playing them it's something that make you feel your blood pump stronger in your veins," Merino said.

"We know we are going to face maybe our toughest challenge yet," Merino said.

Meanwhile, hosts Germany will be riding a wave of belief not seen in the proud football nation for almost a decade.

Germany veteran and 2014 World Cup winner Toni Kroos said Wednesday "the goal is to win the tournament".

A player with an unblemished record of success, six-time Champions League winner, Kroos believes the will to win comes "only through experience".

"You can have a winning mentality or belief, you can live it, but it's hard to convey it in conversations.

"You have to go through experiences and that's how your belief grows more and more."

Kroos will do battle against Spain, the country he has lived in for the past decade.

He said his knowledge of the Spanish players from his time at Real was no clear advantage, saying "they are all pretty well known."

"I don't think we're expecting any big surprises."

Kroos may not be expecting big surprises from Spain, but the new-look Spanish side who have somewhat shed their decade-long style of play will definitely be the biggest thorn in the hosts' way to another European glory.

Djokovic survives major scare

REUTERS

Even though Novak Djokovic was nursing a dodgy right knee, toppling him at Wimbledon was never going to be easy for a Briton ranked 277th and so it proved as the Serb huffed and puffed into the third round with a 6-3 6-4 5-7 7-5 win over Jacob Fearnley.

The wildcard, who was ranked outside the world's top 500 just a month ago before shooting up almost 250 spots after winning a second tier Challenger event in Nottingham, will take away many memorable moments from his Centre Court debut.

He is unlikely to forget the high-risk, high-reward strategy he employed in the final game of the third set, which ended with Djokovic hacking a forehand wide to surrender his serve and the set - to the delight of the hollering crowd.

But all the heroics from a journeyman Scot, who until this week had never won a main tour match or even competed at a Grand Slam, were simply not enough to tame a player chasing a record-extending 372nd Grand Slam match win.

A forehand winner sealed Djokovic his passage into round three and kept him on course to win a record 25th Grand Slam title.

Mbappe or Ronaldo: Who will come through?

AFP, *Hamburg*

- Portugal are the side with the most possession (69.9%) at this Euro, with Germany (66%), England (60%), Spain (59.5%), and France (59%) coming next in this aspect.
- France are yet to find a goal from open play -- they had seen two own goals and one penalty from Kylian Mbappe -- but Les Blues have had the most touches (151) in the opposition's box, followed by Portugal who have had 136 touches in the opposition's box.
- Portugal's captain Cristiano Ronaldo has mustered 20 shots at Euro 2024, the most of any player, but he's yet to find the back of the net.
- Portugal haven't scored in their last two matches -- against Georgia and Slovenia. Portugal have never failed to net in three consecutive games at a single major tournament before.
- France have kept a clean sheet in three of their four games, the most of any side at the tournament.

France and Portugal renew their European Championship rivalry on Friday night in a quarterfinal showdown in which almost all of the focus will be on the two captains, Kylian Mbappe and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The last-eight encounter in Hamburg brings together two of the most-fancied nations coming into Euro 2024, but two teams who have not been completely convinced so far in Germany.

France have reached a sixth quarterfinal in the last seven major tournaments despite not one of their players scoring a goal in open play.

Mbappe has been hindered by the broken nose he suffered in France's first match against Austria, forcing him to miss the goalless draw with the Netherlands.

He has not been at his sharpest since returning and the spot-kick he converted against Poland is the only goal he has scored in seven appearances at the Euros.

The other side of the coin for France is that they have only let in one goal.

Meanwhile, Portugal reached this stage having needed a shoot-out to beat Slovenia following a goalless 120 minutes.

Goalkeeper Diogo Costa ended up being their hero by saving all three of Slovenia's efforts from the spot, but the game will also be remembered for Ronaldo's tears after he had a penalty saved in extra time.

The 39-year-old's quest to become the oldest-ever goal-scorer at the tournament also led to him missing numerous attempts during that game.

It has all added fuel to the fire for those who feel Ronaldo is holding back a supremely talented Portugal side, but coach Roberto Martinez is likely to back the forward.

Portugal must now try to find a way through a watertight French defence, while Didier Deschamps needs to find a replacement in his midfield for the suspended Adrien Rabiot.

With France being one of the most solid defensive sides at the Euro, the question will be whether a misfiring Ronaldo will be able to help Portugal find that spark.

The margins will likely be fine again this tie and the outcome will possibly be determined by a moment of genius. For that, Portugal are likely to keep Ronaldo in place while French eyes will be firmly fixed on Mbappe finally delivering.

SHORT CORNER

Erik ten Hag signs new deal at Man Utd

Erik ten Hag has signed a contract extension that keeps him at Old Trafford until 2026, the Premier League club announced on Thursday. The former Ajax manager, whose deal had been due to expire in 2025, admitted there was work to be done to close the gap on United's Premier League rivals.

Empty seats at Copa, a stark contrast to Euros

Copa favourites such as reigning champions Argentina and Brazil advanced to the quarterfinals playing in sold out stadiums but the less heralded teams have played in half-empty arenas. Games at the Euros averaged 50,000 spectators per game in the group stage.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan in same group in proposed CT schedule

Bangladesh find themselves in the same group as archrivals India and Pakistan along with New Zealand in the draft schedule of the ICC 2025 Champions Trophy submitted by the tournament hosts Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.

Bruzon, Kings 'AMICABLY' SPLIT

SPORTS REPORTER

After six years of remarkable achievements and a string of titles with the country's contemporary powerhouse, coach Oscar Bruzon has parted ways with five-time Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) champions Bashundhara Kings.

Bruzon revealed the news through Facebook yesterday, while Kings president Imrun Hasan also confirmed that they would not be renewing the contract with the 47-year-old coach.

The Spaniard wrote, "Dear BK family, I wanted to express my gratitude for the positive manner in which we reached a mutual agreement to terminate our contract after 6 years of continuous success including a participation this season at the prestigious Asian Champions League. I appreciate the opportunity to part ways amicably and with full understanding for both sides."

He added, "We have contributed on developing a unique football culture in the country, key to the long-term growth and exclusively focused on excellence delivering great results including 11 Major Titles and a last season treble. Proud to have been part of the Kings dominance."

The Spaniard was successful in the domestic circuit, winning a total of 11 trophies since the Kings started their journey in the professional football league in the 2018-19 season. However, Bruzon failed to take the formidable Kings out of the group stage in the AFC Cup four times, despite having quality foreign footballers.

It has been learned that his relationship with club officials had deteriorated last season, while the foreign players were openly involved in scuffles during BPL matches. Bruzon, however, gave a hint of it in his parting post, mentioning the need for Kings officials to "put aside their personal and particular interests" to keep the success ongoing.

"Some have to understand that the only way to achieve success is to work as one team."

India's T20 World Cup winners returned home to a heroes' welcome yesterday, greeted by euphoric fans while parading on an open-top bus through the Marine Drive seafront in Mumbai. The Rohit Sharma-led team had first arrived in New Delhi from the West Indies and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The team waved to fans and danced to drums at their hotel in the Indian capital before leaving for their bus parade in Mumbai where fans gathered in huge numbers.

PHOTO: **AFP**

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ARREST WARRANT FOR BERA MAYOR

He was in plain sight for 33 months

Court now recalls the order

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI, AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU *and* **MAHMUDUL HASAN**

> **"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament.... How do I dare to arrest him?"**
> Bera Police Station OC

Police did not arrest Pabna's Bera municipality mayor SM Asif Shams for over two and a half years, even though he had an arrest warrant against him for his company's failure to pay Tk 191.63 crore it owed the state.

All the while, Asif, also the son of Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Md Shamsul Haque Tuku, continued his mayoral activities in public and even took part in campaigns of others running for local government offices.

Yesterday, the General Certificate Officer's Court of Dhaka recalled the arrest warrant issued against Asif, also the president of Bera upazila Awami League, after he showed up in court and submitted some documents.

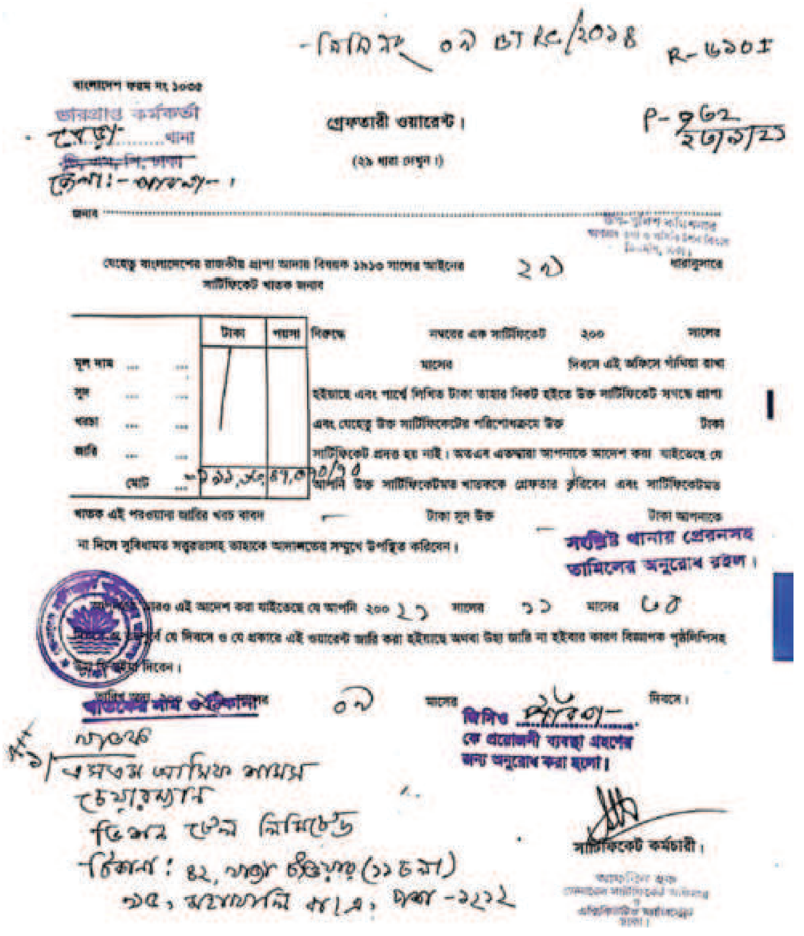
On May 23, 2022, a copy of the arrest warrant was sent to the officer-in-charge of Bera Model Police Station.

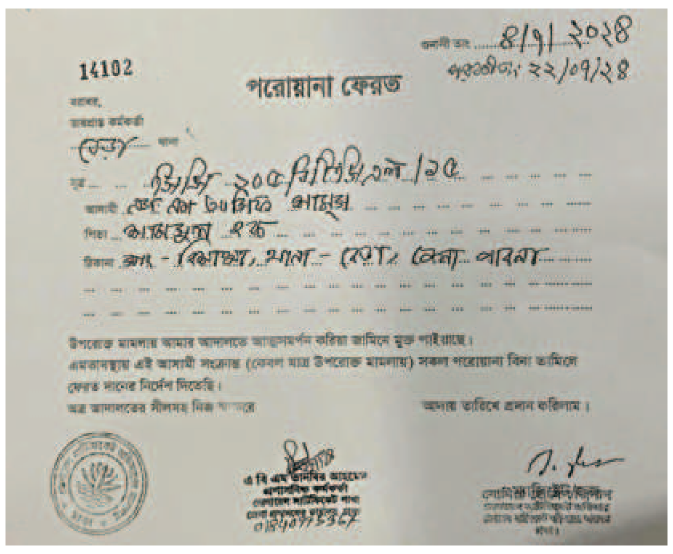
Md Rashidul Islam, OC of Bera Model Police Station, told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "After joining this station [on December 9, 2023], I learnt about the arrest warrant against him and informed my senior officials. Then I verbally told him to pay the government dues.

"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament. He is the incumbent municipality mayor and also the president of the upazila Awami League. How do I dare to arrest him? I only told him verbally, several times."

In January 2014, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) filed the case against the International Gateway (IGW) operator Vision Tel Ltd chairman Asif; managing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1





The arrest warrant, left, for SM Asif Shams issued in 2021, which was never executed by the police. The recall order of the arrest warrant, right, issued by a Dhaka court yesterday. Right bottom, Asif Shams, left in white panjabi, and his father Shamsul Haque Tuku, in Mujib coat at a tree plantation programme in Pabna's Bera upazila on June 28, 2024. IMAGES/PHOTO: **STAR/SOCIAL MEDIA**

Court orders confiscation of customs official's assets

He 'amassed' wealth of Tk 10cr illegally; 4 flats, land of Matiur, his family to be confiscated

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all immoveable properties of Mohammad Enamul Hoque, commissioner of the Commissionerate of Customs Valuation and Internal Audit, in a case filed over acquiring illegal wealth worth around Tk 10 crore.

Enamul

The properties are 11 flats in Kakrail, Mohammadpur, and Gulshan areas of the capital, five kathas of land in Gazipur, and eight kathas in Dhaka's Badda.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Farzana Yasmin, also investigation officer of the case, appealed for this, Anti-Corruption Commission Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, who moved the application, told The Daily Star.

On July 31 last year, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam in Dhaka filed

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

UK GENERAL ELECTION

Labour landslide expected as millions vote

POLLING STATION
POLLING STATION

Britain's Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria Starmer arrive at a polling station to cast their votes during the general election in London, Britain, yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

AFP, *London*

Millions of Britons voted yesterday in a general election that polls predict will hand the opposition Labour party a landslide win and end nearly a decade-and-a-half of Conservative rule.

The first national ballot since Boris Johnson won the Tories a decisive victory in 2019 follows Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's surprise call to hold an election six months earlier than required.

His gamble looks set to backfire spectacularly, with polls throughout the six-week campaign -- and for the last two years -- pointing to a heavy defeat for his right-wing party.

That would almost certainly put Labour leader Keir Starmer, 61, in Downing Street, as leader of the largest party in parliament.

Centre-left Labour is projected to win its first general election since 2005 by historic proportions, with a flurry of election-eve polls all

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PENSION SCHEME

Univ teachers carry on strike as meeting with Quader cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association yesterday said it is hopeful of having a meeting with government representatives regarding their demand for reinstating teachers' pension scheme.

A scheduled meeting between the federation and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader was cancelled yesterday, said Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of the FBUTA.

He said, "Minister Obaidul Quader told us that he has to sit with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss some other issues. As a result, he has decided not to hold the meeting with the teachers today [Thursday]."

Prof Nizamul said, "We are still hopeful of a meeting with the government. At the same time, we will continue our protest."

The teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) continued their strike for the fourth straight day.

Teachers of other public universities, including Buet, Rajshahi university, Ruet, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Barishal University, Begum Rokeya University, and Hajee Mohammad Danesh University also observed the strike.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel

UN chief warns of wider ME conflict as Israel retaliates with strikes; gun battles rock Gaza

AGENCIES

Lebanon's Hezbollah said it launched more than 200 rockets and explosive drones at Israeli military positions yesterday as tensions have soared amid the almost nine-months-old offensive raging in Gaza.

The Iran-backed group said its latest attack, which followed the launch of over 100 rockets the previous day, came in response to Israel's killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in south Lebanon.

Israel did not report any deaths in its northern border area, where most communities have been evacuated, but quickly said it had responded with strikes on targets in southern Lebanon.

Israel and Hezbollah, an ally of Palestinian group Hamas, have exchanged near daily cross-border fire since the Gaza offensive began on October 7, stoking fears the clashes could escalate into all-out war.

- » Witnesses report heavy shelling in western Rafah
- » Israel weighs Hamas response to truce proposal
- » Gaza death toll now 38,011

UN chief Antonio Guterres is "very worried about the escalation of the exchange of fire", his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, warning of the risk to the wider Middle East "if we were to find ourselves in a full-fledged conflict".

The Gaza offensive at the heart of the regional tensions has meanwhile raged on, and gun battles, air strikes and artillery shelling rocked Gaza City for an eighth day yesterday.

Gaza's civil defence agency said at least five people were killed in a strike that hit a Gaza City school, reports AFP.

Fears of renewed heavy fighting have also surged in Gaza's southern

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Messi, Ronaldo and plenty more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

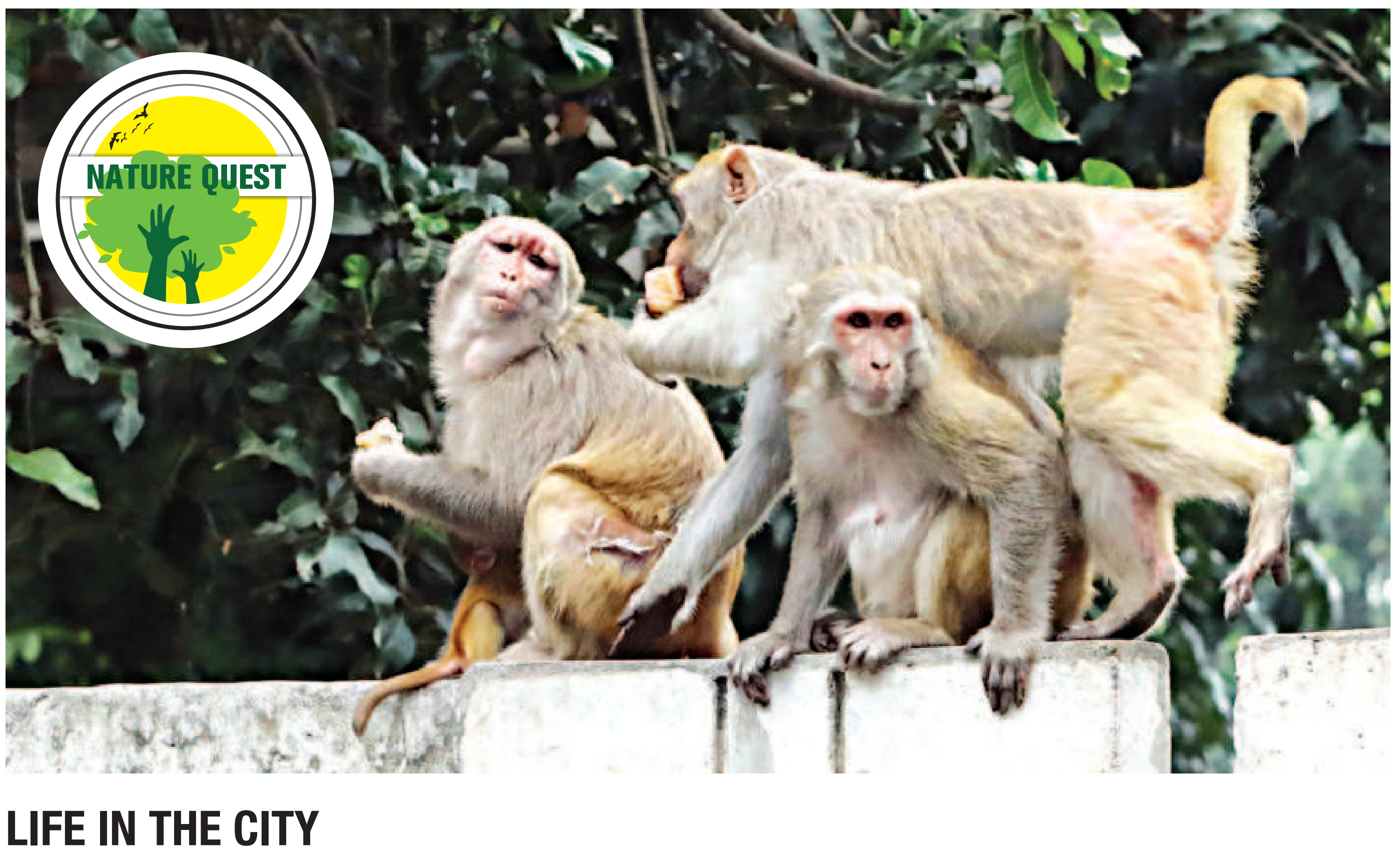
Football fans in Bangladesh will wake up bright and early today and stay up way past their usual bedtime, enjoying three mouthwatering knockout matches across two continents in a dream weekend of international football.

Football-loving officegoers and students, who usually get a few extra hours of sleep on Friday mornings, will set their alarms earlier than they do on weekdays, gluing themselves in front of a screen, preferably with a hot beverage in hand, to catch Lionel Messi's Argentina take the field in their Copa America quarterfinal clash against Ecuador.

The match, taking place at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas, will start at 7:00 am Bangladesh time.

However, this sacrifice of sleep could go in vain for Messi fans, as there is uncertainty whether the Argentine maestro will turn up on the field.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



LIFE IN THE CITY

A troop of rhesus macaques on the hunt for some food in a residential area in the capital's Gulshan-2. Rhesus monkeys account for a large portion of the country's urban wildlife. Even in metropolitans like Chattogram or Dhaka city, they can be spotted in certain areas, roaming comfortably among humans. Their adaptability to human-dominated landscapes has earned them the title of "commensal primates". However, more often than not, this hunt for food in urban spaces has proven to be not beneficial for them as their desperation can lead them to raid or snatch, which can put them in the face of the wrath of humans. Rhesus macaques, though hardy and adaptable, are often persecuted as "menaces" and can become victims of violent abuse. Some good Samaritans though always find some bread to hand out to the primates in need. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Fun trip turns fatal for 5 friends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

At least five people were killed as a car hit a roadside tree in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila last night.

The deceased are Jihad, Bijoy, Shishir, Sifat and Shaon. The injured are Shahid and Nayeem.

Residents of Azampur village of the upazila, all the deceased and injured were friends and aged between 20 and 22.

The accident took place at the Pabna Sugar Mill area on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway around 9:30pm, Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Police said Nayeem used to work as a drive of a ride-sharing service in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

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Smart Fridge
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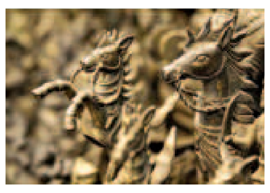
Embracing old-world charm, one antique at a time

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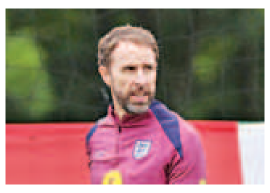

England face Swiss test

P11

The paradox of whitening black money while fighting graft

P8

Keep your phone safe, or it may end up in India

P3

EXPORT DATA

BB finds 6 types of wrongdoing

Sends clarification to govt agencies after shocking statistical correction

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **SOHEL PARVEZ**

The central bank discovered six types of statistical wrongdoing that inflated export data, a development that led to a multibillion-dollar correction.

Anomalies range from serial duplication errors to miscalculations of the value of fabrics to repeated miscounts of sample items as exports.

Bangladesh Bank sent a note to government agencies, explaining the rationale for the correction. The document seen by The Daily Star offers shocking glimpses into the extent of data inaccuracies with serious implications for the economy.

Discrepancies were covered last year by several media outlets, including this newspaper, but the massive correction by the central bank on July 3 in a balance of payments update came as a surprise to economists and business leaders.

To eliminate the anomalies, the central bank obtained export data from scheduled banks in the July-September period last year and verified them against statistics provided by the National Board of Revenue.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

- Serial duplication errors in customs data
- Miscalculations of value of fabrics
- Sample items classified as products with export value
- Sales by EPZ-based firms were counted twice
- Failure to adjust gap between initial LC value and actual export proceeds
- Losses from stock-lot sales, discounts and commissions were not adjusted

'Padma Bridge a source of huge pride for Bangladeshis'

PM says it altered int'l community's mindset towards us

UNB, *Munshiganj*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the construction of Padma Bridge with the country's own funds has taken the nation to a dignified position before the world and it changed the international community's mindset towards Bangladesh.

"The people of Bangladesh can movenow

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Labour back in power with huge mandate

Starmer sworn in as UK PM ending 14 years of Conservative rule, pledges to fix country

"Now, our country has voted decisively for change, for national renewal and a return of politics to public service. The work of change begins immediately, but have no doubt, we will rebuild Britain."

KEIR STARMER

".... first and foremost, I am sorry. I have given this job my all, but you have sent a clear signal that the government ... must change. And yours is the only judgement that matters."

RISHI SUNAK

AGENCIES

Britain's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday pledged to use his massive electoral majority to rebuild the country, saying he wanted to take the heat out of politics after years of upheaval and strife.

Standing outside his new office and residence at Number 10 Downing Street, Starmer acknowledged the scale of the challenge after his party's landslide victory in a parliamentary election ended 14 years of often tumultuous Conservative government.

He warned that any improvements would take time, and he would need to first rebuild faith in politics.

"This lack of trust can only be healed by actions, not words. I know that," he said.

"Whether you voted Labour or not, in fact, especially if you did not, I say to you directly - My government will serve you. Politics can be a force for good. We will show that."

Standing behind a lectern, he said he understood that many Britons were disillusioned with politics after years of scandal and chaos under the Conservatives, who were roundly rejected in Thursday's election, suffering a historic loss.

Starmer said the rejection signalled that Britain was ready for a reset: "Because no matter how fierce the storms of history, one of the great strengths of this nation has always been our ability to navigate away to calmer waters."

MASSIVE MAJORITY

The centre-left Labour won a massive majority in the 650-seat parliament, prompting Rishi Sunak's resignation yesterday morning, before Starmer went to meet King Charles and be formally named prime minister.

He said he would fight every day to rebuild trust, saying Britain would have a "government unburdened by doctrine", underlining something he had repeated during the campaign - that he would put country first, party second.

"To defy, quietly, those who have written our country off. You have given us a clear mandate, and we will use it to deliver change."

The election result has upended British politics. Labour won more than 410 seats, an increase of 211, while the Conservatives, the western world's most successful party, lost 250 lawmakers, including

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Customs official acquired Tk 6.43cr properties in 8yrs

Show ACC papers; he 'grossly underreported' assets value

DIPAN NANDY

In just eight years, Customs Commissioner Mohammad Enamul Haque bought properties that, on paper, cost him over Tk 6.43 crore.

According to an Anti-Corruption Commission report, Enamul bought real estate, flats, large commercial spaces in buildings, and built a nine-storey building while working as a joint commissioner and commissioner of Customs, Excise, and VAT Commissionerate in Chattogram and Rangpur from 2013 to 2020.

Enamul Haque

A Dhaka court on Thursday ordered confiscation of his properties worth over Tk 6.51 crore. Investigators believe Enamul grossly underreported the price of the properties when he bought them.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Onion price jumps up to Tk 120 a kg

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **MD ABBAS**

Ruma Akhter, an employee of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, could not believe her ears yesterday when a trader at the capital's Karwan Bazar asked Tk 104 for a kilogram of onions.

"The price shocked me when I heard it," she said.

She bought onions for Tk 70 per kg a month ago.

"How come the price of onions went up by Tk 34 per kg in a month?" said Ruma, the only breadwinner of her three-member family.

Visiting Karwan Bazar, Shewrapara, Ibrahimpur, Kochukhet, and Mirpur-11 kitchen markets yesterday, The Daily Star found that the retail prices of onions have surged by Tk 10 to Tk 20 per kg within a week.

The essential cooking ingredient was sold for Tk 100-120 a kg yesterday, up from Tk 90-100 last week.

Traders claimed that the prices increased due to supply shortages.

Sajib Sheikh, proprietor of Matri Bhander at Karwan Bazar, said they are getting small supplies from Faridpur and Pabna, two major onion producers.

"The drop in supplies are leading to the price hike," he said, adding that he is now being forced to sell Indian onions.

Mohammad Majed, general secretary of Shyambazar Onion Traders' Association, said the prices of all varieties of local onions increased over the last one week due to the supply crunch.

"We are currently importing onions from India where the prices are high," Majed, also an onion importer, told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Grandmaster Zia breathes his last doing what he loved

SPORTS REPORTER

Chess Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman passed away yesterday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the 12th round match of the National Chess Championship in Dhaka, leaving the country's sports fraternity numb with grief with his sudden demise at the age of 50.

Zia suddenly fell to the ground midway during a game against GM Enamul Hossain Razib at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall room at around 5:45 pm.

He was immediately

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

4 Bangladesh-origin MPs reelected

Tulip, Rushanara among them

AGENCIES

Four Bangladesh-origin candidates -- Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, Rushanara Ali, Rupa Huq and Apsana Begum -- have been elected as Labour Party lawmakers in the UK parliament.

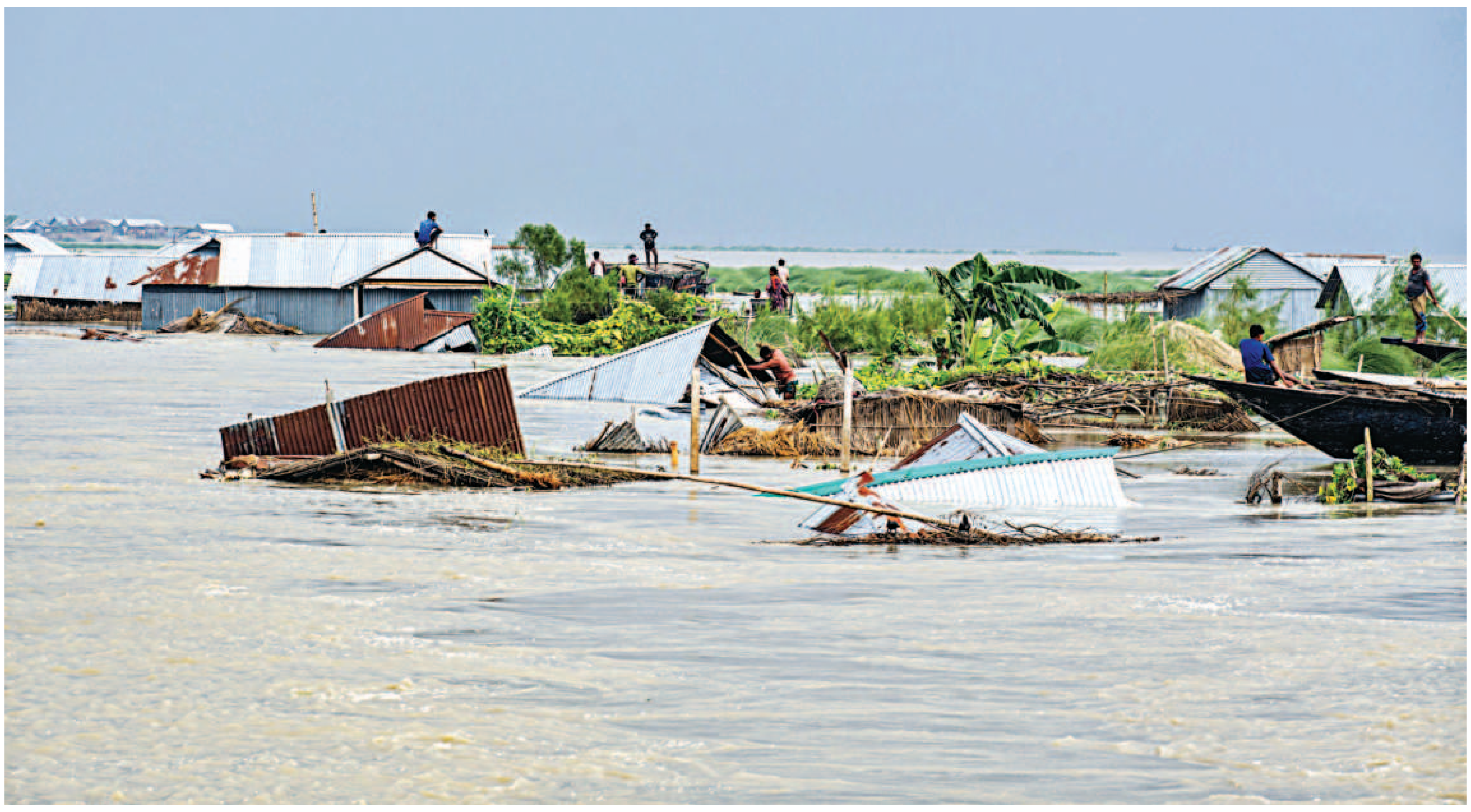
The result was published on the official website of the British Parliament yesterday morning.

Tulip, granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has won by a huge margin in the Hampstead and Highgate constituency in northwest London. According to a BBC report, Tulip got 23,432 votes while her nearest rival Don Williams of the Conservative and Unionist Party got just 8,462 votes.

This is the fourth consecutive win for Tulip.

Rushanara Ali, the first Bangladeshi-origin

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Flood victims salvage what is left of their houses from Gaibandha's Kharzani Char yesterday. The shoal in the Brahmapurtra river went under water on Wednesday due to onrush of water from upstream. Flooding has affected about 29,000 families in four upazilas of Gaibandha.

PHOTO: **MOSTAFA SHABUJ**

Flood in North to continue for another week

STAR REPORT

The flood situation in several northern districts, including Kurigram and Gaibandha, is likely to linger for another week.

"The water level of the Brahmaputra will continue to rise for the next two to three days and after that, it will start declining," said Sarder Udoy Raihan, executive engineer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

However, the situation in the Sylhet region has improved slightly as the water level of the Surma is decreasing, he said.

According to reports of our district correspondents, several lakh people, especially those living in low-lying areas, in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, and Sylhet are marooned in floodwater.

Many schools have been closed in the flood-affected areas.

Several flood victims told The Daily Star that they are in dire need of food and pure drinking water as relief assistance distributed by the government is not enough.

Rezia Begum, 30, of Hatia village in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila, said she and her family members have shelter on a WDB dam as water entered their home on Thursday afternoon.

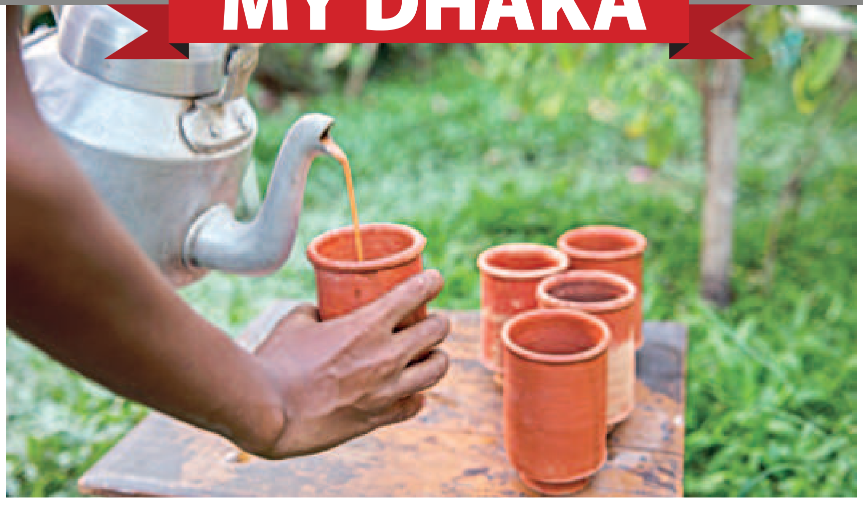
According to Kurigram district administration and relief and rehabilitation offices, 55 unions out of 72 in the district have been hit by flood, causing suffering to over 1 lakh people.

The flood situation in Gaibandha and Bogura is worsening as the low-lying areas have been flooded for the last four days.

Juwel Mia, district relief and rehabilitation officer

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MY DHAKA



Dhaka's tea trade

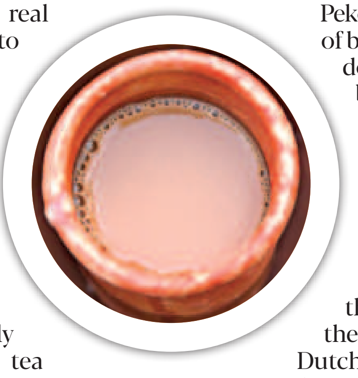
RBR

"Cha ar biskoot" (tea and biscuits) is Bangalee's favourite quick grab. And strong and flavoursome tea is our favourite. Looking for premium tea in Dhaka can be a tad difficult now but once the city boasted dedicated shops that sold different grades and blends of local tea.

We get blended tea in plastic packets from our bazaar or local grocers but CTC (crush, tear, curl) pellets of orange pekoe in brown paper packets, tied with thin jute ropes are not a common sight anymore.

Despite a robust domestic tea market, we have very few specialised tea stores in Dhaka selling exclusive products. The Halda Valley Tea Lounge offers exclusive silver tips and orthodox black tea. However, before all these, New Market's kitchen market had a lone store selling loose tea.

The big wooden chests of tea lots were stacked inside the shabby shop. There were rows of tin boxes the sides of which were made of transparent glass to facilitate the buyers to pick their choice; the boxes were lined with different grades of teas. The containers were arranged according to the tea categories, which a real tea lover would be able to appreciate.



The narrow by-lanes of Kaptan Bazar also have some tea shops selling loose tea. They buy tea lots from Chattogram tea auction and boast that they supply tea to most of our local tea stalls, namely the roadside tongs or tea canteens, famous tea spots in Chawk Bazar, Nazira Bazar -- even to reputed restaurants.

Long ago there used to be a famous tea store in Shantinagar Bazar that sold different grades of tea and a variety of loose tea powders like orange pekoe, orthodox, fanning orthodox tea, and premium blend tea; I picked the name orange pekoe from that store and thus began my tea adventures impressed with the complexity of the taste.

Pekoe is a particular grade of black tea made from the downy tips of the young buds of the tea plant and does not have an orangey flavour or colour, just so that you know. The story goes as far as the Dutch coming to India and introducing the best black tea to the royals. Now, the Dutch royal family belonged to the House of Orange, so naturally when tea came down to the commoners, they nicknamed it orange pekoe to isolate the kind from other variants and blends.

Today, Dhaka's tea scene is going strong with exclusive tea bars offering premium loose tea. In the city's evolving tea scene, the legacy of teas persists despite challenges in the industry, highlighting a market coming to terms with new norms and preferences.

The reason why the tea industry is not doing well from a trader's perspective is primarily because there are no rules and regulations in the industry to monitor ethical trading practices. Some suppliers are directly procuring tea from gardens and distributing it to the retailers at a lower price compared to the ones bought from the auction. This prompt selling, that too on credit, has become a major risk factor in this industry.

The loss of the export market has also reduced the profitability of the tea industry as now all the traders are competing in the domestic market. Nevertheless, our thirst for a cup of good tea remains as strong as ever! Specially so when the rains come pouring.

3 Bangladeshis die in factory fire in KSA

UNB, *Naogaon*

Three Bangladeshis from Naogaon's Atrai upazila have died in a factory fire in the Musaasa neighborhood of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The fire incident occurred around 5:00pm local time on Wednesday.

The victims have been identified as Faruk Hossain, 40, from Tejnanandi village; Enamul Hossain, 25, from Shikarpur village; and Shukbar Ali, 40, from Digha Schoolpara village.

A pall of doom descended on Faruk's home in Tejnanandi village on Thursday. Relatives, neighbours, and well-wishers gathered to offer their condolences as Faruk's wife and two children remained inconsolable.

Faruk's nephew, Pintu Ali, said his uncle had been working in the garment industry before moving to Saudi Arabia six years ago. Faruk had faced numerous challenges and recently joined a sofa manufacturing factory eight months ago.

Biddut Hossain, the son-in-law of Shukbar Ali, said Shukkur, who worked as a farm labourer, had sold his only piece of land to fund his trip to Saudi Arabia two and a half years ago. Despite his efforts, he had not been able to repay the debts.

Shukbar's family will now struggle without their sole breadwinner. He left behind two sons, one of whom is physically challenged, and a daughter.

Enamul's uncle, Zahidul Islam, said Enamul had gone to Saudi Arabia with hopes of earning enough to repay his debts and build a better future. Enamul had almost completed the construction of a brick house and planned to return home next year to get married. The news of his death has left his parents devastated.

The families of the deceased have appealed to the government for immediate assistance in repatriating the bodies.

Atrai Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sanchita Biswas expressed deep sorrow over the incident and said that the authorities are in touch with the bereaved families.

She pledged support to facilitate the return of the dead bodies and any other government assistance available.

Onion price jumps

FROM PAGE 1

He said the cost of imported onions stands at Tk 90-95 a kg after calculating import taxes, transportation and other costs.

Md Shamsur Rahman, senior agricultural marketing officer in Pabna, said the supply of onions is not adequate.

"Farmers have adequate stocks of onions, but they are selling in small quantities, causing the prices to go up," he added.

Meanwhile, the prices of almost all vegetables have also increased by Tk 10-40 per kg in the capital's kitchen markets over the last one week.

Traders attributed this price hike to supply shortage due to incessant rains.

Yardlong beans were sold for Tk 100-120 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 70-80 last week.

Bitter gourd was sold for Tk 80-100 per kg yesterday against the previous week's price of Tk 60, spiny gourd Tk 100 per kg against Tk 80 a week ago, and aubergine Tk 80-120 per kg against last week's price of Tk 60-100.

The prices of sponge gourd, papaya, snake gourd, bottle gourd and ash gourd have surged by Tk 10 per kg during the same period.

Suman Miah, a vegetable trader at Karwan Bazar, said crops were damaged in different parts of the country due to incessant rains in the last few days. This led to a fall in supplies, causing the prices to rise, he added.

BB finds 6 types of wrongdoing

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Bank found multiple entries, equivalent to 20 percent of the total dataset. The ratio of multiple entries to total exports in the previous months was 14 percent.

"So, the dataset did not give a true picture of the country's exports," the central bank concluded, explaining why it corrected data in the BoP for the July-April period.

As the document indicates, both the NBR and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) mishandled the export data.

The statistical revision, while it was necessary, raised questions about the country's economic performance and the policy that revolved around it.

Actual exports in the July-April period of fiscal 2023-24 were nearly $14 billion below the shipment value of goods published by the EPB earlier, according to the central bank. The difference between export figures has been persisting for at least 12 years, with the gap crossing $12 billion in fiscal 2022-23.

The BB said multiple entries of shipments by customs officials at the NBR were the main reason.

In the case of garment orders under a manufacturing process known as cutting, making and trimming (CMT), the Export Promotion Bureau calculated the prices of fabrics and all accessories, although it was supposed to take into account the making charge only. That was another reason behind inflated data.

On many occasions, sample items shipped abroad for buyers were counted as exports, which means a certain value was assigned to those items with no export value.

The central bank said sales by companies inside the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) were counted twice -- first during shipment from the EPZs to local firms and second during shipment from the ports by the exporters.

The document also said actual proceeds usually fall below the initial value mentioned in the letters of credit. The EPB did not adjust the discrepancy later.

Losses stemming from stock-lot sales, discounts and commissions were not adjusted by the EPB either, according to the BB.

The central bank arrived at these findings in its inquiry into the reasons behind the increase in net trade credit, the gap between reported shipment values and actual money flowing into Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Bank prepares the BoP, which reflects a nation's transactions with the rest of the world, regularly based on data gathered from scheduled banks, the EPB, the NBR and other agencies.

GDP GROWTH MAY BE LOWER THAN GOVT ESTIMATE

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the central bank's latest data on the BoP has remarkably altered the narrative on the drivers of external stress without changing the signal on the overall stress.

"The bottom line on persistent external imbalance remains pretty much the same but the composition is palpably different. The corrections made by the BB were long overdue," he said.

"Hopefully, BB would appropriately correct the entire historic series to make sure the BOP data remains comparable over time. It appears BB has finally made a laudable attempt to present export values plausibly close to reality."

Hussain said the most pressing implication of the correction of the shipment value of exports is for the GDP growth estimate.

He said the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has projected GDP growth at 5.8 percent for FY24. In making this calculation, they projected a 5.63 percent growth in the real exports of goods and services.

Following the correction, economic growth may be about one percentage point lower than the government's preliminary estimate.

Thus the 5.8 percent GDP growth could be 4.8 percent due to the shortfall in actual export growth relative to the export growth projected, other things equal, Hussain said.

Tulip Siddiq

Rushanara

Rupa Huq

Apsana

4 Bangladesh-origin MPs reelected

FROM PAGE 1

MP in the UK parliament, has been reelected from Bethnal Green and Stepney, bagging 34.1per cent of the vote. Rushanara got a total of 15,896 votes, followed by Ajmal Masroor, an Independent candidate who received a total of 14,207 votes. She has won this seat for the fifth consecutive time since 2010.

Labour Party candidate Dr Rupa Huq has been re-elected as MP for Ealing Central and Acton with 46.8per cent of the vote. Rupa Huq, first elected as MP in 2015, got 22,340 votes beating Conservative candidate James Windsor-Clive who got 8,345 votes. She has been elected as a British MP for the fourth consecutive time.

Apsana Begum won from Poplar and Lime House constituency by getting 18, 535 votes. She secured 43.1per cent of the vote.

Bangladeshis account for less than 1 percent of the UK's total population.

According to reports by local UK news outlets, Rushanara Ali, Tulip Siddiq, and Rupa Haque, all of whom have previously served as shadow ministers, have the chance to assume ministerial roles in the new cabinet.

Keir Starmer yesterday became Britain's new prime minister after his centre-left opposition Labour Party swept to a landslide general election victory.

Rishi Sunak conceded defeat in the poll, which brings an end to 14 years of right-wing Conservative rule.

Labour back in power

FROM PAGE 1

a record number of senior ministers and former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

Sunak's Conservatives suffered the worst performance in the party's long history as voters punished them for a cost of living crisis, failing public services and a series of scandals.

"To the country, I would like to say first and foremost I am sorry," Sunak said outside Downing Street, adding he would stay as Conservative leader until the party was ready to appoint his replacement.

"I have given this job my all, but you have sent a clear signal that the government of the United Kingdom must change, and yours is the only judgment that matters. I have heard your anger, your disappointment and I take responsibility for this loss."

TOUGH ROAD AHEAD

Despite Starmer's convincing victory, polls suggested there was little enthusiasm for Starmer or his party. Thanks to the quirk of Britain's first-past-the-post system and a low turnout, Labour's triumph was achieved with fewer votes than it secured in 2017 and 2019 - the latter its worst result in terms of seats won for 84 years.

The pound and British stocks and government bonds rose marginally yesterday, but Starmer comes to power at a time when the country is facing a series of daunting challenges.

Flood in North to continue for another week

FROM PAGE 1

said 28,938 families in Gaibandha Sadar, Phulchari, Sundarganj, and Saghata upazilas have been affected.

In the four upazilas, classes have been suspended at 80 primary schools as water entered the institutions, said Shahidul Islam, Gaibandha district primary education officer.

Fifteen secondary schools were closed on Thursday, said Rokshana Begum, district education officer.

Golam Kibria, district relief and rehabilitation officer, said the flood has affected 78,332 people in Sariakandi and Sonatola upazilas of Bogura.

In Sirajganj, more than 100 villages of 34 unions in five upazilas of the district have been flooded.

According to the Water Development Board in Sirajganj, the Jamuna was flowing above the danger level at Sirajganj and Kazipur points at 6:00am yesterday.

In Jamalpur, the situation has worsened due to onrushing water from upstream.

The Jamuna was flowing 93cm above the danger mark at Bahadurabad Ghat point around noon yesterday, according to WDB officials.

Flood has forced the authorities concerned to suspend classes at 50 primary and 17 secondary schools in the affected areas.

Around 42 unions in six upazilas and five municipalities of Jamalpur have been hit by flood, said Alomgir Hossain, district relief and rehabilitation officer.

A good number of people have taken shelter in their relatives' houses, on roads, dykes, and high grounds, he added.

In Sylhet, due to the rise of the water level of the Kushiyara, four dykes in the Zakiganj upazila were breached in the last two days, flooding 87 villages in the upazila.

[Our correspondents in Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, and Sylhet contributed to this report.]

Customs official

FROM PAGE 1

Citing the deeds, the court order says Enamul bought six katha of land in Bashundhara Residential Area in 1999 for Tk 61,000.

He later built a nine-storey building with 3,200 square feet floors on the land at G Block, considered one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in the city.

According to an ACC report submitted to the court, Enamul in 2017 purchased the 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors and three car park spaces in Aftab Tower on Ring Road for Tk 2.14 crore.

The floors -- 4,000 square feet each -- are rented out to different commercial entities.

In 2020, Enamul bought the 2nd and 4th floors of Sara Sandhani Life Tower at Mohammadpur Housing Society and eight car parks for Tk 2.35 crore. The two floors -- over 10,965 square feet in total -- are used as commercial spaces.

In 2015, Enamul bought two flats at Bhuiya Trade Centre in Kakrail: a 1,900 square feet one on the 1st floor and another 3,800 square feet one on the 5th. The record shows he paid just about Tk 2.08 crore for both.

In 2014, he bought an 1,835 square feet flat at Iris Noorjehan building in Kakrail for Tk 51.29 lakh. In the previous year, he purchased another 1,170 square feet flat at the same building for Tk 28.3 lakh.

In 2019, he bought a 2,428.81 square feet flat in Glydia Shahida building in Banani for Tk 72 lakh.

In 2020, he purchased a four-katha plot in the Badda area for Tk 14.55 lakh and in 2008, a 33-decimal one in Khilkhet for Tk 7.84 lakh.

Enamul also owns a five-katha plot in Chandana, Gazipur. He informed the court that the land worth Tk 62.4 lakh was a gift from someone.

The ACC started investigating Enamul in November 2022. In July last year, it sued him for acquiring assets worth Tk 9.76 crore through questionable means.

ACC lawyer Mosharraf Hossain Kajol told the court on Thursday that the properties should be seized immediately.

Since September 5 last year, Enamul has been the customs and VAT commissioner in Sylhet.

Grandmaster Zia breathes his last doing what he loved

FROM PAGE 1

rushed to the Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital in Shahbag but was declared dead by the duty doctor.

"Zia bhai and I were playing when suddenly he fell down," GM Razib told The Daily Star.

"Zia bhai had shown no signs of discomfort. He fell down to his right side and I thought he was picking up a bottle of water. When I called him, he did not respond. Everyone rushed to him. He was senseless. He was immediately taken to the hospital but he was no more," Razib recalled the events.

Zia, who in 2002 became the second chess player from Bangladesh to become a GM after Niaz Murshed, was the only chess player of the country who took chess as a profession.

He earned a living by competing locally and internationally in chess tournaments, unlike other top chess players of the country who have other sources of income.

His only child -- FIDE Master Tahsin Taswar Zia -- also plays chess and the father-son duo represented Bangladesh in the Chess Olympiad in 2022. His wife Tasnim Sultana also played chess at an amateur level.

In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Zia told this reporter that despite all the hardships he has gone through, he never strived for any other occupation as he loved the game of chess.

After GM Zia fell to the ground, the other players also abandoned their respective matches and came to the hospital, which turned into a place of mourning.

"I think Zia bhai had been the best chess player of the country. What he did was unachievable for other chess players including me whether it was in the national chess championships or international competitions," Razib said.

"As a human being, he was excellent, he had no bad habits. He even offered his prayers during the games. During the Asian Games in China last year, he was not performing well and he felt bad. But he was more concerned about my performance rather than his."

Having played in many local and international competitions over the years, Zia devoted himself to coaching in the last few years but continued playing chess for the club and Bangladesh.

Razib believes Zia is irreplaceable.

"It is a big loss for Bangladesh chess because he could have served the nation for few more years. We always relied on Zia bhai when we competed the Chess Olympiad because we knew there was no one other than Zia bhai to play against the strong opponent in board-1."

IGP Mamun's tenure extended for second time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday again extended the tenure of Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, this time for one year under contract.

The public administration ministry issued a circular, signed by its deputy secretary Bhaskar Debnath Bappi, in this regard.

On January 9 last year, his tenure as IGP was extended for a year and a half under contract.

Police sources said it was the first time that an IGP was given two extensions.

According to the circular, he will serve as IGP for one more year under conditions of the contract mentioned in the previous circular that extended his tenure last year.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

পদ্মা সেতু
প্রকল্পের সমাপনী উপলক্ষ্যে
সুধী সমাবেশ
০৫ জুলাই ২০২৪
প্রধান অতিথি:
শেখ হাসি
মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina being presented with a framed painting of the Padma Bridge at a rally in Munshiganj yesterday. The rally was organised on the occasion of the closing ceremony of Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project. PHOTO: PID

Keep your phone safe, or it may end up in India

Transnational phone smuggling gangs active

MUNTAKIM SAAD

If you lose an iPhone in Bangladesh, chances are it has already been sold at an unbelievably cheaper price in one of the many states of India.

Likewise, smartphones stolen in the neighbouring country make their way to Bangladesh and are sold at far below the market price.

On November 7 last year, Ferdous Miah, a deputy jailer from Dinajpur, was robbed in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area, losing his Samsung S23 Ultra mobile phone.

After filing a GD and using a tracking app, he located the phone months later in Gujarat, India.

Following coordination with Indian authorities, he received news of its recovery on March 1 and the phone was returned via parcel shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile, Religious Affairs Minister Md Faridul Haque Khan's mobile phone was stolen in Jamalpur on April 30, but was found in Malaysia a month later. Detectives investigating the incident busted a gang and seized 63 stolen mobile phones from their possession.

There are transnational rackets active in Bangladesh and India that are smuggling stolen and unauthorised mobile phones between the two countries, law enforcers found.

The issue re-emerged on June 30 when Dhaka Metropolitan Police recovered a stolen iPhone belonging to a Kolkata resident from Keraniganj, Bangladesh.

Moutusi Ganguly, an Indian resident, lost her phone in Kolkata's Park Circus area on July 26, 2023.

Her daughter, Ashmita Ganguly, tracked the phone to Bangladesh by using technology.

Nearly a year later, Shahjahanpur Police recovered the device.

Ashmita submitted a general diary to the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata and communicated with Sub-inspector Milton Kumar Deb Das of Shahjahanpur Police via WhatsApp.

"I tried to track the phone 25-30 times over the last year before finally recovering it from Keraniganj. A man had purchased the iPhone for only Tk 17,000," said SI Milton to The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

A corrupt taxman and his 'blessed' in-laws

Faisal, his relatives undervalued their properties in official documents, claims ACC

DIPAN NANDY

"When you rise, lift others [read in-laws in this case] with you"-- even if it means bending a few rules along the way.

Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal, former first secretary of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), seems to have lived up to these words.

Faisal, who was recently transferred to the Bogura office of NBR, has been under the spotlight recently for allegedly amassing a staggering Tk 1,000 crore illegally, as claimed by the ACC.

But it's not just Faisal whose fortune has risen exponentially thanks to his government job; his in-laws too seem to have hit the jackpot.

Faisal has purchased a 2,990-square-foot flat in Siddheshwari and 10 katha of land in Meradia, Dhaka, in the names of Ahmed Ali, his father-in-law, and Momtaz Begum, his mother-in-law.

The values of these properties were strategically undervalued in official documents.

Although the Siddehshwari flat was purchased in the name of Ahmed Ali on paper, in reality, it's Faisal and his family who have been living there for a year, according to locals.

The flat, located on the 10th floor of one of the four buildings in Rupayan Swapno Niloy in Siddheshwari, was shown to be bought for Tk 95.50 lakh.

The market value of the 2,990-square-foot flat is Tk 1 crore, according to an ACC document submitted to the court. The Daily Star has a draft copy of the document.

Bazlur Rahman, who has been living in the area over the past three decades, also finds the official valuation "unbelievable".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

In police, 'benefits are for seniors'

Say disgruntled junior cops who haven't been promoted for years, and even decades

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **SHAHEEN MOLLAH**

Thirteen years ago, Md Halim (name changed) was promoted to police inspector.

Since then, he has served as officer-in-charge at various police stations in Dhaka.

His name was enlisted for promotion to assistant superintendent of police (ASP) in 2017, but six years later, he is still waiting for the call.

"It seems the authorities do not think we are capable, or else they would have given us the promotion," he told The Daily Star recently.

"All benefits are for seniors. Why shouldn't we get the promotion after working 10 to 12 years in the field? It's embarrassing for me and my family."

According to the Police Headquarters database, around 655 inspectors and 115 Traffic Inspectors were listed for ASP promotion in 2017, and 291 inspectors and 72 TI were listed in 2016. Additionally, at least 515 inspectors were listed in 2012 and 2014.

These officers, who joined between 1991 and 1999, have completed 25 to 33 years of service and will retire soon.

Over the past year, junior officers have met with the home minister, inspector general of police, and other top officials to address the promotion crisis.

In response, PHQ in a recent letter informed the home ministry that no ASP posts are currently available.

Although ASPs were supposed to be promoted to additional SPs after five years, 113 officials of the 36th BCS and 97 officials of the 37th BCS are still waiting after six and five years, respectively. Promotions for the 35th and 36th BCS batches won't be possible until 2027, and the 37th BCS until after 2030.

While some ASP posts will be vacant by 2028, they are insufficient for the large number of awaiting officers.

PHQ requested the ministry to create 300 supernumerary (officials who hold the same position and perform the same duties after their elevation) ASP posts.

Both inspector and ASP ranks are grade nine, so no additional salary would be required.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the letter.

Mazharul Islam, general secretary of the Bangladesh Police Association, said, "We have placed our demands to the government several times. It is our legal demand and we hope the government will address our demands soon."

The PHQ letter also requested the creation of 350 supernumerary Additional SP posts, as officials of the 35th BCS have not been promoted despite serving as ASPs for about seven years.

There are around 114 ASPs in the 35th BCS.

Although ASPs were supposed to be promoted to additional SPs after five years,

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MoUs with India one-sided

Speakers tell Ganatantra Mancha rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recently signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between India and Bangladesh are one-sided and unbalanced, said leaders of Ganatantra Mancha, an alliance of several opposition parties, yesterday.

They said these deals favoured India's dominance over Bangladesh's economy, security, and governance.

During a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club, they also said the people of Bangladesh have rejected the MoUs with India that go against the country's interests, said a press release by the platform.

The leaders criticised the deals signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India, which

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'On this journey, no one cares if you live or die'

Migrants face violence, rights violation on journey through Mediterranean, says UNHCR report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Refugees and migrants, including Bangladeshis, continue to face extreme forms of violence, human rights violations, and exploitation on land and sea routes through the African continent towards its Mediterranean coastline.

The information was disclosed in a report titled "On This Journey, No-one Cares If You Live or Die" (volume 2), which was released by UNHCR, International Organisation for Migration and Mixed Migration Centre yesterday.

Risks and abuses reported by refugees and migrants include torture, physical violence, arbitrary detention, death, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and exploitation, enslavement, human trafficking, forced labour, organ removal, and robbery, alongside collective expulsions and refoulement, said the report.

It also said at least 1,180 people died while crossing the Sahara between January 2020 and May 2024, but the number could be much higher.

During the same period, around 7,115 people were reported to have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean Sea, it adds.

The report states that the Central Mediterranean route starts in East and West Africa and the Horn of Africa, leading to the Mediterranean.

At least 1,180 people died while crossing the Sahara between January 2020 and May 2024, but the number could be much higher.

It also said people from many countries, including Bangladesh, travel through Dubai, Istanbul, or Cairo to reach the route's North Africa section, which leads through the desert to and through Maghreb countries, where people reach their destination or move towards the European Union, crossing the sea.

The report builds on data collected by IOM, MMC, and UNHCR from January 2020 to March 2023, for which refugees from a total of 59 different countries were interviewed.

Also, 66 percent of respondents who were interviewed in or transited through Libya reported the country to be risky, followed by Ethiopia (62 percent), Algeria (55 percent), and Guinea (33 percent), among other countries.

The report says the main departure points to cross the Mediterranean Sea include the coastal cities of Zuwara and Misratah in Libya and Sfax in Tunisia.

People traditionally start their sea voyage from Libya to go to Italy, but during the first half of 2023, people departed from Tunisia more, with a 137 percent increase from 2022.

In 2022, the most common nationalities entering Europe through the Northern Africa region were Egyptian, Tunisian, and Bangladeshi.

For January-August 2023, the main nationalities arriving in Italy were Guinean (14 percent), Ivorian (13 percent), Tunisian (11 percent), Egyptian (7 percent), Bangladeshi (7 percent), and Pakistani (6 percent).

Among the top ten nationalities arriving in Italy through the Central Mediterranean route during 2018-2022, Syrians had a 95.23 percent asylum application acceptance rate, followed by Sudanese (83.25 percent).

By contrast, the "protection rate" of Bangladeshis was lower (13.40 percent).

In a joint statement, the organisations called for concrete, route-based protection responses to save lives and reduce suffering, as well as a push to address the root causes of displacement and drivers of irregular movements.

Met office predicts rain across country

UNB, *Dhaka*

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has predicted rain or thundershowers in all divisions including Dhaka over the 24 hours from 9:00am yesterday.

"Light to moderately heavy rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy at places over the country," said Met office.

The highest 54mm of rainfall was recorded in Chandpur yesterday.

Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The country's highest temperature was recorded in Chuadanga at 33.5 degrees Celsius yesterday while the lowest was in Teknaf at 23.7 degrees Celsius.

Ctg hospital shut over irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has directed to close Central City Hospital at Parbartak Intersection in Chattogram city due to various irregularities.

The DGHS issued a notification on Wednesday, signed by its Director (Hospitals and Clinics) Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, in this regard.

According to the notification, the hospital has been operating without a licence from the health directorate and without clearance certificates from the Department of Environment.

Additionally, the hospital lacks adequate and qualified doctors and nurses, as well as necessary equipment.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Mohammad Ilias Chowdhury said, "As per the direction of the health directorate, we issued instructions to stop all operations of the hospital yesterday [Thursday]."

He also mentioned that if there are any admitted patients in the hospital, they must be referred to an appropriate hospital by Monday.

They make jute braids to send their kids to school

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Women from Rajpur, Khuniagach, and Gokunda unions along the Teesta river in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila have been crafting jute braids for the past five years to supplement their family incomes.

Facing impoverishment exacerbated by recurrent floods and erosion, approximately 60 percent of families in these unions have lost their lands and homes, relying on government lands and dykes for shelter.

Tulsi Rani, 27, took matters into her own hands in Madhuram village, and inspired around 3,000 women along the way to weave jute braids during their free time after household chores.

"I started making jute braids to earn some money to help my family. Later, I engaged some other women to work with me," said Tulsi Rani.

"Different handicraft establishments provide me jute fibres. I weigh and deliver the fibres to women, and they make braids and submit those to me. I would then weigh and send the braids to the establishments," she added.

Different other jute products, including bags, floor-mats, and rugs are also made by them.

Through their craftsmanship, these women have transformed adversity into opportunity, showing resilience and entrepreneurial spirit in challenging circumstances. With the money these women are earning, they are now able to send their children to school and meet the expenses, they added.

Each woman earns between Tk 24 to Tk 90 per braid, depending on its thickness, producing an average of 3-4 kilogrammes of braids daily.

Karla Rani, for instance, earns Tk 100-150 daily. She has recently used her savings for her daughter's wedding.

Meanwhile, the income has helped women like Mina Rani and Jannati Begum send their children to school. They praised Tulsi Rani for leading the way.

Keep your phone safe

FROM PAGE 3

Earlier on March 7, DB arrested 10 Indian nationals linked to a cross-border smuggling group allegedly involved in trafficking Indian goods, including stolen mobile phones.

Last December, Indian authorities dismantled a syndicate smuggling stolen mobile phones into Nepal and Bangladesh, recovering 153 devices from a mobile repair shop in Ghaziaba.

The gangs primarily target high-priced cell phones in Bangladesh and smuggles them to India, Malaysia, and Thailand.

High-end phones like iPhones, known for their hard-to-alter IMEI numbers, are risky to sell locally, so criminals smuggle them to a different country.

Besides, there is a significant demand in Bangladesh for unauthorised mobile phones that evade customs duties and taxes upon entry.

Recently, Rapid Action Battalion arrested four members of an unauthorised mobile phone dealing gang during a raid in Narayanganj, recovering over 800 mobile phones.

Abu Taher, one of the arrestees, supplied over 2,500 mobiles to the market through his organised gang in the last one and a half months, said Rab-3

Meanwhile, State Minister for IT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, on June 13, directed the National Board of Revenue to track and take action against users of high-value unregistered mobile phones.

MoUs with India

FROM PAGE 3

include provisions for rail corridors, use of ports, joint satellites, and military cooperation.

Sheikh Rafiqul Islam Bablu, a freedom fighter and convener of Bhasani Anusari Parishad; Mahmudur Rahman Manna, president of Nagarik Oikya; Saiful Haque, general secretary of Biplobi Workers Party; Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan; Hasnat Quaiyum, coordinator of Rastra Sangskar Andolon; and Tania Rob, vice president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), spoke at the rally.

They held the PM responsible for signing these MoUs to maintain power without holding proper elections.

They criticised the PM's statement, "What's the harm if India is given transit?", claiming that the government is compromising national interests for its own benefit.

The speakers condemned the recent statement by the foreign minister, who said, "India has no objection to PM's visit to China."

They said the PM of a sovereign country should not need permission from other nations to visit a country.

Asma Abbasi passes away

CITY DESK

Asma Abbasi, an educationist, TV personality, and writer, passed away at her residence in Dhaka on July 4, at the age of 83, said a press release.

She left behind her husband, Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, a musician, artist, and folklorist; two daughters, Samira Abbasi and Sharmini Abbasi; and four grandchildren, Armaan, Shaiza, Sarina, and Alvi.

Asma Abbasi was the niece of the renowned writer Mujtaba Ali.

She completed her honours and master's degrees in Bangla literature from Dhaka University.

Throughout her career until retirement, she taught at Purana Paltan Girls' College.

She was also a leader at the Inner Wheel Club and the Ladies Club in the capital.

She was laid to rest in her mother's grave at Banani graveyard yesterday.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 5

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

A corrupt taxman and his 'blessed' in-laws

FROM PAGE 3

"It's a real miracle," Rahman said, adding that the per square foot price in Siddheshwari ranges from Tk 10,000-15,000, and the actual market value of Faisal's flat is at least Tk 3 crore.

Besides, at least Tk 25 lakh more is required for parking space, he added.

Meanwhile, Momtaz Begum's fortune turned bright in February 2022 when she acquired 10 kathas of land in Meradia for Tk 52 lakh.

ACC believes the actual market value of the property is Tk 4.5 crore.

Besides, Faisal's father-in-law purchased a flat for Tk 1 crore from Rupayan Housing Estate in the city's Ramna area.

These are just the tips of the iceberg. The story goes even deeper.

For example, Faisal and his 11 relatives conducted transactions worth crores through 87 accounts across 19 banks and one non-bank financial institution.

The largest volume of transactions, amounting to Tk 11.57 crore, was found in the account of his father-in-law, a retired bank officer, who has eight bank accounts.

Faisal's mother-in-law Momtaz Begum, a homemaker, has 10 bank accounts, and transactions amounting to Tk 7 crore were spotted in these accounts.

ACC is now investigating how Faisal's father-in-law acquired so much wealth.

But Faisal didn't forget his wife Jesmin. She owns five kathas of land in Boro Kathaldia Mouza in Bhatara area, "valued" at Tk 18.17 lakh.

However, during the investigation, the ACC found the market value of this land to be Tk 75 lakh.

Moreover, there is also land "worth" Tk 7.5 lakh in Purbachal New Town, but the ACC has not disclosed its true value yet.

As for Faisal himself, he owns approximately 15.5 kathas of land spread across five places in Dhaka and Narayanganj, which he valued at Tk 40.29 lakh.

However, the ACC's investigators have stated that these land values have been significantly undervalued.

Faisal and his wife had also bought a five-katha plot from the Jolshiri Housing Project in Khilgaon, while his wife bought another five-katha plot for Tk 75 lakh from East-West Development.

Faisal has six accounts, which had transactions amounting to Tk 5.21 crore. Jesmin, a homemaker, has five bank accounts where transactions worth Tk 2.25 crore took place.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court ordered the seizure of Faisal's assets, including plots, flats, and bank accounts, which include 19 bank accounts and 87 financial institution accounts held by 11 of his relatives.

The seized assets, both movable and immovable, are valued at approximately Tk 17 crore as shown in official documents by Faisal and his family members.

However, ACC officials claimed in court that those properties were undervalued and they amount to no less than Tk 20 crore.

Faisal also purchased savings certificates worth Tk 2.55 crore between June 2019 and November 2023 in his and his family's names.

The allegations against Faisal include taking bribes for transferring income tax officials, intimidating taxpayers, and other irregularities.

ACC decided to investigate Faisal last year.

Faisal joined NBR in 2005 as a BCS cadre in the post of assistant tax commissioner.

In police, all benefits

FROM PAGE 3

113 officials of the 36th BCS and 97 officials of the 37th BCS are still waiting after six and five years, respectively. Promotions for the 35th and 36th BCS batches won't be possible until 2027, and the 37th BCS until after 2030.

Creating these posts would cost an additional Tk 2.71 crore.

Officials of the 35th and 36th BCS have held several meetings with the home minister, IGP, and top police officials to demand promotions.

"We were supposed to be promoted after five years, but we are not getting it even after seven years of service. The officials of 35th and 36th BCS, who joined other cadres like admin, foreign, and even Ansar, got promotions at least a year back," said an official of 35th BCS police.

Abul Fazal Mir, joint secretary (police-1) of the public security division of home ministry, said, "Creating supernumerary posts is a policy-level issue. It requires approval from other ministries like public administration, so nothing can be said right away about the application."

According to PHQ, there are around 3,146 cadre posts in the police. This includes one IGP, two additional IGPs (grade-1), 20 additional IGPs (grade-2), 87 DIGs (grade-3), 201 additional DIGs (grade-4), 596 SPs (grade-5), 1,008 additional SPs (grade-6), and 1,231 ASPs (grade-9).

Last year, PHQ sought 529 supernumerary posts for IG, DIG, additional DIG, and SP promotions.

But public administration ministry created 342 such posts, causing dissatisfaction among cops.

On September 19, the home ministry applied for more posts, leading the public administration ministry to approve eight additional IGP and 15 DIG posts on October 23.

IGP Mamun

FROM PAGE 3

As per the two circulars, Mamun's post-retirement leave and related-benefits have been suspended as per Section 49 of the Public Service Act-2018 and his tenure as the IGP has been stretched for one year on a contract from July 12 or the date of joining.

On September 30 in 2022, Mamun became the IGP. He was the Rab director general when the US on December 10, 2021, imposed sanctions on him and six other current and former Rab officials and the force itself.

Jatisangha Park remains

FROM PAGE 5

sitting arrangements, restrooms, lighting, a fountain, iron pergolas, a kids' zone, and sports facilities.

Improved drainage is also planned to prevent waterlogging.

DELAY AND RESIDENTS' FRUSTRATION

Despite the promising plans, the delay in completing the renovation has frustrated the city dwellers.

"There is no other park for the residents of Panchlaish, Katalganj, Chawk Bazar, Kapasgola, Badurtola, Shulakbahar, Mirzarpool, Parobarttak, Sugandha, and Muradpur areas. The park has been in a sorry state for around six years, depriving us of its facilities," said Miltan Das from Katalganj.

A recent visit to the site revealed that the area had been covered with corrugated sheets, and around 20 workers were found working.

The ground has been elevated with earth-filling to prevent waterlogging, and the boundary wall and walkway have been constructed. Workers are currently excavating land to construct a swimming pool.

However, it is unlikely that the project will be completed by the end of this month as scheduled, as confirmed by Kamrul Islam Khan, executive engineer of PWD, Chattogram (Div-1).

"Around 90 percent of the project work has been completed so far. We had to wait for the monsoon to plant around 3,000 saplings to ensure they thrive in favourable weather, causing some delay," he said.

Khan said they expect to complete the project by August this year.

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ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

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ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
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Principal

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সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী।
email: rhdnil@gmail.com

স্মারক নং ৩৫.০১.৭৩৬৪.৪৫৬.০৭.০১৩.২৪-১৩৮৬ তারিখ: ০৪ জুলাই ২০২৪

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নীলফামারী সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে অভ্যন্তরীন ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ (CPTU) কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী কার্যালয় অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, নীলফামারী/১ম সারি কারখানা উপ-বিভাগ, নীলফামারী কার্যালয় হতে আগামী ০৮-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ৩১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিপ্টের মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করতঃ আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণ পূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ৩১ জুলাই ২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে এ অফিসে জমা প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ ও ৬৪ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহ্বান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।
উল্লেখ্য, ইতোপূর্বে এ অফিসের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরে লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি বাবদ টাকা = ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) + ১৫% ভ্যাটসহ বিনা জরিমানায় আগামী ৩১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখের মধ্যে এ অফিসে জমা প্রদান পূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ছক-১: নতুন তালিকাভুক্তি

বিবরণ	তালিকাভুক্তি ফরমের মূল্য	তালিকাভুক্তি ফি	ভ্যাট ১৫%	তালিকাভুক্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা প্রদানের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি	১০০০/-	৫০০০/-	৭৫০/-	০৮-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ৩১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

ছক-২: নবায়ন

বিবরণ	নবায়ন ফি	ভ্যাট ১৫%	বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	১০০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার লাইসেন্স নবায়ন	২০০০/-	৩০০/-	০৮-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ৩১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	০১-০৮-২০২৪ হতে ২৯-০৮-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ পর্যন্ত	০১-০৯-২০২৪ হতে ৩০-০৯-২০২৪ খ্রি. তারিখ পর্যন্ত।

০৪-০৭-২৪
(মোঃ জুয়েলুর রহমান)
সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (অ.দা.), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী

০৪-০৭-২৪
(মোহাম্মদ জহিরুল ইসলাম)
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নীলফামারী

GD-15

Anti-quota demos continue

STAR REPORT

Hundreds of students from three universities yesterday rallied against the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs.

The universities are: Chattogram University, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University in Dinajpur, and Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail.

In Chattogram, CU students blocked Sholosohor road for one and a half hours, starting at 4:00pm, causing significant traffic disruptions.

They gathered earlier at Shaheed Minar to voice demands for the abolition of the quota system.

In Dinajpur, HSTU students defied rain to protest in front of the university gate, demanding quota reforms and shouting slogans like "No place for discrimination in Golden Bengal" and "Merit, not quota!"

In Tangail, students from Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University formed a human chain at the university gate.

Meanwhile, students of other institutions including Dhaka University said they will bring out processions today and boycott classes and exams on Sunday if their demands are not addressed.

Man held over rape of 6-year-old girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Police arrested a man in Ghoraghat, Dinajpur, on Thursday night on charges of raping a six-year-old girl.

The arrestee is Saju Mia, 25, from Loharband Uttarpara area.

Md Asaduzzaman Asad, officer-in-charge of Ghoraghat Police Station, said the incident occurred on Tuesday afternoon when the girl went to a nearby shop to buy some snacks.

On her way back home, Saju Mia allegedly raped her while brandishing a sharp weapon, said the OC.

Traditionally, by the first week of Ashar (monsoon), farmers prepare Aman paddy seedbeds. However, due to a lack of rain, farmers are yet to prepare seedbeds this time around. The photos were taken at Tetultala beel and Batiaghata upazila recently.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Aman farmers worry over lack of rain

June saw 250mm less rainfall than normal; no seedbeds prepared yet

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Paddy farmers in Khulna division are worried as a lack of rainfall on the onset of Aman season threatens to adversely affect cultivation.

This staple crop is crucial for over 10 lakh farmers in Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira districts, who rely on monsoon rain for irrigation due to water salinity during the rest of the year.

Traditionally, by the first week of Ashar (monsoon), farmers prepare Aman paddy seedbeds.

However, this year, June recorded 250mm less rainfall than usual, leaving canal and river waters unsuitable for irrigation due to high salinity.

After visiting 15 villages in Batiaghata, Dumuria, Paikgachha, Dacope, and Rupsha upazilas, this correspondent saw no seedbeds were being prepared.

Agricultural lands lie fallow, covered with grass and used for pasture. In Batiaghata, two canals were found dried up.

"I haven't been able to prepare Aman seedbeds due to inadequate rain, which hasn't lowered canal salinity, making the water unsuitable for irrigation," said Proshad Roy from Khalashibunia Kachhari Bari.

"Last year's delayed cultivation due to a lack of rain led to pest attacks and a poor harvest. This year looks worse," he added.

Approximately 930 farmers from Proshad's village share his predicament.

Abdur Rob of Pankhali village in Dacope upazila echoed similar concerns, adding that the Bhadra river's water remains too salty for irrigation and groundwater is also highly saline.

"Rainwater is our only hope," he said.

Environmental experts attribute the situation to disrupted weather patterns and erratic monsoons due to climate change.

In recent years, Khulna division has seen a decline in precipitation during crucial Aman cultivation months, intensifying the hardships for the farming community.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension in Khulna, 84,810 hectares are designated for Aman cultivation with a target production of 291,563 tonnes of paddy, involving 317,274 families.

"It rained 305mm in May, much more than the usual 175mm, but it was too early to benefit the farmers. Till June 27, only 46mm of rain was recorded, 250mm less than the usual June rainfall," said Md Amirul Azad, senior meteorologist at Khulna Meteorological Office.

Md Mosaddek Hossain, senior monitoring officer of DAE's PARTNER programme, expressed concerns about the delayed seedbed preparation, which could lead to lower yields.

He added that the lack of rain is damaging Aus paddy cultivated in the region.

Farmers remain hopeful for timely rainfall to salvage the Aman cultivation season and mitigate the looming agricultural crisis.

UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX

Patients suffer for shortage of doctors

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

The 50-bed Sarishabari Upazila Health Complex, serving over four lakh residents across Jamalpur and Sirajganj, is facing a severe shortage of medical staff.

Operating with only four medical officers and two consultants, well below the required 29, the facility struggles to meet the basic healthcare needs.

Dr Rabiul Islam, resident medical officer, said essential departments like surgery, gynaecology, cardiology, and others lack dedicated doctors and staffers.

The absence of a gynaecologist for six months has particularly hampered maternity care, while an equipped, but unused operation theatre due to surgeon shortage symbolises the facility's underutilisation.

With only one cleaner instead of the required seven, the hospital remains unhygienic.

Visiting the health complex recently, this correspondent found only one doctor busy working, while a huge rush of patients was seen in the emergency room.

Meanwhile, middlemen were seen taking advantage of the situation and taking patients to private clinics.

Saddam Hossain, a resident from Kumariabari of Kazipur, said he had been waiting in the hospital's corridor for an hour, but no doctor was available in the emergency room.

Instead, he saw a medical assistant attending patients.

Shahin Miah, a resident from Adra village of Sarishabari upazila, said he went to the hospital after an accident and waited for half an hour, but found no doctor till that point.

Dr Rabiul said, "Over a hundred patients are currently admitted to the health complex.

However, the hospital only has 50 beds, so half the patients are on the floors."

Sarishabari upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Md Shafiqul Islam said, "The issue of doctor shortage has already been informed to the authorities."

Local lawmaker Abdur Rashid, president of the hospital management committee, said he has been trying his best to solve the matter.

The park has been off limits to city dwellers for over a year now due to a renovation project.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Jatisangha Park remains off limits

First bureaucratic tangle, now renovation keeps visitors away

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Residents of port city are currently unable to use Jatisangha Park in Panchlaish due to delayed renovation work.

The port city lacks sufficient parks and open spaces for its residents. Jatisangha Park, established in 1964 and spanning 2.17 acres, is one of the few parks in Chattogram with free public access.

The park has been off limits to city dwellers for over a year now due to a renovation project.

Earlier, a tug of war over the park between the Chattogram City Corporation and Public Works Department led it to utter disarray, neglect and abandonment for six years, alongside a wastage of around Tk 5 crore of public money.

PARK HISTORY AND DECLINE

Originally established by the PWD and later handed over to the Chittagong Municipal Corporation in 1969, the park was named Jatisangha Park in 2002.

"It used to be a beautiful park with various trees and a walkway around an artificial lake," said local resident Shahedul Azam.

In 2012, the Chattogram City Corporation constructed two swimming pools and a boundary wall in the park at a cost of Tk 4.80 crore.

However, following a child's drowning in one of the pools, they were abandoned.

In 2016, CCC attempted to lease the park to a private organisation for 25 years, but this was opposed by the then minister for housing and public works, Mosharraf Hossain.

Consequently, a dispute ensued, leaving the park abandoned for six years until it was handed back to the PWD in 2020.

RENOVATION PROJECT

The PWD began a Tk 12.62 crore renovation project for the park in January last year, scheduled for completion by June this year. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone for the project on December 4.

Babar Associates and Coronation Corporation, a joint venture, is responsible for the renovation.

The project aims to develop a green garden with attractive greenery, a boundary wall with iron grilles, a walkway,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

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Invitation Reference No.	03/e-GP/PMP-Roads/BC/JRD/2023-2024
Tender ID	1001927
Name of Works	DBS Wearing Course work at Chainage:0+000 (Naikathi) to Chainage:9+140(Halder bari Bazar) km of Naikathi-Bhandaria (Z-8717) (Jhalokathi Part) Road under Jhalokati Road Division during the year 2023-2024.
Tender Last Selling Date and Time	21-Jul-2024 16:00
Tender Closing Date and Time	22-Jul-2024 12:00
Tender Opening Date and Time	22-Jul-2024 12:00

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4.7.24
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Barishal Road Circle, Barishal.

GD-14

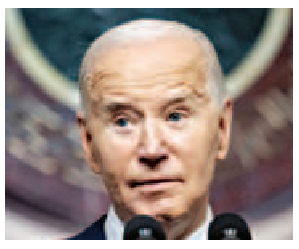
Biden seeks reset with high-risk TV interview

AFP, *Washington*

With his reelection bid on the line, US President Joe Biden sits down Friday for a crucial TV interview to persuade doubters of his physical and mental fitness for a second White House term.

The one-to-one with the ABC network has been hyped as the most consequential of the 81-year old's long career, after a disastrous campaign debate with Donald Trump triggered panic within his Democratic Party and calls for him to pull out of the race.

The Biden campaign has pushed back hard on any suggestion he may withdraw, and just hours before the ABC interview it released an aggressive campaign travel schedule for the rest of July.



At least three of his party members in Congress have called on him to step aside, as have several major newspaper editorial boards and a raft of Democratic-supporting political commentators.

The president has said that he is "not leaving" and is "in this race to the end," but post-debate polls have shown Trump's lead widening.

Biden has also not yet spoken publicly without a teleprompter since the debate, other than some brief remarks.

Friday's interview with ABC presenter George Stephanopoulos, set to be recorded during a campaign trip to Wisconsin. With soaring anticipation for the interview, ABC has switched up its original plan of airing excerpts through the weekend, and will instead broadcast it in full Friday at 8:00pm (0000 GMT Saturday).

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria pose on the steps of 10 Downing Street in London yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

As Europe turns right, UK steers to centre

REUTERS, *London*

The centre-left Labour Party's crushing victory in the British election stands in stark contrast to recent gains by the far right across Europe.

But the party's triumph was not so much a rejection of populism by voters, but rather an echo of the same disenchantment with their political leaders.

Keir Starmer swept to power yesterday winning a large parliamentary majority and condemning Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party to its worst defeat in history.

The victory comes days after Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) party scored historic gains to win the first round of the parliamentary election in France.

That followed similar advances by populist parties in last month's European Parliament elections where German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats recorded their worst result ever.

Before his poll triumph, Starmer said progressive politicians had to demonstrate that they had learned the lessons from the rise of nationalism and populism.

But rather than a bulwark against a European populism wave, Starmer's success was built on the same voter desire for change and to punish perceived incompetence by incumbent governments that is driving support for the far right.

Britain, once renowned for political stability, has lurched from crisis to crisis since the 2016 vote to leave the European Union, through the Covid-19 pandemic, increasingly stretched public services and a cost of living crisis.

The Conservative Party, in power for 14 years, had increasingly followed a more populist agenda with a focus on immigration, including a plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, promising to tackle immigration and to reshape the economy, but its credibility was shattered by years of economic stagnation and the failure to stop tens of thousands of asylum seekers arriving in small boats.

"The Tories were populist, but it hasn't gone very well so people are fleeing," said Professor Geoffrey Evans from Oxford University.

"I wouldn't say that is a reaction against populism. I would just say that is a reaction against the perceived incompetence of the party and generally bad economic circumstances that the country finds itself in."

The strong performance of Reform in the British election, where it won four seats and four million votes, would appear to bear that out.

Labour's likely foreign minister David Lammy said: "The truth is when we see the tide of nationalism across Europe and in other parts of the world, he (Starmer) knows if he doesn't deliver for the working people, then populists and those with a different account of how you deliver will be coming back and will be biting at our heels."

Meanwhile, Britain's Labour Party suffered significant election setbacks in areas with large Muslim populations yesterday amid discontent over its position on the war in Gaza, despite a landslide victory in the parliamentary vote.

Pro-Gaza independents also won in Blackburn, and Dewsbury & Batley, beating Labour into second in both. Labour also failed to win in Islington North, where its former leader, veteran left-winger and ardent pro-Palestinian activist Jeremy Corbyn won as an independent.

Corbyn resigned as Labour leader in 2019 after the party suffered its worst election defeat since 1935, and Starmer threw him out of the parliamentary party less than a year later, accusing him of undermining efforts to tackle anti-Semitism.

While Labour has said it wants the fighting in Gaza to stop, it has also backed Israel's right to defend itself, angering some among the 3.9 million Muslims who make up 6.5% of Britain's population.

Russian strikes kill 2, wound 15 in Ukraine

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russian attacks killed two and wounded more than a dozen others in the eastern Donetsk region of Ukraine yesterday, regional officials said.

Moscow has centred its firepower on the industrial region, which it claims to have annexed and has been partially controlled by Kremlin-backed forces since 2014.

"A village council employee was killed and 14 of her colleagues were wounded during hostile shelling in the Volnovakha district," prosecutors said in a statement.

The head of the region said one person was killed and another was wounded in a Russian Smerch rocket attack on the town of Ukrainsk.

"The Selydivska community is constantly under enemy attack -- it is dangerous to stay here, as well as in the rest of Donetsk region," said governor Vadym Filashkin.

Russian forces are pushing towards the hilltop settlement of Chasiv Yar in the Donetsk region. Images distributed by Ukrainian forces of the town show rows of destroyed and smouldering Soviet-era housing blocs.

Russian President Vladimir Putin told Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban that Ukraine must abandon four regions in the east and south -- including Donetsk -- that Moscow claims as its own if Kyiv wants peace.

PRESIDENTIAL RUN-OFF

Iranians vote amid apathy

REUTERS, *Dubai*

Iranians voted yesterday for a run-off presidential election that will test the clerical rulers' popularity amid voter apathy at a time of regional tensions and a standoff with the West over Tehran's nuclear programme.

The final result will be announced today, although initial figures may come out sooner.

The run-off follows a June 28 ballot with historically low turnout, when over 60 percent of Iranian voters abstained from the snap election for a successor to Ebrahim Raisi, following his death in a helicopter crash. The low participation is seen by critics as a vote of no confidence in the Islamic Republic.

The vote is a tight race between low-key lawmaker Masoud Pezeshkian, the sole moderate in the original field of four candidates, and hardline former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, a staunch advocate of deepening ties with Russia and China.

While the election is expected to have little impact on the Islamic Republic's policies, the president will be closely involved in selecting the successor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's 85-year-old Supreme Leader who calls all the shots on top matters of state.

Martinez saves Messi's blushes

FROM PAGE 12

attempted an audacious 'Panenka' chip to outwit the goalkeeper. However, his shot clipped the crossbar, leaving fans and teammates stunned.

Yet, Argentina's No.1 quickly turned the tide once again, making crucial saves on consecutive penalties, demonstrating his unwavering nerve in pressure situations and redeeming Messi's earlier miss.

Reflecting on Martinez's impact, Messi remarked, "When we're at this stage, that's an advantage."

Coach Lionel Scaloni emphasized Martinez's pivotal role in the penalty shootout, stating, "The team has complete faith in our goalkeeper. Even with Leo missing, we knew something positive would happen."

Despite Messi's penalty miss, Argentina's shooters remained composed throughout the shootout, scoring four in a row to secure their place in the semifinals, where they await the winner of today's match between Venezuela and Canada.

Put an end

FROM PAGE 12

July 2 was issued by Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin and senators Jeff Merkley, Tim Kaine, and Peter Welch.

"For more than a decade, Professor Yunus has faced more than 100 unsubstantiated cases brought against him in Bangladesh. The harassment campaign against Professor Yunus has been denounced by more than 100 Nobel Prize winners, including former President Obama," reads the statement.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and Amnesty International have identified irregularities in the proceedings against Prof Yunus. This includes a recent six-month prison sentence for allegedly violating the country's labour laws and another indictment on embezzlement.

"These reputable organisations argue that the speed and repeated use of various criminal proceedings are indicative of politically motivated judicial abuses. Moreover, the repeated and sustained harassment of Professor Yunus mirrors what many Bangladeshi civil society members also face in an increasingly restrictive environment," reads the statement.

While the US values its longstanding relationship with Bangladesh, the failure to end this seemingly personal vendetta against Professor Yunus will negatively impact that partnership, it reads.

"We again call for the immediate end to the harassment of Professor Yunus..."

On January 22, 12 senators including Durbin, Merkley, Kaine, and Welch sent a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, calling for an end to the harassment of Professor Yunus.

The other signatories were senators Todd Young, Dan Sullivan, Jeanne Shaheen, Ed Markey, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Ron Wyden, and Cory Booker.

Six lives lost as bus hits truck

FROM PAGE 12

Farid Hossain said, "A bus of Nabil Enterprise was traveling from Dhaka to Ranisankail upazila in Thakurgaon. Around 6:00am, as the bus approached Chawkrampur village, the driver lost control and collided with a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction."

Upon receiving the emergency call, police and the rescue response team from Dinajpur Fire Service and Civil Defence promptly arrived at the location.

They rescued 30 people, mostly passengers of the bus, and rushed them to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital. Three of them died at the hospital.

The accident damaged the truck's cockpit and the front of the bus. Police had to cut through the mangled wreckage of both vehicles to recover the bodies. It took police an hour to clear the wreckage and restore road communication on the highway.

In a separate incident, later in the afternoon, a collision between a truck and a cattle-laden three-wheeler in Phulbari upazila resulted in two fatalities and four injuries.

The incident occurred around 2:00pm on the Dinajpur-Gobindaganj regional highway, near the Phulbari Upazila Health Complex in North Sujapur, said Phulbari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mostafizar Rahman.

The deceased were identified as three-wheeler driver Menhazul, 40, and cattle trader Aman, 45, both from Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila.

According to police and local sources, a truck was heading towards Dinajpur while the three-wheeler, carrying nine cattle, was travelling from Amabari Hat towards Panchbibi. As they reached the road bend near North Sujapur on the Dinajpur-Gobindaganj highway, a head-on collision with a truck severely damaged the front parts of both vehicles. Menhazul and Aman died on the spot.

Police and fire service personnel, along with locals, rescued the injured and took them to the health complex.

Efforts to secure Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

Gaza health authorities say more than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli offensive launched since last Oct 7.

The war has displaced hundreds of thousands of Gazans and caused a humanitarian crisis. It has also fuelled tension across the region, triggering exchanges of fire across Israel's northern border with the Iran-backed Hezbollah group in Lebanon.

Hamas said it had told Hezbollah it had agreed to a ceasefire proposal in Gaza and that the Lebanese group's leader had welcomed the step, two sources familiar with the matter said.

"If there is a Gaza agreement, then from zero hour there will be a ceasefire in Lebanon," said one of the sources, an official in Hezbollah, which says its rocket and drone attacks on northern Israel are in support of the Palestinians.

Turkey's president, Tayyip Erdogan, was quoted by Turkish media as saying he hoped a "final ceasefire" could be secured "in a couple of days", and urged Western countries to put pressure on Israel to accept the terms on offer.

Some far-right partners in Netanyahu's governing coalition have indicated they may quit the government if the war ends before Hamas is destroyed. Their departure would probably end Netanyahu's premiership.

Merino's 119th-minute winner sends

FROM PAGE 12

for penalties, Olmo lofted a cross for Merino, who headed Spain into the semi-finals and on course for a record-breaking fourth Euros crown.

Germany's exit brings to an end the hosts' hope of a summer fairytale Euros victory after a decade of poor performances at major tournaments, while also lowering the curtain on Toni Kroos' stellar career.

The battle between the two most successful Euros nations, with three titles apiece, was billed as a final come early, with the in-form Spaniards against Nagelsmann's reborn hosts.

Spain nominated Kroos as Germany's most dangerous pre-match but the midfielder had a huge, even if unintended impact early, colliding with Pedri, who was then subbed off with a leg injury for Olmo.

Germany, with the oldest squad at Euro 2024, struggled with Spain's speed during the first half, frequently coming into duels a fraction too late, but the two best chances of the opening half fell to the hosts -- and both to Kai Havertz.

The Arsenal forward leapt highest to head a cross directly at Unai Simon early and then scuffed a tame shot at the goalie later in the half with just the 'keeper to beat.

After a goalless first half, Nagelsmann took off surprise starter Emre Can for the pink-haired Robert Andrich, while the ineffective Leroy Sane was hooked in place of Wirtz.

The substitution who would make his mark however was Olmo, who gave Spain the lead six minutes into the second half, slicing through the sleepy Germany defence to perfectly place a Yamal pass past Manuel Neuer in the bottom left corner.

The goal kicked Germany into gear with Wirtz particularly dangerous.

The Bayer Leverkusen starlet linked with Fuellkrug on the counter with a quarter of an hour remaining but the striker, under heavy attention from the Spanish defence, could only hit the post.

With 10 minutes remaining Nagelsmann made his final substitution, bringing veteran Thomas Mueller from the bench.

But it was Wirtz -- 13 years his junior - who made the difference, skimming a Joshua Kimmich header across the grass and in at the far post in the final minute, sending the game to extra time.

Mikel Oyarzabal, on for Williams, curled a 104th-minute shot just wide of the post and Wirtz did the same a minute later with the goal beckoning.

Germany appealed strongly for a penalty in the second period of extra time, after a goal-bound Jamal Musiala shot clearly connected with Marc Cucurella's outstretched hand.

After the penalty drama, Olmo curled in a cross for Merino, who leapt high to head the ball past Neuer and put Spain into the Euros semi-finals.

Padma Bridge a source of huge pride

FROM PAGE 1

with pride in the international arena... This is the biggest achievement," she said.

Hasina was addressing a rally in Mawa marking the closing of the Padma Bridge construction work.

She said that the mindset of those who used to show an attitude towards Bangladesh that it cannot dowithout their support has changed.

"This Padma Bridge is the structure of our pride....Now the people honour Bangladesh in the international arena..."

The PM said the country would be transformed into a developed, prosperous and Smart Bangladesh by 2041 through socio-economic development.

"We will continue to move forward at an irresistible pace overcoming all obstacles, no matter how many arein the way. We will take Bangladesh forward by implementing the ideals of the Father of the Nation."

Hasina said the Padma Bridge has opened the door for socio-economic advancement of the southwestern region.

She said Bangladesh's independence, which came at the cost of tens of thousands of martyrs, has not gone in vain.

The premier thanked the consultants, workers, and others involved in the Padma Bridge project. She also expressed her gratitude to those local families who gave up their land for the project.

Hasina recalled the contribution of late Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury, an eminent civil engineer who served as the chair of an international committee of experts, and late communications minister Syed Abul Hossain.

Criticising the role of Dr Muhammad Yunus in the withdrawal of the Word Bank's offer of funds for the Padma Bridge project, the PM said she never got the answer as to why a Nobel laureate is so obsessed over the mere post of the managing director of a bank.

Now the people can know what kind of honey was in the MD post when they see the labourers filing lawsuits and cases being lodged for tax evasion and corruption (against Dr Yunus), she said.

"More information will come out when the auditor's report on Grameen Bank is revealed."

On her arrival at the rally venue at 3:50pm, Hasina was received by Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader.

Former cabinet secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam, Bridges Division Senior Secretary Monjur Hossain and Project Director Shafiqul Islam also spoke at the event, with Quader in the chair.

The Bridges Division secretary said the project was completed on June 30 at a cost of Tk 30,770.13 crore.

A documentary on the Padma Bridge was screened at the programme.

On June 25, 2022, Hasina inaugurated the 6.15-km Padma Bridge which directly connects the country's 21 southern and south-western districts with the capital.

PM PAYS HOMAGE TO BANGABANDHU

In the afternoon yesterday, the prime minister travelled to her ancestral home at Tungipara of Gopalganj by road.

She paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman there and offered prayers at his mausoleum.

Hasina joined a prayer seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his family members who were killed on August 15, 1975.

ARTCELLISM LIVES ON

In the dim light of a cosy studio, the air thick with anticipation, I found myself face-to-face with the rock legends of our country. The members of Artcell, clad in their iconic black band t-shirts, lounged before me with an air of casual camaraderie that belied their status in Bangladesh's rock pantheon.

MAHIYA TABASSUM

As I was preparing for the camera to roll, a humbling realisation struck me—this band had been crafting sonic masterpieces before I had even mastered my mother tongue. Their creations, like— ***Oniket Prantor, Onno Shomoy, Obosh Onubhutir Deyal, Amar Poth Chola, Dhushor Shomoy***—had become the soundtrack to a generation's hopes, dreams, and rebellions.

Twenty-five years. A lifetime for some, a blink of an eye for others. For Artcell, it represented a journey etched in power chords and poetic lyrics, a reflection of their enduring impact on Bangladesh's musical landscape.

As four members from the current lineup—George Lincoln D'Costa, Kazi Faisal Ahmed, Kazi Asheqeen Shaju, and Iqbal Asif Jewel—graced The Daily Star studio, they talked about their 25-year celebration, recent tour, future projects, and more.

To mark their silver jubilee, Artcell embarked on an ambitious international tour. Lincoln shares, "We kicked off our celebration with a tour starting in Australia, followed by performances across nine Canadian provinces."

The Canadian leg proved particularly significant, with shows in major cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. Notably, Artcell made history as the first Bangladeshi band to perform in St John's, Newfoundland, and Regina, Saskatchewan. Band member Saef Al Nazi Cezann, currently residing in Australia, rejoined the group for this tour.

Shaju highlights the unique connection experienced during these performances. "We reconnected with fans from our RCC days, many now settling into careers or pursuing PhDs. It's a rare opportunity to engage so intimately with our audience, something we don't often experience during larger gigs back home."

Twenty-five years. A lifetime for some, a blink of an eye for others. For Artcell, it represented a journey etched in power chords and poetic lyrics, a reflection of their enduring impact on Bangladesh's musical landscape.

The tour, organised by Toronto-based MNC Entertainment, allowed Artcell to showcase a broader repertoire. Jewel explains, "In Bangladesh, mixed concerts often limit us to our greatest hits. In Canada, we had the freedom to play extended sets, as long as two hours, including deeper cuts like ***Rahur Grash, Otritio, Bhul Jonmo,*** and ***Dhushor Shomoy***."

"***Bhul Jonmo*** wasn't even on our list. The crowd started chanting it and we had to play it on the spot," shares Faisal.

In 2023, Artcell released ***Otritio***, their third album, following a 17-year hiatus since the massively successful ***Oniket Prantor***. "Conceived over a decade ago, it explores the destination, something that we search for. The destination may seem incomprehensible, miraculous, or unreal at first, but it can be the only truth, to be comprehended in the future," says Lincoln.

"Lincoln is being cryptic with the answer," interrupts Jewel with a playful smile. He then goes on to elaborate, "This is a concept album, there's a lot of room to think for the listener. This is a story set in the future, blending science, fiction, as well as spirituality."

The band acknowledges that ***Otritio*** hasn't resonated as strongly with audiences as their earlier work. Shaju explains, "We deliberately departed from our conventional approach. As a progressive rock album, we knew it might not immediately appeal to younger listeners. Our goal was to create a conceptual album and make a statement as a band, that would remain in history."

Discussing the current state of local music industry, the band reflects on the challenges of creating timeless classics in today's fast-paced, content-saturated environment. Shaju notes, "It's too early to say we're not getting enduring hits. ***Oniket Prantor*** was released in 2006. It was around 2012-2013 when it became a hit or achieved its classic status."

The band also discusses the double-edged sword of digital platforms, which have democratised music distribution by labels but led to content oversaturation. "People are constantly looking for dopamine hits, even videos are becoming too long for their attention span. So, they are switching to reels with a shorter duration. This way, it has become difficult to find that space to grow a loyal fanbase for a song or band. But quality songs are being made, tons of them. We need to listen to them sincerely," he adds.

Jewel further emphasises the collective responsibility to promote quality, "Instead of making low-quality content viral, we must promote quality ones. Otherwise, not just the music industry, art, film, and every other form of media industry will suffer."

On the topic of AI in music creation, Jewel expresses measured scepticism. "While AI has its uses, like restoring old recordings, it can't replicate the emotional depth of human-created music. It's a tool, but not a substitute for genuine creativity."

Artcell hints at several upcoming projects, including a corporate collaboration featuring a music video. Jewel reveals, "We're developing six or seven new tracks and have plans for more. Our creative process is organic; we don't rush to meet external demands."

Reflecting on their enduring success, Lincoln attributes it to "perseverance, consistency, dedication, and passion for music."

ARTCELL
ARTCELL
ARTCELL
25
PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F

N
BEVERLY HILLS

Prime Video
Mirzapur

Disney Plus
Red Swan

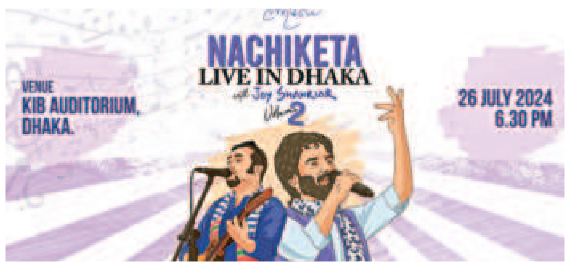
HANYA KEBENARAN YANG BISA

HBO Max
House of the Dragon

Hoichoi
Bijoya

SWASTIKA MUKHERJEE IN & AS
05 JUL

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Nachiketa Live in Dhaka with Joy Shahriar Vol 2
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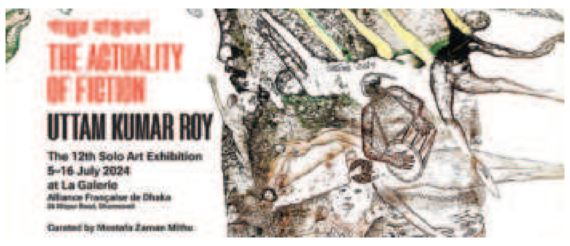
THE ACTUALITY OF FICTION
UTTAM KUMAR ROY
The 12th Solo Art Exhibition
5-16 July 2024
at La Galerie
Alliance Française de Dhaka
Curated by Mostafa Zaman Mithu

Exhibition 'The Actuality of Fiction'
July 5-July 16 | 6pm
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TV TALKIES

जिला न्यायालय, पटपड़गंज, दिल्ली

'Maamla Legal Hai': Legal realities from diverse lens

The courtroom drama of Netflix's ***Maamla Legal Hai*** owes its entertainment value entirely to the whole cast. Directed by Rahul Pandey and written jointly by Kunal Aneja and Saurabh Khanna, it cleverly blends real-life cases through each of its episodes—offering insights into the courts of the Indian heartland and their challenges.

Actor Ravi Kishan shines brightly in his role as advocate VD Tyagi. The show takes an engaging approach to depict the lives and challenges of various lawyers belonging to different social classes: some in their chambers, others seated on benches in the court's parking area, and some under trees. Most importantly, all of them face genuine struggles, including those in positions of judicial authority.

In ***Maamla Legal Hai***, the lawyers are portrayed as complex characters with shades of grey, rather than simply black or white. While Ravi Kishan leads the cast, every character plays a significant and equally important role, making each one a unique hero in their own right.

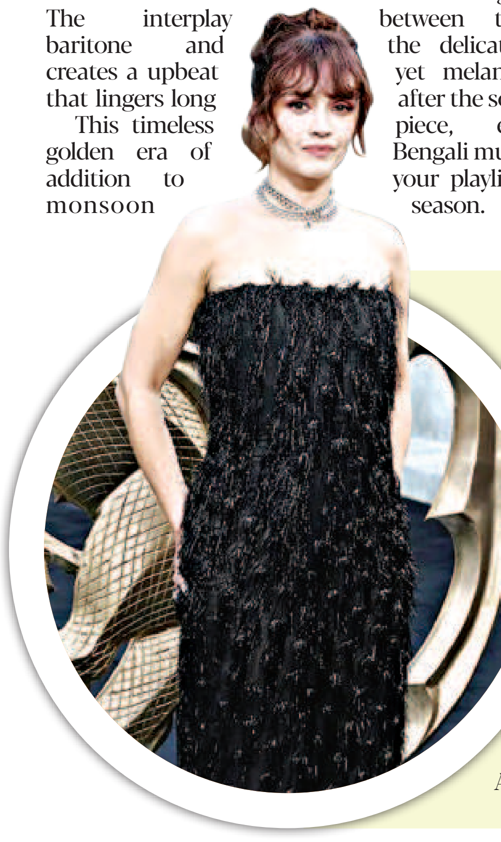
WHAT'S PLAYING

Ami Jharer Kachhe Rekhe Gelam

Ami Jharer Kachhe Rekhe Gelam, sung by the legendary Hemanta Mukherjee, is a haunting Bengali melody that showcases the artiste's deep, mellifluous voice. The song, composed by Salil Chowdhury, evokes a profound sense of longing and separation. Hemanta's emotive rendition perfectly captures the poignant lyrics, which speak of leaving one's beloved in the care of a storm.

The composition's gentle, flowing rhythm mimics the ebb and flow of emotions, while the orchestration subtly enhances the mood without overshadowing Hemanta's vocals. The interplay between the singer's rich baritone and the delicate instrumentation creates a upbeat yet melancholic atmosphere that lingers long after the song ends.

This timeless piece, exemplifying the golden era of Bengali music, can be a perfect addition to your playlist to celebrate this monsoon season.



OLIVIA COOKE

Olivia Cooke, the leading lady of Team Green in the ongoing HBO Max series ***House of the Dragon***, showcased a remarkable look during the show's London premiere.

Decked out in an all black Stella McCartney gown, embellished with glittering black tassels, the strapless piece gave the actress an edgy and moody look. Her understated makeup was accentuated by nude pink lipstick, and she finished off the look with a high-up curly bun.

Olivia's fluffed face-framing bangs, alongside the silver vintage-esque necklace, give her the overall regal flair—reminiscent of her character Alicent Hightower in the series.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Don't dismiss human rights violations

ASK report paints disturbing picture of first six months of 2024

We are disturbed by Ain O Salish Kendra's (ASK) report on the human rights situation in Bangladesh in the first half of 2024. According to one of the leading human rights organisations—which prepares the report every year based on news published in national dailies, alongside its own findings—political killings have tripled, and custodial deaths doubled this year compared to the same period in the previous year. At least 250 women were raped across the country from January to July this year, 631 children became victims of killings, torture, and repression, 35 people were lynched by mobs and 21 temples and 25 Hindu homes were vandalised. If this is how the first six months of the third term of the Awami League government has played out, can citizens be blamed for worrying about what the future holds?

At least 41 people were killed in incidents of political violence in the first six months of 2024. The alarming increase in political violence can be traced back to the general election on January 7, city corporation elections, and upazila polls held in four phases across the country. Although the polls were boycotted by the main opposition parties, including BNP, it is unfortunate that we still witnessed untoward killings and violence, mostly among supporters of Awami League candidates and independent AL candidates or, in the case of local elections, among AL-affiliated candidates. We have not seen any acknowledgement from the government, its law enforcement agencies and the Election Commission about its failure in preventing intra-party violence and an intimidating election-time environment. Instead, in a controversial move, the home ministry deleted all data relating to 1,524 complaints of electoral violence and breach of electoral code of conduct received between December 19, 2023 and January 10 this year.

Meanwhile, at least eight individuals, including two women, died in custody during this period. Again, we have not seen any meaningful action to hold accountable law enforcers involved in allegations of torture and extrajudicial excesses, despite repeated appeals from national and human rights bodies. In fact, there has only been one conviction for custodial death over the past decade, though ASK documented at least 138 deaths that have been allegedly caused by physical torture by law enforcement agencies.

Over the years, we have observed a concerning dismissal or downplaying of human rights abuses by the government, even when presented with compelling statistics. Will the third term of the Awami League government be more of the same, or will it finally realise that no amount of economic growth and infrastructural development can make up for gross human rights violations, and that it is ultimately in its best interests to address them? For the sake of citizens, we hope it is the latter.

Stop ignoring militancy threats

Focus more on deradicalising ex-militants in prison

A recent police intelligence report has confirmed what we have been warning about in this column for years: militants in prisons, far from being rehabilitated and deradicalised, are continuing their communications with members of militant outfits outside of prisons, possibly gathering strength and reorganising. This indicates that the soft power approach being pursued by the authorities in prisons are not working at all.

Militants in prison, like all other prisoners, need to be rehabilitated and shown a better path. But because of the way our prisons are presently operating—with prisoners crammed beyond prison limits, inadequate resources allocated for them and very little focus on their rehabilitation—they are doing the exact opposite. Only a year ago, this newspaper reported on how militant leaders have been taking advantage of gaps in surveillance to form new outfits and recruit members inside and outside prisons. By intercepting communications, intelligence officers also managed to learn that Neo JMB leader Saiful Islam Khaled, now on death row at Kashimpur High Security Prison for the 2016 Holey Artisan cafe attack, was contacting Bangladeshi IS militants in Afghanistan, asking for financial support to reorganise the militant group in Bangladesh. This, of course, should seriously concern the authorities. Unfortunately, it seems that has not been the case as surveillance gaps continue to persist in our prisons, according to police report.

What is further concerning is that militants in prisons have apparently been able to smuggle cell phones into the jails with the help of some prison guards. Due to such neglect, even militant leaders living abroad are regularly communicating with jailed members in Bangladesh. With that being the case, it is difficult to imagine that the jailed members will ever become deradicalised. What then, will be the outcome when they finally get out of prison? Will they not again bolster the ranks of different militant groups? It seems that the government has no plan on what to do with these people. And the militant outfits are taking full advantage of that.

Hence, we once again reiterate the importance of cutting off the communication of these prisoners with outside militant forces. Authorities must put greater focus on deradicalising and rehabilitating them, and also increasing surveillance in prisons to ensure that these measures are actually working. After all, militancy poses one of the greatest threats to our national security, as well as our secular social fabric—and strongly contradicts the religious values held by the majority of our citizens.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Frida Kahlo was born

On this dayin 1970, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, noted for her intense, brilliantly coloured self-portraits, was born.

The paradox of whitening black money while fighting corruption

Kamal Ahmed
is an independent journalist. His X handle is @ ahmedka1

KAMAL AHMED

Bangladesh is often described as a "paradox"; it excels in crucial social indicators while scoring poorly on the quality of governance. This paradox was evident when two contrasting news stories emerged from the same session of the Jatiya Sangsad on June 29: one about the prime minister's vow to crack down on graft, and the other about retaining amnesty for possessors of black money. How does one reconcile such contradictions? Has the government redefined corruption by excluding proceeds from illegal transactions, graft, and tax evasion, commonly known as black money?

Critics argue that the definition of black money varies depending on who holds it. This money seems less problematic if the holder is connected to the ruling party. Despite loud proclamations of "zero tolerance," government efforts rarely make a lasting impact on curbing corruption.

Currently, the country is abuzz with complaints about bureaucratic corruption. Previously, there was noise about traders' excessive profits and syndicates. A few years ago, Awami League embodied the zero-tolerance mantra when it tackled illegal wealth from casinos, gambling, and extortion. There was no shortage of theatrics when alleged casino kingpins were arrested in raids, which included quite a few Jubo League leaders, such as Ismail Chowdhury Samrat, Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, Kazi Anisur Rahman, and AKM Mominul Haque. Now, however, prosecutors seem to have forgotten about pursuing conviction for the accused, with all of them out on bail.

Considering the slew of unresolved large-scale financial crimes such as fraud and embezzlement of bank loans, insider trading, and manipulations in the stock market involving thousands of crores, one may wonder why there is even talk of a crackdown on corruption.

In the past decade and a half, the stock market has experienced at least three major manipulations. Those who looted investors' wealth faced no significant consequences. Similarly, fraud and embezzlement of bank loans have been long-standing issues. In 2012, the late Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith downplayed Hallmark's Tk 4,000-crore fraud, saying, "It is not a big sum." At the time, his words seemed incredible, but now, with the scale of corruption being uncovered, his statement appears less mistaken or humorous. Banks being used to break rules and create precedents for anonymous loans in the billions is now commonplace.

Despite the noise about corruption, the corrupt seem largely unaffected. Government measures, like transfers or demotions after grand corruption allegations, suggest a "hate the sin, not the sinner" approach. Thus, criminals have no trouble withdrawing money or transferring assets before fleeing abroad. Critics of the government or opposition members, however, struggle to secure court permission just to travel.

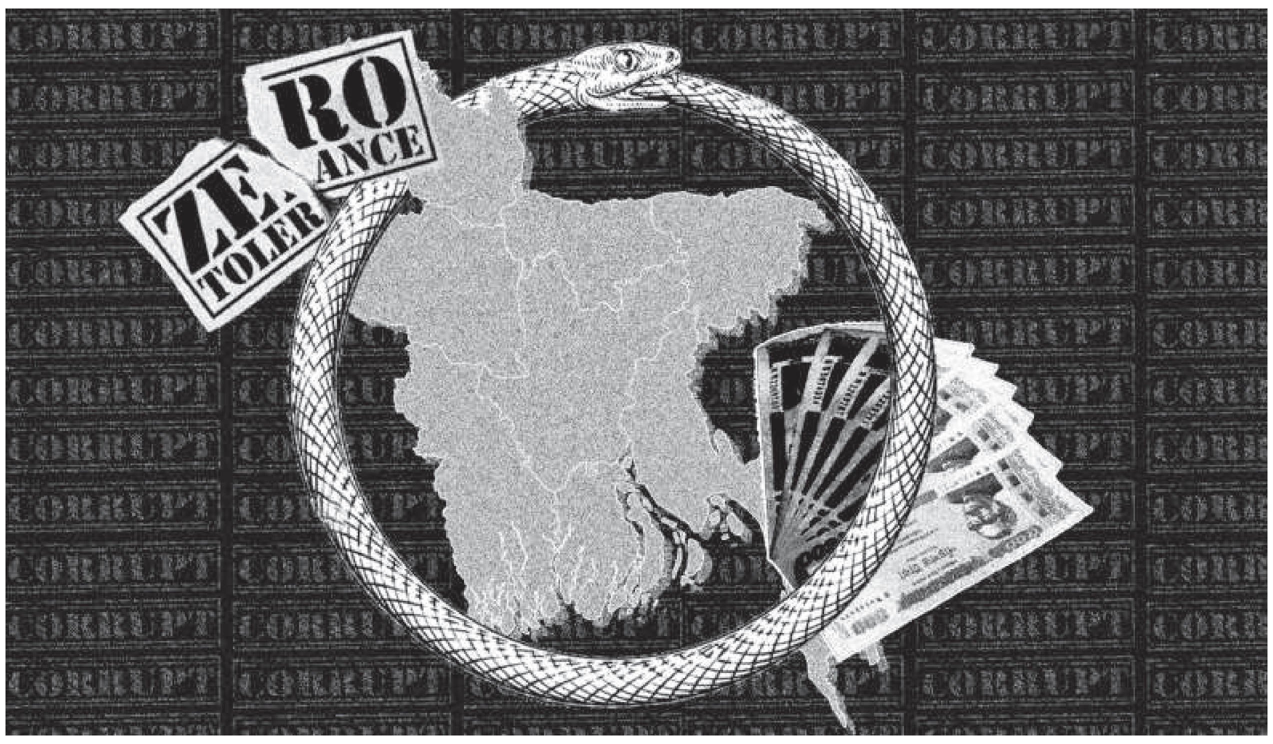
Everyone wants corrupt bureaucrats tried, but the belief that they will face justice is almost nonexistent. This scepticism arises from the long-standing patronage they receive from political authorities, reflecting a partisan state apparatus. This is evident from the various medals and awards given to administrative and police officials for suppressing political opposition and overseeing one-sided elections. The Suddhachar (integrity) Award, intended as part of the anti-corruption drive, ironically has been bestowed upon record-setting corrupt individuals like former police chief Benazir Ahmed.

The one-sided election on January 7 has probably faded from many of our memories, along with the asset lists of candidates. Since the election was boycotted, and most candidates were from Awami League, the wealth disclosures in their affidavits highlighted how lucrative politics is. Transparency International Bangladesh found that the assets of the top 10 wealthiest MPs multiplied by up to 55 times in five years. The wealth of the richest MP's wife increased about 35 times, and over 15 years, his wealth surged 2,436 times. Many of these politicians are businessmen, yet such business growth is rare even in the West. Transparency's analysis of ministers' and state ministers' wealth also found up to eleven-fold wealth growth and 22 times income growth in five years.

Transparency identified 18 billionaires among candidates. Despite laws limiting single ownership to 100 bighas of land, affidavits revealed many own agricultural and non-agricultural land far exceeding this limit. The top 10 landowners possess 1.5 to 20 times the legal limit.

On January 11, Transparency called for verifying candidates' affidavits, analysing their assets and income statements, and confiscating any illegal asset through proper legal processes. They also recommended seizing land exceeding legal limits, which was not too difficult as these disclosures came in their affidavits. None of this happened. Had politicians' illegal land been confiscated, bureaucrats might have been deterred from pursuing dreams of becoming zamindars.

It has already been proven that raising alarm bells about the corruption of various professionals and groups will achieve little if the political sponsors of corruption are kept out of the reckoning. What's happening now is best described as mega-corruption, and at the rate at which complaints are heard, corruption has become decentralised. Whoever has the power, the maximum of it is being used for corruption. There is no solution to this problem unless there is a change in politics and a return to accountable democracy and the rule of law.



VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Why Macronism failed

JanWerner Mueller
Professor of Politics at Princeton University, is the author, most recently, of Democracy Rules

JAN-WERNER MUELLER

Following his party's decisive loss to the far-right National Rally in the European Parliament election, French President Emmanuel Macron shocked everyone by dissolving the National Assembly and calling a snap election. He has justified his decision by claiming that an election will "clarify" the political situation, but his compatriots do not share this view.

As Édouard Philippe, Macron's prime minister from 2017 to 2020, put it, the president has needlessly "killed the presidential majority." A hung parliament with National Rally as the largest party is now considered the most likely outcome. Still, Macron's decision has clarified one thing: his strategy to create a powerful centrism in France has failed. Other European leaders should take note.

Legend has it that the first question Napoleon would ask about a military officer was not whether he was talented, but whether he was lucky. In 2017, Macron was extraordinarily lucky. The incumbent was so unpopular that he did not even bother to run for a second term, and the likely conservative winner was felled by a scandal. Macron seized the moment to offer what one might call a Second Coming of the "Third Way." Just like Tony Blair, the British Labour Party leader who came to power in 1997, Macron held that the old ideological cleavage of left and right was dépassé, and that centrists should simply pick the policies that "worked best."

Macron appealed to both socialists and conservative Gaullists, on the assumption that all reasonable people could unite happily in the moderate middle. For a while, this approach had traction, because Macron's seemingly ever-expanding was flanked by Marine Le Pen's National Front (now National Rally) on the far right and by the firebrand Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed on the far left. But the technocratic approach—"if you're not with us, you're unreasonable"—ultimately failed to transform the political landscape.

The far right, far left, centre left, and centre right each still tend to win at least a fifth of the vote in the first round of French presidential elections, on average. But the centre-right Republicans have been hemorrhaging votes to National Rally, prompting the party's leader, Éric Ciotti, to endorse an alliance with the far right. This matters, because Macron's overwhelming support in the second round of the 2017 and 2022 elections—when he was facing off against Le Pen—was largely due to voters' hostility to the far right, not burgeoning enthusiasm for Macron-style technocracy.

Macron's haughty style—already in 2017, he let it be known that he wanted to rule like "Jupiter"—certainly did not help. But quite apart from the personal failings of a man who fancies himself a philosopher-king, a centrist project aimed at taking the best from the left and the right was always more likely to alienate both than to harmonise their contradictory agendas.

Once Macron had lost control of the National Assembly in 2022, his prime minister, Élisabeth Borne, heroically tried to cobble together ad hoc majorities to advance the president's agenda. But on more than 20 occasions, she resorted to constitutional shortcuts to ram through measures that clearly lacked popular support.

Macron's haughty style—already in 2017, he let it be known that he wanted to rule like "Jupiter"—certainly did not help. But quite apart from the personal failings of a man who fancies himself a philosopher-king, a centrist project aimed at taking the best from the left and the right was always more likely to alienate both than to harmonise their contradictory agendas.

Macron's centrism not only looked increasingly authoritarian; it also acquired a rightward tilt. Hence, his hardline interior minister went so far as to accuse Le Pen of being soft on Islamism, and Borne introduced an immigration law that seemed to legitimise the claims made by the far right. Constantly shift rightward, and you eventually will reach a point where you can no longer blackmail voters with the argument that you are the only thing standing in the way of right-wing extremism and the end of the Republic.

Some commentators speculate that Macron wants the National Rally to govern until the 2027 presidential election so it will prove itself incompetent and set the stage for a triumphant shift back toward the centre. But this kind of quasi-pedagogical project—with the headmaster showing his pupils that the substitute teacher doesn't know how to do the job—is misguided for several reasons.

For starters, not all far-right populists have overly simplistic policy ideas or are amateur administrators. In cases where they do prove themselves incompetent, their fortunes can recover. When Austria's Machiavellian Christian Democratic chancellor, Wolfgang Schüssel, brought Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party into government in 2000, the populists descended into infighting and revealed their incompetence and corruption. But after splitting up and licking its wounds, the Freedom Party sailed to victory in last month's European elections.

Moreover, since the French system allows for "cohabitation"—when the president and the prime minister belong to opposing parties—an incompetent-seeming governing party can blame the other side for tying its hands. Wielding the extraordinary powers of the French presidency, Macron will doubtless find an outlet on the international stage. But it is sobering to see that his vision has been downgraded from a "revolution" in 2017 to a "renaissance" in 2022 to what it is today. Macron failed to transform the movement he started into a proper political party that is not dependent on a charismatic leader. His charisma gone, the centre's prospects for 2027 look bleak.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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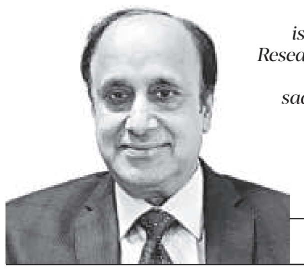
The large cracks in Bangladesh that IMF missed



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SADIQ AHMED

In January 2023, Bangladesh entered into a $4.7-billion IMF programme, spanning over 42 months, to fight the pressures on the macroeconomy and arrest the associated economic downslide. These pressures, triggered by a series of external shocks emerging from Covid-19, global inflation and the Ukraine War, had accumulated over a number of years owing to weak economic management. The policy corrections, therefore, involve macroeconomic adjustments, structural reforms and institutional strengthening.

The core IMF programme was broken down into six reviews, and the associated policy reforms were designed to become progressively more challenging. The government should take some comfort in successfully negotiating the release of the second review on June 24. While the government succeeded in ticking many of the conditionalities for the first and second review and convinced the IMF to be more flexible on some others, in substance, the two most important policy reforms implemented so far are the flexibility of the exchange rate and interest rate. However, fiscal correction has not happened, and the structural reforms in taxation, subsidies, state-owned enterprises, trade policy, and the banking sector have not made adequate progress.

Against this backdrop, the IMF has identified nine specific risks and uncertainties that could jeopardise progress with implementation of the IMF programme and constrain the ability of Bangladesh to successfully stabilise the macroeconomy and resume the growth process on a sustainable path. Five of these risks are global in nature and four are domestic.

The global risks include intensification of regional conflicts, commodity price volatility, abrupt global slowdown, systemic financial instability, and deepening geoeconomic fragmentation. The domestic ones relate to failure to maintain a market-based flexible exchange system, failure to address banking sector reforms, insufficient international support in resolving the Rohingya crisis, and higher frequency and severity of natural disasters related to climate change.

The global risks are well identified. It is hard to quarrel with them. Regional conflicts and deepening geoeconomic fragmentation are of particular concern. Yet, it is fair to say many of these risks have prevailed over the decades. The main policy implication of these risks is to make an all-out effort to stabilise the macroeconomy and resume the momentum of sustainable growth as quickly as possible. Growing economic resilience is the best way to absorb external shocks and take corrective actions in the future.

VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

The list of domestic risks is way too conservative and misses out some big-ticket items. Regarding the Rohingya crisis, this is more in the nature of an external risk. Bangladesh is doing its best to drum up international support. Progress with fiscal reforms will help create more space to fund Rohingya needs.

Concerning climate-related natural disasters, this is more a long-term challenge, although admittedly, Bangladesh's response in instituting policies and programmes to build greater climate resilience so far has been weak. It is not clear whether the IMF programme's $1.4-billion climate resilience component has been very effective in strengthening this policy response, especially in regards to mainstreaming climate change policies in planning, budgeting, incentives and institutional capabilities. I would like to throw the ball back at the IMF's court and ask it to reassess this component to see if the programme design was adequate to secure substantial climate reforms with potential long-term benefit.

The two remaining domestic risks are both very relevant and fall in the high risk category. It has now been 18 months since the IMF programme was approved, and little progress has been achieved in the banking sector. If anything, downside risks have increased. The volume of non-performing loans and distressed assets continues to increase, and there is little sign that a reversal is coming anytime soon. Without meaningful progress on banking reforms, the overall quality of the IMF programme will suffer.

On the exchange rate, an encouraging beginning has been made with the reform on May 8. The unification of the exchange rate and adoption of the interim crawling peg regime is a sound reform. Steps must be taken to quickly move to a fully flexible market-based exchange system. The risk of slippage is high, but the IMF must remain vigilant in monitoring this risk and engage with the government to stay on track.

Several substantial domestic risks have not been identified in the IMF risk matrix. These risks are not only high but present more immediate adverse consequences for the macroeconomy and resumption of growth momentum than the seven other risks noted by the IMF (the five global, the Rohingya, and the natural disaster ones).

First and foremost is the weakness of fiscal policy. This is the Achilles heel of Bangladesh's development strategy, and progress has been faltering for a long time. The 18 months of the IMF programme has brought in some marginal progress, but most of the institutional and structural aspects of the tax reform programme have not been addressed.

A big missing item in the budget is the absence of reform of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The financial return on investments in SOEs is very low and net budgetary transfers to sustain these poorly performing SOEs are way too high. Reform of SOEs is an easy win and surprisingly not emphasised in the IMF programme.

Of immediate concern is the consistency of the FY2025 budget with monetary policy for inflation control. At 4.6 percent of GDP, the budget deficit is way too high to allow the credit tightening that is needed to control inflation. There is a high risk that the budget will either crowd out private credit or cause a loosening of monetary policy thereby jeopardising inflation control.

A big missing item in the budget is the absence of reform of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The financial return on investments in SOEs is very low and net budgetary transfers to sustain these poorly performing SOEs are way too high. Reform of SOEs is an easy win and surprisingly not emphasised in the IMF programme.

On the spending side, the budget subsidy target is too high while the allocations for health, education, training, agriculture, water, and social protection are too low. At a time when job creation is constrained, the economy is slowing down, and inflation is high, the low level of spending on social protection (0.8 percent of GDP excluding civil service pensions) is very disturbing and must be corrected.

Another major structural reform where very little progress has been made concerns trade protection. This again is a long-standing challenge. The tax revenue's excessive dependence on customs duties, including supplementary and regulatory duties, has prevented any meaningful progress with trade reforms even after 18 months of the IMF programme. Consequently, the anti-export bias of trade policy prevails, which constrains export diversification and growth of non-RMG exports. Indeed, the slowdown in export growth to a mere 2 percent in FY2024 is a hugely worrisome development for both the sustainable management of the balance of payments and recovery of the growth momentum.

The final missing risk area is governance and institutions. The high incidence of corruption, some of which have erupted openly in the public domain, especially at a time when inflation is high and the economy has slowed, is a huge threat to social and economic stability. The government has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for corruption. This is comforting to know but it must now act decisively to implement its policy of zero tolerance. It must dig down to the root causes of corrupt practices and implement the required institutional and regulatory reforms that eliminate/minimise the scope for rent seeking.

আমার সোনার
বাংলায়
বৈষম্যের ঠাঁই
নাই

Students and job seekers have taken it to the streets, seeking an end to positive discrimination under the quota system that looms over half of government jobs.

FILE PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

PENSION WARS AND QUOTA PROTESTS:

The manufactured divide

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

How does it feel to live in a society that seems to be melting from the bottom up, as well as from the top down? On one end of the pendulum, you see one of your country's biggest loan defaulters, aka one of the "Crazy Rich Asians," throwing a lavish wedding party in the Middle East. Then you witness common people groaning in front of the fish market, unable to afford anything except the throwaway guts and bones.

The "division bell" is responsible for creating a toxic climate in which our resentment for one another grows while our compassion for one another declines. Polarisation, rife with mutual fear and rage, is on the rise. Something dark and sinister is occurring. Our long-term sense of solidarity is fading; we are seeing a rise in isolationism and hostility. The problem is sociological. People blame rotten politics, social media, and moral or spiritual degradation for the venom's spread. It seems each group is on its own. We hardly give each other any thought until the issue flares close by.

Public university teachers are on strike, calling for the protection of their pension rights.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Many divisive problems that pit one group against the other clearly show how our society is disintegrating. Public university teachers are on strike, calling for the protection of their pension rights. Students and job seekers have taken it to the streets, seeking an end to positive discrimination under the quota system that looms over half of government jobs. The court has overturned a previous decision to end quotas for the offspring of freedom fighters. The time is tough. A troubling pattern emerges that masks the deeper systemic issues through a calculated orchestration of conflict. In the process, the focus shifts from the real culprits who have brought our economy to a halt.

Why change the existing scheme and create a system through which incoming colleagues receive a different and disadvantageous payoff? Why separate the state-affiliated autonomous bodies from the state schemes? Why then, delay the pension scheme for civil servants by a year while maintaining secrecy about its details? The striking teachers have reason to believe that the intended parity and inclusivity promoted by the universal pension scheme are not universal after all.

What do I mean by orchestration? The government's handling of the pension reform offers a case in point. Everyone welcomed the government's announcement last year of a universal pension package under four categories: Probash for expatriate Bangladeshis, Progoti for private service-holders, Surakkha for self-employed nationals, and Samata for those below the poverty line. The inclusion of Prottoy, a contributory pension scheme that affects new teachers joining from July 1, 2024, triggered the issue. This scheme is for all autonomous entities, among other bodies, funded by the government.

Once the details were revealed, the stakeholders found that they would be getting the short end of the stick. Why change the existing scheme and create a system through which incoming colleagues receive a different and disadvantageous payoff? Why separate the state-affiliated autonomous bodies from the state schemes? Why then, delay the pension scheme for civil servants by a year while maintaining secrecy about its details? The striking teachers have reason to believe that the intended parity and inclusivity promoted by the universal pension scheme are not universal after all.

The administration has made no secret of its intention to limit the scope of the teachers. Without consulting the teachers, authorities decided to implement a contributory pension scheme for new teachers, which does not include the existing one-time lump sum gratuity. This unilateral approach has not only sparked widespread outrage but has also further exacerbated the divide between the state and the educators who have long been the backbone of our society.

The policymakers have completely ignored the demands of the striking teachers. The finance minister, in charge of introducing a new contributory pension programme, called the protest "irrational." The education minister echoed the government's stance, stating that his office has nothing to do with it and that all new teachers have to follow the universal programme. Assigned to hear the teachers' side of the tale, the minister for road, transport, and bridges called off his planned meeting on Thursday, saying he had to first speak with the prime minister. The government is well aware that these teachers are not like those battery-rickshaw pullers who created mayhem to press home their demands. Given their lack of support, the teachers are likely to eventually yield. They are unlikely to get public support as they have failed to publicly oppose numerous other social injustices. They are on their own.

So much so, there is no communication between the teachers holding sit-in demonstrations inside the campus and the students staging protests at Dhaka's Shahbagh, each man for himself. Adding fuel to the fire, we see the civil servants creating a new list of perks and benefits: scholarships for higher studies, allocation of land and provision for housing societies, car loans, and selection grades. Their constant disregard for the teachers' community, whom they perhaps hate for their academic freedom, was evident when they requested a university of their own. Already, we have seen military professionals create their own universities to rehabilitate their officers or provide them with degrees for post-retirement job opportunities. The current socio-political landscape is characterised by a perilous game of division and control.

Teachers are now pitted against students, students against the government, and the mainstream media against anyone who dares to speak out. This coordinated conflict serves two purposes: it deflects attention from the rampant abuses of private entrepreneurs who use tax holidays and other incentives to launder money, and it diverts attention from the shortcomings of civil servants and military officials who are often involved in corruption scandals. It muffles the voice of civil society, which has the ability to speak.

In this climate of division, public anger and frustration have become palpable. This pervasive distrust has tainted our interactions with one another, whether on the road, in public spaces, or in our daily lives. A sense of betrayal and helplessness is increasingly driving us, unravelling the societal fabric.

As we navigate through this turbulent situation, it's crucial to understand the underlying issues: the systematic manipulation of social tensions to uphold the status quo for a select few, leaving the rest of us to bear the consequences. The consequences fall on the rest of us. The solution to these problems depends on a democratic climate that promotes openness, inclusion, and sincere communication.

"I want to play forever. I love the sport. It's given me so much, taught me loads of lessons over the years that I can use in the rest of my life. But I don't want to stop, so it is hard."

Two-time Wimbledon singles champion Andy Murray, who had an emotional sendoff on Centre Court following Thursday's doubles defeat at Wimbledon. The British tennis icon is still set for at least one more match in the mixed doubles.

When will Hathurusingha take responsibility?

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

A lack of ambition has clearly surmounted the lack of ability in the Bangladesh national cricket team setup.

The team, evidently, is striving to maintain the mediocre status quo is an environment where no real ambition can pierce through, with the major stakeholders having no vision to reach excellence.

Exhibit A in this regard is how Bangladesh fluffed an opportunity to reach the semifinals of the T20 World Cup for the first time in their history.

Bangladesh needed 116 runs in 12.1 overs against Afghanistan in their last Super Eight contest to guarantee qualification. However, after losing a few wickets, the Tigers abandoned their attempt at fulfilling that equation and instead played for the win.

The reason behind that questionable approach that reeked of a mediocre mentality was later revealed by the skipper in a statement which most took as utter buffoonery, as Shanto said that after Bangladesh lost three in the first three overs, they focused on only winning the game, a victory that would be of no benefit to them.

While Shanto has been copping a lot of flak for this statement, with even the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon criticising the skipper for it, the person who got the ball rolling in this mediocre path, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, has seemingly got off scot-free.

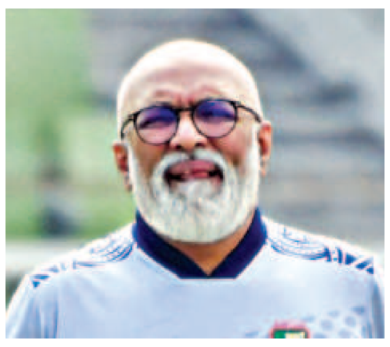
After Bangladesh qualified for the Super Eight for the first time since 2007, Hathurusingha stated that the Tigers had achieved their goal in the tournament and whatever came after would be a bonus.

The players' performances in the next two matches reflected the coach's statement, where they surrendered against Australia and India without even putting up a fight.

And when circumstances presented them with an opportunity that every team could only dream about, the Tigers did not even go all out at taking it, perhaps already satisfied with their 'bonus' phase of the competition.

Since Hathurusingha's re-appointment at the beginning of last year, Bangladesh have played two World Cups– the 2023 ODI World Cup in India and this year's T20 World Cup in North America.

He was brought in to streamline a path to the semis in last year's World Cup but instead under his tutelage Bangladesh had one of their worst ever campaigns. In the T20 World Cup, other than a few match-winning efforts from the bowling unit, there wasn't anything to get excited about.



With another major ICC tournament – the 2025 Champions Trophy – ahead, one would have to be overly optimistic to believe that Bangladesh would fare better with Hathurusingha at the helm.

However, these underwhelming displays have hardly mattered as Hathurusingha's job seems to be secure and much like the BCB, his role seemingly demands very little accountability.

In every sport, the coach has to take responsibility along with the players for disappointing campaigns but Hathurusingha seems to be an exception in this regard.

Papon, who is serving his third term as the BCB boss, expressed his satisfaction with the team reaching the Super Eight and with the team ending their campaign with three wins overall – the most ever by Bangladesh in a campaign.

He hardly said a word about Bangladesh's appalling batting display, head coach Hathurusingha's role in allowing the team to slip into such mediocrity and the failure of batting coach David Hemp to get the batters out of their slump.

Hathurusingha's evolution as the Bangladesh coach also provides an interesting insight on how a culture of mediocrity effects everyone that's part of it. When he was first appointed as Bangladesh coach in 2015, it seemed that Bangladesh had brought in a top coach who was astute in planning successful campaigns. And impressive results did follow.

Almost a decade later, and into his second stint with Bangladesh, it seems that the Sri Lankan has clothed himself in mediocrity and the once result-oriented and stubborn coach has settled himself well into Bangladesh's culture of playing it safe and doing the bare minimum.

BCB has always lacked in long-term vision and when the coach at the helm shares the same attitude, it's a recipe for an unsustainable future filled with uninspiring showings and inevitable mediocrity.

In the T20 World Cup, Bangladesh shook the very foundation of why professional sports is played by consciously choosing to ignore a shot at excellence. It won't be a stretch to assume that the 19 other teams that played in the tournament would go out of their way to achieve excellence if they were presented with the opportunity Bangladesh received.

With another major ICC tournament – the 2025 Champions Trophy – ahead, one would have to be overly optimistic to believe that Bangladesh would fare better with Hathurusingha at the helm.

Now, will the BCB finally demand accountability from Hathurusingha or will they maintain the status quo as raising questions will bring them directly into the firing line?

MARTINEZ
the shoot-out 'animal'

AGENCIES

It will be tough for Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez to top his penalty shoot-out heroics from the run to World Cup glory in Qatar in 2022 but that certainly won't stop him trying.

The keeper, known as 'El Dibu' by his adoring fans, produced two brilliant diving saves in the shoot-out to earn his team a 4-2 win on penalties against Ecuador in the Copa America quarter-finals on Thursday.

The game had ended 1-1 in normal time and with no extra time in the Copa, until the final, the game went straight to penalties.

When Lionel Messi chipped the opening attempt against the top of the bar, the almost 70,000 fans in NRG Stadium could have been forgiven for thinking Argentina's title defense was about to end.

But Martinez had other ideas.

"Dibu is an animal. The truth is that what he is doing is crazy. He deserves it. He loves to wear these colors. He gives us a lot of security and peace of mind. We try to do the same for him, but in these important moments he's always there, he's always there," said midfielder Rodrigo De Paul.

Just as he had done against Colombia, in the Copa semi-final in Brazil in 2021 and then against the Netherlands in the quarter-final of the World Cup when he saved two Dutch spot-kicks, the Aston Villa keeper turned the game in his team's favor.

"Dibu is an animal. The truth is that what he is doing is crazy. He deserves it. He loves to wear these colors. He gives us a lot of security and peace of mind. We try to do the same for him, but in these important moments he's always there, he's always there," said midfielder Rodrigo De Paul.

"I knew that 'Dibu' would come good, he loves those moments, he rises to them," said a relieved Messi. "He had faith in himself. Even before the game he was joking that if it went to penalties, we should relax."

His most famous performance of all, of course, was in the World Cup final against France when not only did he save from Kingsley Coman but his mind games put added pressure on Aurelien Tchouameni who missed his kick as Argentina won the shoot-out 4-2.

This time there was no dancing on his line, no indication of his chatter with opponents or other mind-games -- although he certainly made clear his joy at the saves with his gestures to the fans.

"I told the guys before the penalty shootout that I wasn't ready to go home. This group deserves to go all the way to the final," Martinez told Argentine television.

Martinez dived to his left to deny Angel Mena and then to his right to keep out Alan Minda's spot-kick, celebrating his saves wildly.

It also extended the 31-year-old's penalty record with Argentina to an astonishing 50%. Of 24 penalties faced for the national side, Martinez has saved nine with three off target.

"I got a bit full on with the crowd. I had all the Argentinians here, my family close by. So these are special moments," he said.

Martinez, who won the Golden Glove at the World Cup and was voted FIFA's Best Goalkeeper in 2022, has come through plenty of tough battles in his career, having moved to England as a teenager, joining Arsenal.

While he dreamt of making his mark in the Premier League and with the national team, there was little glamour in his early years with the Gunners as he was loaned out to lower-league clubs.

He had spells at Oxford United, Sheffield Wednesday and Rotherham United before stepping up to Wolverhampton Wanderers and eventually getting a chance with Arsenal.

He was sold to Aston Villa in 2020 and saved a penalty in his first game for his new club against Sheffield United.

He has established such a rapport with the Argentine team and produced such vital saves from the spot and in open play that coach Lionel Scaloni said he had ensured an ultra-confident mood for his team-mates in the shoot-out.

"In the penalties I think the team felt a blind trust in their goalkeeper and for us that is fundamental. Even if Leo missed I think the team knew that something positive was going to happen. That is so important," he said.

GM Murshed, Niaz
GM Rahman, Ziaur

Zia 'Bangladesh's best' with legacy unparalleled

Bangladesh's fourth GM Abdullah Al Rakib shared his experience and memories with Ziaur Rahman, who passed away from a heart attack while competing in the National Chess Championship in Dhaka yesterday. Here are the excerpts:

"I have been playing for the national team since the age of 14 and from the beginning, I had a good personal relationship with Zia bhai; someone who always treated me as a younger brother. I have numerous memories with him during our chess journey. A friendly, big-hearted person, his simplicity, strong ethics and sincerity always inspired us. When we came into the scene, Niaz [Murshed] bhai had already passed his prime. We didn't see much of his playing before he became Grandmaster, but Zia bhai and Rifat [Bin Sattar] bhai had seen him at work.

I think Zia bhai's dedication and contribution to the sport is unmatched. After Niaz bhai, Zia bhai got the first GM norm and then I achieved the landmark in 2001. After that, Zia bhai told me that my GM norm has made him excited to seek another GM norm.

Actually, we were not jealous about others' success. We have become Grandmaster nearly at the same time. We played so many tournaments as teammates and also as opponents. I can't describe all these words. I think his contribution to the sport and Bangladesh will be remembered for a long time. I can say that, performance-wise, he was the best chess player for Bangladesh."

Paris-bound archer Sagor 'confident of bringing home Olympic medal'

Archer Sagor Islam, at just 18 years old, has made history as the youngest athlete from his country to earn a direct spot in the Olympic Games, following in the footsteps of golfer Siddiqur Rahman and archer Ruman Sana who achieved the same in previous editions. Overcoming poverty with unwavering support from his widowed mother, BKSP, and the Bangladesh Archery Federation, Sagor, a high school student in the 11th grade, has reached this milestone. While he has not yet won an individual event medal in either domestic or international competitions, Sagor surprised many by securing a direct Olympic entry and even clinching a silver medal in last month's Final Olympic Quota tournament. The lad from Rajshahi discussed his career, passion for archery, and future aspirations with The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman in an exclusive interview, the excerpts of which are as follows:

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Daily Star (DS): How did you feel talking to your mother from Turkey after securing a direct entry to the Paris Olympic Games?

Sagor Islam (SI): It took me nearly four hours to reach my mother by phone from the hotel in Turkey because I had no network during the competition. When I asked her if she knew about my achievement, she replied positively and blessed me, hoping for even better results in the Olympics. At that moment, I felt like the most successful son in the world; I felt like I was number one. My mother's happiness is my happiness because she raised me without my father, fulfilling as many of my demands as she could. I have come this far because of her.

DS: What were your expectations going into the Final Olympic Quota tournament in Turkey?

SI: We started to believe that our hard work and continuous practice could lead to something significant. Others also supported us in achieving our goals. I personally believed that this year, with seven months of relentless training, we had become really strong.

DS: There were high expectations for the men's recurve team to secure a quota place, but they were eliminated in the quarterfinals, and you outshone them in the individual events as the youngest team member.

SI: Yes, we had hoped for a lot from the team event, but things didn't go as planned. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, we cannot control the outcome. We approached the competition in our own way, but unfortunately, we didn't succeed.

DS: What was going through your mind when you entered the quarterfinals following the elimination of two teammates in previous rounds?

SI: I started with a positive mindset. I focused solely on my performance without worrying about others because I had nothing to lose. I was confident that if I performed to the best of my ability, I could secure a direct quota place for the Paris Olympics.

DS: You will be competing against the world's top archers in the upcoming Paris Olympics, although they were absent from the Final Olympic Quota tournament in Turkey. How confident are you in your ability to compete with them?

SI: Korean archers and other top archers qualified directly. I achieved the same qualification as they did, so I never considered myself inferior to them. I believed I am on their level because I competed against archers from all over the world, not just Asia.

DS: What kind of training are you undergoing now under German coach Martin Fredrick in Tongi, following your qualification for the Paris Olympics?

SI: Previously, the coach focused on all members of the national team, but now he is solely guiding me for the Olympics. I continue to train by shooting over 320 arrows every day, similar to what I did during national camp. Fredrick and others are inspiring me greatly to boost my confidence and provide mental motivation so that I can perform well in the Olympics.

DS: What are your thoughts on the Paris Olympics?

SI: It's hard to predict my own performance at the Paris Olympics, but I am confident that if I perform naturally, I can compete with anyone and bring a medal home for the nation. The biggest challenge for me is to stay composed during critical moments and maintain my focus, as archery is as much a mental game as it is physical.

DS: How do you feel about the discussion to potentially send Hakim Ahmed Rubel instead of you to the Paris Olympics?

SI: I think it's normal because I earned the quota for the nation, and the coach and federation have the right to decide what's best for the country. I didn't feel upset about it because I would have accepted whatever decision the coach and federation made. Nevertheless, I am grateful to finally represent the nation at the Paris Olympics.

DS: What are your expectations from the other athletes – Imranur Rahman, Robiul Islam, Samiul Islam, and Sonia Akter – participating in the Paris Olympics?

SI: It's a rare opportunity to compete in the Olympics, so I hope they will give their best efforts to achieve something for the nation. In sports, there are no guarantees that even a talented athlete will succeed. As for archery, anything can happen.

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Euro
Quarterfinal
England vs
Switzerland
Live from 10:00 pm
Netherlands vs
Turkey
Live from 1:00 am
(Sunday)
Copa America
Venezuela vs
Canada
Live from 7:00 am
Colombia vs Panama
Live from 4:00 am
(Sunday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Live from 3:30 pm

Southgate under pressure as England face Swiss test

REUTERS, *Weimar*

England's European Championship campaign looked dead and buried before it was salvaged by a remarkable last-gasp goal from Jude Bellingham in the round of 16, but they have barely made their presence felt in Germany.

Gareth Southgate's men take on in-form Switzerland in the quarterfinals on Saturday in Duesseldorf, and the Swiss underlined their credentials by beating defending champions Italy in the last 16.

A couple of weeks ago, England would have relished facing Switzerland -- a team they have lost to only three times in their 27 meetings and most recently in 1981.

Murat Yakin's team, however, have played with a consistency and confidence that has eluded England.

Yakin even said he sympathised with Southgate, who has been lambasted in Germany for not getting more from his talented squad.

"I know this myself from last year a little bit, just focus on the football game, not what we read in the newspapers, that's the only thing we can do as a coach," Yakin said.

Southgate has been criticised for not making many changes to his team but that could be about to change as they practised a back three in training, with Kyle Walker moved to the right of centre three and Bukayo Saka potentially playing as wing-back.

- This will be Gareth Southgate's 100th international match in charge of England, becoming only the third manager to hit the milestone.
- England have lost just one of their last 24 meetings with Switzerland in all competitions (W17 D6), and are unbeaten in 13 (W9 D4) since a 2-1 loss in a World Cup qualifier in May 1981.
- England also aim to become the sixth European side to earn 50 victories at major tournaments – after Germany, Italy, France, Spain and the Netherlands.
- Granit Xhaka has created more chances (8), completed more passes (254) and made more line-breaking passes (51) than any other Switzerland player in this tournament.

Of concern to Southgate is the fact that defender Marc Guehi, who has been solid on his major tournament debut, is suspended for Saturday's match, John Stones has been training with his leg heavily bandaged and Luke Shaw has not played since February due to injury.

While England have not played with three at the back since finishing runners-up to Italy at Euro 2020, it would allow Southgate to employ his wing-backs higher up the pitch.

Yakin, meanwhile, will rely on the experience of Manchester City's Manuel Akanji and Newcastle United's Fabian Schar to anchor the back line, with Granit Xhaka acting as the midfield playmaker.

Xhaka, who played a pivotal role in Bayer Leverkusen's Bundesliga victory last season, was delighted by Switzerland's win over Italy which was sweet revenge for their 3-0 thrashing by them at Euro 2020.

"I have never seen the Azzurri in such difficulty on the field as against us," Xhaka said. "We won even before going on the pitch, just as they did with us three years ago. They were scared."

England are bidding for their first European Championship title in 11 appearances while a Swiss victory would put Yakin's team into the semifinals for the first time.

Spotlight on Guler, Gakpo in Dutch-Turkey clash

AFP, *Berlin*

Cody Gakpo and Arda Guler endured frustrating seasons but both have established themselves as their teams' vital players as the Netherlands face Turkey in a Euro 2024 quarterfinal clash on Saturday in Berlin.

"Gakpo is our star," former Netherlands international Pierre van Hooijdonk said on Dutch channel NOS.

Overshadowed by Mohamed Salah at Anfield, where he has played inconsistently, Gakpo has burst into life in Germany as a constant threat coming in off the left.

Half of the forward's 12 goals for his country have come at major tournaments, with three at the World Cup two years ago.

With another he will match compatriots and former stars Ruud van Nistelrooy and Arjen Robben on seven.

"He is a great player who is solid on the ball... and super important for us," said Koeman after the 3-0 last 16 win over Romania, in which Gakpo scored and also brilliantly teed up Donyell Malen.

At the other end, Real Madrid attacker Guler is Turkey's main weapon.

After months of injury problems and struggling to earn a chance in the Spanish capital, Guler burst into life in the final weeks of the season.

With the Spanish title won, Carlo Ancelotti let Guler loose and he blossomed at the perfect time to take the creative controls for Turkey this summer.

The 19-year-old scored a stunning effort against Georgia in Turkey's thrilling opening win and created both of his team's goals against Austria in the 2-1 last 16 win with set pieces.

- The last two matches between the Netherlands and Turkey have featured 13 goals (6.5 per game). Turkey won 4-2 in March 2021 and the Oranje won 6-1 later that year.
- Arda Guler is one of just three teenagers to score and assist at a single Euros, after Wayne Rooney (4 goals, 1 assist) and Cristiano Ronaldo (2 goals, 2 assists), both at Euro 2004.
- While this is set to be the 15th international meeting between Netherlands and Turkey, this tie is the first fixture between these teams to come at a major tournament.

It is only the fourth time Turkey have reached the quarterfinals of a major tournament and the first since 2008. They are boosted by the return of captain Hakan Calhanoglu and defender Samet Akaydin from suspension.

In the stands at the vast Olympiastadion Turkey have the advantage, despite Oranje fans taking over every city they have visited in their vibrant shirts.

"It will be an away match," Netherlands defender Daley Blind warned his team-mates on Thursday, with around three million Turks living in Germany, many supporting their team fervently.

However, Turkey will be held back in one aspect as defender Merih Demiral will miss this quarterfinal clash after UEFA suspended him for two games on Friday for making an alleged ultra-nationalist salute when he scored his second goal in their 2-1 last-16 win over Austria on Tuesday.

The ban is a signficant blow for Montella's side, already missing the suspended Orkun Kokcu and Ismail Yuksek -- by contrast the Netherlands have their full complement available.

And that is what Koeman's men, who, according to Gakpo, "are not yet where we (they) want to be", will be hoping to capitalise.

If Netherlands can get through their Turkey test then fans can start dreaming of a second Euros triumph, with England or Switzerland awaiting in the semifinal in what has been dubbed the "easier" side of the draw.

Tigers brace for challenging Test fixtures

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are all set to brace the Test challenge from next month after competing mostly in the T20 format for the last couple of months in the buildup to the T20 World Cup, which concluded on June 29 in the USA and West Indies.

The challenge will start with a two-match series against Pakistan which will be followed by series against India, South Africa, and the West Indies respectively in the coming five months where the Tigers will compete in a total of eight Tests, two each against these four strong opponents.

India and West Indies had already confirmed the itinerary of the full-fledged Bangladesh tours, scheduled for September-October and November-December, respectively, while on Friday, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officially announced the fixture of their home series against Bangladesh.

According to the itinerary, Bangladesh will play the first Test in Rawalpindi on August 21-25 while Karachi will host the second Test between August 30 and September 3.

In between the India and West Indies tours, Bangladesh will host South Africa on home soil, although the itinerary of the series is yet to be confirmed.

BANGLADESH TOUR OF PAKISTAN

- First Test in Rawalpindi from August 21-25
- Second Test in Karachi from August 30-September 3

Bangladesh haven't been in a Test mood since their last home series against Sri Lanka in March-April where they showcased an underwhelming performance in both matches to lose the series.

The poor batting display of the batters had significant impact on Bangladesh's performance in the series as they failed to cross the 200-run mark in three of their four innings. Apart from Mominul Haque and Mehidy Hasan Miraz, none of the batters could score any fifty in the series.

Although the Bangladesh national team were mostly occupied with T20 assignments, a number of Test players have been involved in camps across multiple venues of the country under the 'Bangladesh Tigers' banner.

Bangladesh, who have a disastrous record against Pakistan in Tests as they lost 12 out of 13 matches with six of those being innings defeats, toured Pakistan last in 2020 where they lost the opening match in Rawalpindi by an innings and 44 runs.

The tourists were scheduled to fly to Pakistan again to play another Test but the surge of Covid-19 saw that fixture abandoned.

Bangladesh's current Test skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who was part of the Rawalpindi Test and made 44 and 38 runs in two innings respectively, admitted that they need to provide their A game in Pakistan to do well against the hosts.

"As a team, we are looking forward to returning to Pakistan for the ICC World Test Championship," Shanto was quoted in a PCB press release on Friday.

"Playing in Pakistan is always a challenging but exciting prospect, and we will have to be at our very best to compete against a formidable side in their backyard," he concluded.

The series will also give a clear indication where Bangladesh are actually heading into the ongoing ICC Test Championship 2023-25 cycle in which they are currently placed eighth among nine teams with one win in four matches.

A lot to fix for Brazil against in-form Uruguay

STAR SPORTS DESK

Coming up against Uruguay, the standout performers of this Copa America so far, Brazil, missing their key player Vinicius Jr, will have a lot to fix in this heavyweight quarterfinal clash at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas on Sunday morning.

Uruguay have shown that they have the credentials to go all the way this year, though, and can be optimistic of success on Sunday as they secured a 2-0 victory over Brazil in their last competitive meeting in 2026 World Cup qualifying in October last year.

Brazil have reached the knockout rounds of the Copa America for the third successive tournament, but they missed the chance to secure top spot in Group D after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Colombia.

What would see Brazil coach Dorival Junior, who is yet to taste defeat since taking the charge of the Selecao in January, scratch is head is the fact that he would have to go without his star player Vinicius for this clash. The Real Madrid forward, who scored twice in their 4-1 win over Paraguay in the group stage, will be missing this game due to a suspension for receiving two yellow cards in the group stage -- against Paraguay and Colombia.

Dorival could swap Arsenal winger Gabriel Martinelli directly in the left-wing or he could go for fitting in the young prodigy Endrick alongside his soon-to-be Real Madrid teammate Rodrygo and Barcelona's Raphinha in the right flank.

With Brazil already struggling to find their way into opposition's defence in this tournament, Dorival will know he is up for his toughest challenge so far in this Copa against a Uruguayan side that have not only racked up nine goals – most by any team so far – but have also been defensively solid as they let in just one in stoppage time in a 3-1 win over Panama in the first game.

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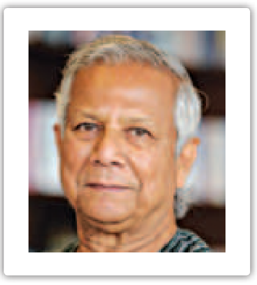
Put an end to harassment of Prof Yunus immediately

4 US senators urge Bangladesh govt



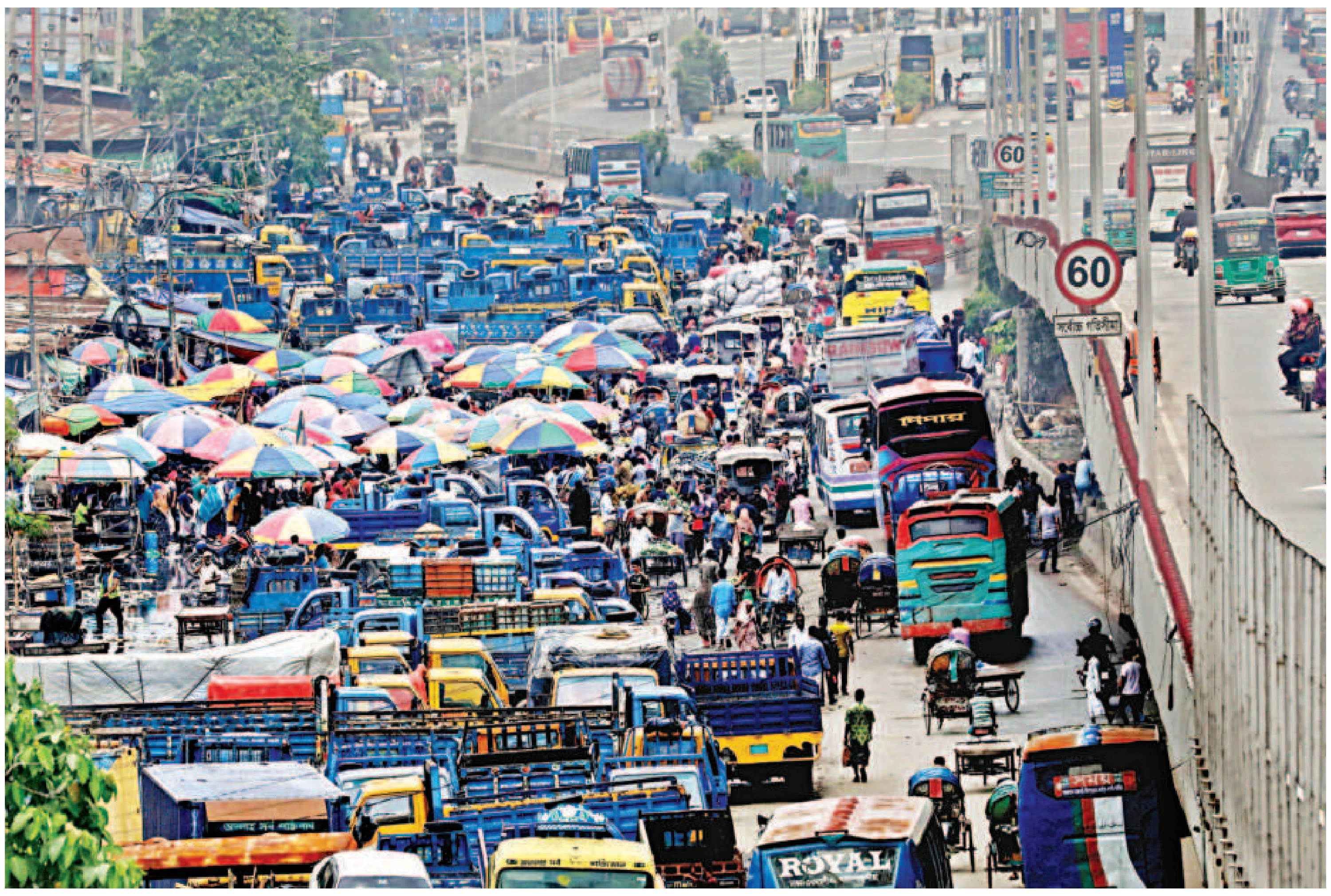
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four US senators, including the Senate majority whip, issued a statement demanding an immediate end to what they said was harassment of Prof Muhammad Yunus, adding that the "seemingly personal vendetta" against him will negatively impact the US-Bangladesh partnership.

They also urged the Bangladesh government to respect democratic values and institutions.

The statement dated

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Parked pickups take up a large part of the Dhaka-Chattogram road next to the wholesale fish market in the capital's Jatrabari, leaving little room for vehicles to pass through. The traffic situation is aggravated by some makeshift shops under big umbrellas. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Six lives lost as bus hits truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

At least six people, including two children, were killed and some 28 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a fruit-laden truck in Dinajpur Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The incident took place on the Dinajpur-Phulbari regional highway in Chawkrampur village adjacent to Panchbari Bazar around 6:00am.

Most of the victims were on the bus, said police.

The deceased were identified as truck driver Hasu Mia, 28, of Thakurgaon's Pirganj; bus supervisor Rajesh Bahadur, 30, of Dinajpur's Bochaganj; bus driver's assistant Md Ali, of Pirganj; Jyna 5, daughter of Mominur Rahman of Dinajpur's Chirirbandar, Bibha Akhtar, 10, daughter of Jahid Hossain of Bochaganj, and passenger of a paddy-laden van Swadesh Chandra Roy, 30, of Chirirbandar.

Dinajpur Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC)

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

A 28-year-old Bangladeshi man was gunned down by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Baliadangi border in Thakurgaon early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Raju Islam, son of Habib Ali of Gariali village under Boro Palashbari union of the upazila.

"BSF members opened fire on a group of Bangladeshi cattle smugglers near the Nagarbhita border pillar 376/5-S. Raju got shot and died on the spot," said Baliadangi Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Firoz Kabir.

After the incident, BSF members took custody of Raju's body, he added.

In this regard, a flat meeting was held with the BSF in the afternoon, according to sources at the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)-50 Battalion.

BSF claimed that their members opened fire in self-defence as they came under attack, they said.

MIGRANT SHIPWRECK

89 migrants dead at sea off Mauritania

AFP, *Nouakchott*

89 migrants bound for Europe perished when their boat capsized earlier this week off the coast of Mauritania, the state news agency and a local official said Thursday, while dozens more remain missing.

"The Mauritanian coast guard recovered the bodies of 89 people aboard a large traditional fishing boat that capsized on Monday July 1 on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean" about four kilometres from the country's southwest city of Ndiago, the state news agency said.

The coastguard rescued nine people, including a five-year-old girl, it said.

The agency quoted survivors saying that the boat had set sail from the border of Senegal and Gambia with 170 passengers on board, bringing the number of missing to 72.

Mauritanian coastguard rescued nine people, including a five-year-old girl.

A senior local government official gave AFP similar information, on condition of anonymity.

The Atlantic route is particularly dangerous due to strong currents, with migrants travelling in overloaded, often unseaworthy, boats without enough drinking water.

But it has grown in popularity due to increased vigilance in the Mediterranean.

The number of migrants landing at Spain's Canary Islands in 2023 more than doubled in one year to a record 39,910, according to the Spanish government.

Efforts to secure Gaza truce gain momentum

Hamas makes fresh proposal on ceasefire deal as Israel says it is resuming stalled negotiations

AGENCIES

Efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza gathered momentum yesterday after Hamas made a revised proposal on the terms of a deal and Israel said it would resume stalled negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told US President Joe Biden on Thursday he would send a delegation to restart negotiations, and an Israeli official said his country's team would be led by the head of the Mossad intelligence agency.

Biden welcomed the move and a source in Israel's negotiating team, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was now a real chance of achieving agreement.

The Israeli remarks were in sharp contrast to past instances in the nine-month-old war in Gaza when Israel said conditions attached by Hamas were not acceptable.

A Palestinian official close to the internationally mediated peace efforts said the latest proposal by the militant Islamist group could lead to a framework agreement if embraced by Israel.

He said Hamas was no longer demanding as a pre-condition an Israeli commitment to a permanent ceasefire before the signing of an agreement and would allow negotiations to achieve that throughout a first six-week phase.

"Should the sides need more time to seal an agreement on a permanent ceasefire, the two sides should agree there would be no return to the fighting until they do that," the official told Reuters.

Hamas later said it rejected the presence of foreign forces in Gaza, signalling its opposition to any plan to send an international contingent to the Gaza Strip to help keep the peace in the Palestinian enclave.

The Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), a group allied with Hamas, said separately that it would consider any international or other forces in Gaza as occupiers.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

» Israel sends Mossad chief to Qatar for Gaza hostage negotiations: sources

» Seven killed in Israeli West Bank raid

» More than 38,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since last Oct 7

Martinez saves Messi's blushes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a tense quarterfinal encounter of Copa America 2024 yesterday (Bangladesh time), defending champions Argentina narrowly overcame a feisty Ecuador in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw in regulation time at a packed NRG Stadium in Texas, thanks to their reliable goalkeeper, Emiliano Martinez.

The match provided a thrilling finish and a surprising twist involving the winning captain Lionel Messi, who remained subdued throughout the 90 minutes while his teammates sporadically sparked in offensive transitions.

Argentina's title defense was threatened when Ecuador's Kevin Rodriguez scored a late equaliser, cancelling out Albiceleste's 35-minute lead through defender Lisandro Martinez's goal against the run of play, pushing the game into a decisive penalty shootout; as extra time is reserved only for the final.

The spotlight then fell heavily on Messi, who stepped up to take the first shot of the shootout. Known for his composure and precision, Messi

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Carpenter ants perform amputations to save lives

CNN ONLINE

Humans aren't the only ones capable of performing amputations to save lives.

Florida carpenter ants have been observed biting off the injured limbs of nestmates, depending on the location of the wounds, to help their counterparts survive, according to a new study published Tuesday in the journal Current Biology.

About 90 percent to 95 percent of the ants receiving amputations make it through the process and continue with their duties within the nest just fine despite losing a leg, researchers found.

Reddish-brown Florida carpenter ants, which reach about 1.5 centimeters in length, can be found nesting in rotting wood throughout the southeastern United States. They have to defend their nests against rival ant colonies, which can result in injuries.

Lead study author Erik Frank, a behavioral ecologist at the University of Würzburg in Germany's state of Bavaria, said he doesn't think the ants consciously know what to do. Instead, it may be more instinctual, similar to how humans bring their fingers to their lips after a paper cut.

Spain midfielder Mikel Merino celebrates with teammates after heading home a 119th-miute winner in a 2-1 win over Germany in a Euro 2024 quarterfinal at the Stuttgart Arena in Stuttgart on Friday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Merino's 119th-minute winner sends Spain into Euro semis

AFP, *Stuttgart*

A Mikel Merino goal in the final minute of extra time took Spain to a 2-1 win over Germany and into the Euro 2024 semis.

After a fiery yet goalless first half, Spain's Dani Olmo latched onto an inch-perfect pass from Spanish wunderkind Lamine Yamal to give La Roja the lead on 51 minutes.

Niclas Fuellkrug struck the post with 14 minutes remaining but with the hosts staring at an early exit, Florian Wirtz slammed in a Joshua Kimmich knock-down in the 89th minute to take the game to extra time.

With a minute remaining in extra time and the game looking set

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

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Embracing the old-world charm, one antique at a time

If you pass through Gulshan DCC 2 market, the shops selling antiques just grab your attention; an old dresser or a bureau in teak wood would make a beautiful foyer table or an entryway table. With lace curtains drawn on the mirror, the dresser can serve as a writing table for guests, who missed you for being out.

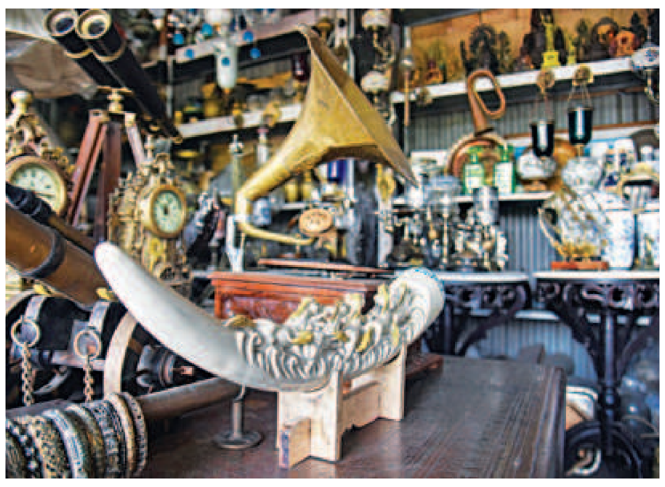
RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

There is a certain drama in being mystified with all things retro and vintage. You are always in your world of imagination and creativity, fleeting from one era to another, flying on wings of yellow butterflies, which symbolises transformation, rebirth, and personal growth. And for people being hopelessly attached to the old-world charm, the renaissance of giving antiques a new lease of life by transforming and upscaling the old classics in current context is all about being retro-chic.

We have categories of antiques in our open market, there are the real products dating 100 to 150 years back, then there are chemically treated antique looking items hog washing buyers and there are also collectibles from ship-breaking; selling scraps from ship breaking is a very robust industry in the country.

THE BHATIARI PULL

Collecting old artifacts is a hobby and sometimes old ship wreckage is the best place to look for retro vibes. In Bhatiari, Chattogram the entire street situated near the highway N1 is dotted with stores selling antiques from old ships.



"People do flock to Bhatiari to search for unique items that would add a statement to their home of collectibles. For example, marine sextants in wooden boxes are a collector's delight. The shops have shelves of ornamental wooden boxes of intact sextants, used in navigation to determine latitude and longitude," starts Mizanur Rahman Yousuf, a journalist by profession and a former antique dealer.

In fact, they are the hottest items on sale on the online shopping platforms, he adds.

"Now, before putting them up for sale, the business experts buy in lots at the source, which are then brought by marine stores and sold to retailers. There are separate lots for marine items, brass items, furniture, kitchenware, tableware, so on and so forth. It is said that 96 percent of ship scrap is recycled. Though, in terms of antiques, these items are only 30 years old maximum, because it is mandatory to scrap a ship after 30 years of running; but they attract local and foreign tourists equally," Yousuf explains.

Brass favourites, an old coal iron, oil lamps, bells, and dongs are bought by weighing their weight in kilogrammes, then they are polished and resold. Ceramic and porcelain ware with a web of tiny cracks over its surface are very sought-after pieces for repurpose, as well. These bowls add a tag of charm to table décor as fruit bowls or floating candle holders.

Lifeboat oars are a collector's item, if you want to believe it. People paint them in happy pastel colours or intricate geometric designs and many upcycle them by using them as nameplates near the main entrance or as kitchen hook hangers or even as eccentric garden accessories.

"Tourists and collectors are drawn to Chattogram's ship breaking industry collectibles. It is an industry with a market value exceeding Tk 10,000 crore, but currently it is going through a stagnation due to the rising dollar price and margin rates imposed by banks," says Yousuf.

Every object is reusable and value adds to the economy. A mere example of the fact that the re-usage of 5,000 tonnes of ship furniture proves how it impacts the economy and environment. We do not need to cut down trees for making furniture," he says.

The ship-breaking industry in Bangladesh holds the top global position, but the industry faces a challenge in converting all ship recycling yards into green yards by 2025.

UPSCALING ANTIQUES

Not just the collectibles from ship breaking yards, Dhaka has its fair share of shops boasting antiques.

"If you pass through Gulshan DCC 2 market, the shops selling antiques just grab your attention; an old dresser or a bureau in teak wood would make a beautiful foyer table or an entryway table. With lace curtains drawn on the mirror, the dresser can serve as a writing table for guests, who missed you for being out. It can have a fountain pen, an ink pot, blue letter pads and envelopes and an old brass vase of freshly cut flowers, setting a décor tone for your home," says Nasira Mansoor, an interior consultant.

This vintage dresser with a mirror can be a versatile piece of furniture and can also be used as a statement piece in your drawing room with adopted styles of periods past. Just like an old easy chair with criss cross cane back support, adds a grand look to your wide veranda, rewinding you to the days when your great grandfather would sit in his quiet corner and listen to dramas and Rabindra sangeet on shortwave radio programmes.

An ornate palonka or zamindari antique bed, that has steps to get up on and is tightly tucked up with croquet or hand embroidered bedsheet and pillow cases will lend your bedroom an air of romantic period play theme.

With such antique pieces you can let your ideas run wild. The antique markets are like treasure-troves for people who love the time-worn period look. From tableware like old English porcelain bowls, plates and cups to cut glass candle holders, oil lanterns, door charms that protect from evil eye to rusted and dusty brass idols, dolls, decoration pieces; the shops are stuffed with antiquated things.

You cannot walk from one aisle to another without stepping on some fragile objects. Tea pots and chinaware dating back to the British rule that are stamped with Made in England or Holland labels and various sizes of cooking pots and other belongings of a lost generation are on display here.

"Though Dhamrai boasts bell metal products, very rarely you will find an antique there. Their products are given an antique look but the area can be great for finding lower-end antiques and it's always worth a rummage," says Mansoor.

"The shops in Gulshan do carry some fine vintage stuff dating back roughly a hundred years or so after the British period ended. Rarity also factors in pricing, especially if it's a collectible in a particularly active market like antique coins, lamps, and glassware that sell regularly for surprising sums at such stores. These beautiful pieces of history are collected from zamindars who fell on bad patches, or old family heirlooms where the new owner is not interested in their new windfall, sell off," Mansoor talks from an experienced antique bargain hunter's point of view.

FROM THE ONE IN BUSINESS

Fahim Metal Handicraft, a traditional business selling brass, copper, bronze items in Rayerbagh, Jatrabari claims to be in this line of business for five generations now.

"I am one of the biggest antique dealers in business and I can say that it is very easy to be double crossed in buying such antique products. The market is full of new products that are washed in chemicals to achieve that antique, rusted look. Having said that, we do get hold of real vintage items collected from excavation sites or sold off by current owners," says NM Fahim Rahman, the current business head of the shop.

"We do not have products made of real copper in Bangladesh, we mostly used the alloy called bell metal or kasha to make kitchenware and dining ware. These were considered an investment in bygone times. Our markets of antique products are also selling Indian or Pakistani handicrafts in the guise of archaic heirloom products. Selling old items is a collector's game and before it goes to the real buyer, you must remember that it has changed a minimum of four to five hands. When a client asks us to collect something for them, we search for it within our commercial network or circle, thus this involvement of different stakeholders," he explains.

Mitford in Old Dhaka is the biggest hub of collectibles both imported and local. Recently a buzz has been created in the antique business, by people who can afford it, and they are opting for old-world aristocracy, as Fahim feels.

When upscaling is trending with a go green sticker on it, these items, holding aesthetic and old family significance, can be re-used in many ways. Antiques add grandeur to your home if used in an artistic way. You do not have to turn your home into a museum rather highlight a period piece for that subtle grace.

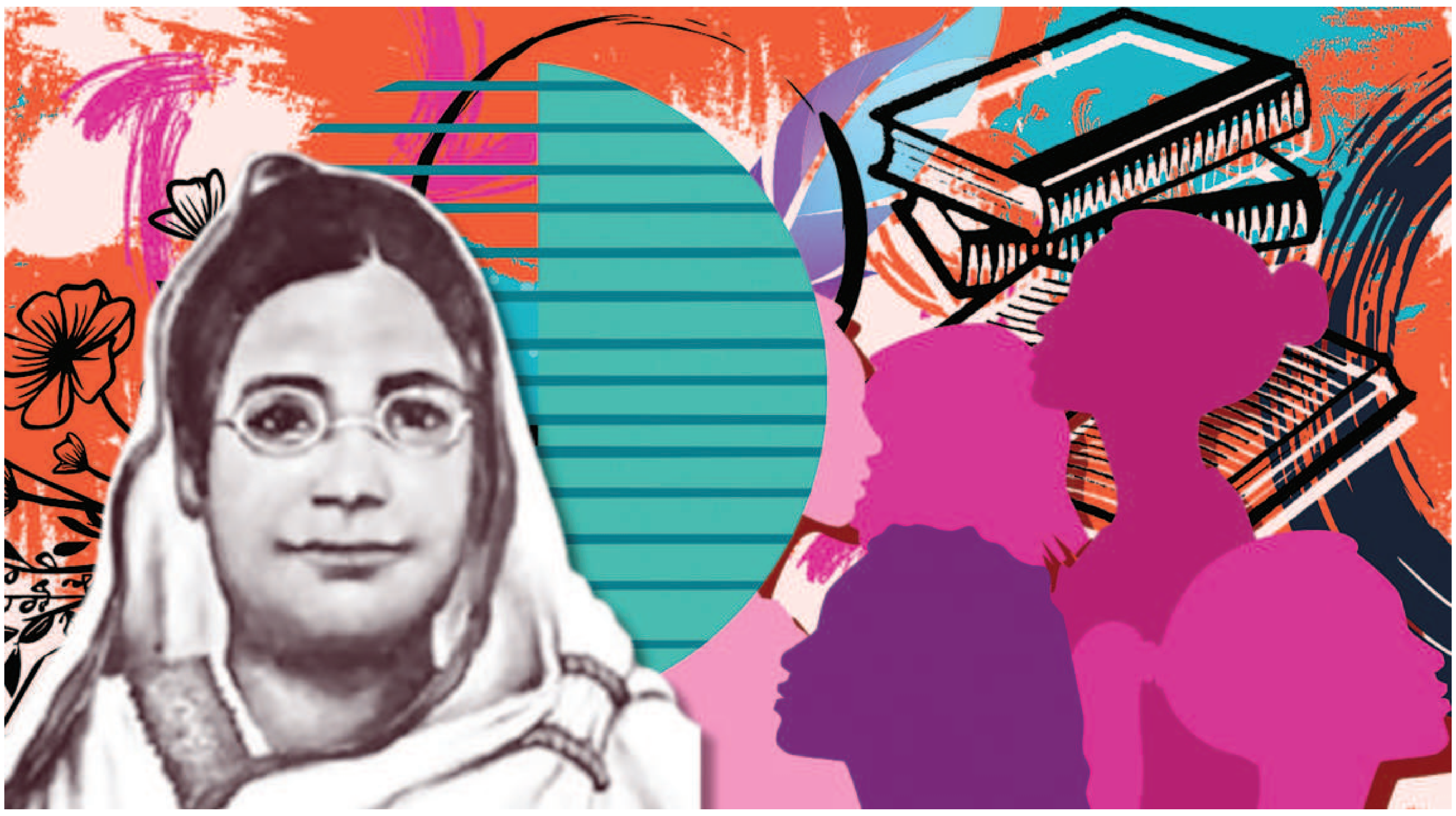


ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

BEGUM ROKEYA

A redoubtable Muslim feminist and educationist

MOHAMMAD A. QUAYUM

Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932), fondly known as Begum Rokeya, was an autodidact who became a formidable champion of women's rights and education when women in South Asia, especially Muslim women, were forced to live in subhuman conditions, almost like animals, or even worse than animals (Rokeya's analogies). She was brought up in an environment that was brutally indifferent to women and often viewed them, following the teachings of the legendary first man and lawgiver in Indian mythology, Manu and his influential "laws", as embodiments of "untruth, sin and darkness" and comparable to "dogs" and "cows." Rokeya's mission was to root out such primitive, pejorative, and gynophobic ideas from society and make women equal to men, or even outshine them, through their education, empowerment, and emancipation.

Born in a rich but ultraconservative Muslim family on December 9, 1880, in the village of Pairaband, Rangpur, Rokeya did not enjoy parental love or freedom in childhood, only because of her gender identity. In her dedicatory note to her novel *Padmaraag*, she admits, "I have never experienced the love of a father, mother...or a teacher" (All excerpts in the article are from my translation of Rokeya's work in *The Essential Rokeya*). Moreover, in *Aborodhbashini*, she scornfully recounts how she had to live in an extreme purdah system from the age of five, which segregated her not only from men but also from women outside their family circle.

Her androcentric father, Zahiruddin Muhammad Abu Ali Hyder Saber, was wealthy enough to marry four times, including a European woman, and send his eldest son, Ibrahim Saber, to England for higher study. Yet, he had no interest in sending Rokeya and her elder sister, Karimunnesa, to school. He also prohibited them from learning English and Bangla, considering them "non-Islamic" languages that could corrupt the minds of young girls, but not so much of boys, as Rokeya's two elder brothers were both brought up in English-medium schools in Calcutta (Kolkata).

However, Rokeya's eldest brother, Ibrahim Saber, was progressive and supported women's education. Rokeya once likened his affection for her to "Kausar", the heavenly stream of nectar mentioned in the Quran. It was Ibrahim Saber who taught English and Bangla to Rokeya, often in the dim light of a candle after their authoritarian patriarch had retired for the night. Another significant figure in Rokeya's emotional and intellectual growth was her husband, Khan Bahadur Syed Sakhawat Hossain. Like Ibrahim Saber, Sakhawat pursued his education in England and believed in women's empowerment and emancipation. He inspired Rokeya, who was childless, to dedicate her life to this cause. Their unwavering support was pivotal in motivating Rokeya to challenge the regressive practices of her time and spearhead the charge of rescuing women from what she called their "shipwrecked" state.

Rokeya's mission of bolstering the status of South Asian women, especially of her own faith community, began with her essay "Strijatir Abanati", first published in the ladies' magazine, *Mahila*, in 1903 and then in a Muslim magazine, *Nabanur*, the following year. This was followed by a slew of publications in several other newspapers and popular magazines, such as *Nabaprabha*, *Bharat Mahila*, *Bangeya Muslim Sahitya Patrika*, *Saugat*, *Sadhana*, *Dhumketu*, *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, *The Mussalman*, to name a few.

In her essays, Rokeya launched stringent attacks on men for depriving women of their inherent rights and subjecting them to various forms of oppression and exploitation. However, she also expressed disdain towards women for internalising society's male-centred values and thoughtlessly surrendering their dignity and femininity to men. She argues that men have cunningly manipulated women under the guise of love, reducing them to the status of "bonded slaves", "domesticated animals", and "feckless mannequins". In turn, women have accepted their subjugation and embraced lives of passivity and ignorance in the vein of "opium addicts".

In her essay "Subhasadeq", she instigates women to rise from their "addictive" state of dehumanising serfhood: "Wake up, mothers, sisters, daughters; rise, leave your bed and march forward...Say, mother, pounding your chest, we are not animals! Say, sister, we are not objects for possession! Say, daughter, we are not items of ornament to be locked away in an iron safe. Say, all in unison, we are humans!" In "Griha", Rokeya dissects the general perception that men rule the world and women command the home by showing how South Asian women, irrespective of their class, colour, cast, or creed, are all homeless, forced to live within their four walls, at the whim and mercy of men. "For those who live in subjugation and do not have the right to consider the house of their 'keeper' as their residence, home is like a prison," she argues stridently and concludes in a more blistering tone, "Therefore I say, we do not even have a little hut to call our home. No other creature in the animal world is destitute like us. Everyone has a home—only we do not."

Rokeya's literary repertoire encompasses not only explosive essays but also a plethora of poems and short stories vehemently condemning toxic masculinity. In her work "Biye-pagla Buro", she offers scathing criticism towards elderly men who engage in the inappropriate practice of marrying young girls, exploiting the allowance of polygamy in Islam. The way she makes fun of the selfishness and sexual obsession of septuagenarian men in the story is darkly comic and virulent.

In "Nurse Nelly", she portrays the dire consequences that can befall an entire family due to a woman's lack of education. The story revolves around Nayeema, an uneducated Muslim girl who succumbs to the manipulative tactics employed by a group of British Evangelical missionaries, leading her to convert to Christianity and become "Nelly". Tragically, this decision not only results in her own demise but also claims the lives of her mother-in-law and her two children. Rokeya's underlying message in the story foregrounds the paramount significance of educating and empowering women, as they play an indispensable role in upholding the stability of both family and society. By keeping women uninformed and susceptible to manipulation, the fabric of cultural and religious values can unravel, as Rokeya poignantly depicts in this narrative.

Rokeya's most famous story is "Sultana's Dream", in which a young Muslim girl, Sultana, visits Ladyland in her dream, where women run the state and men are confined indoors or in the "mardana". In this seriocomic utopian story, Rokeya shows how beautiful and morally as well as socially prosperous a country can be when women are given their rights and opportunities, and are allowed to act according to their potential, unimpeded by male bias or misogynous policies. Ladyland is not only neat and clean, well-maintained like a garden, but also free from violence, corruption, and crime; people here have tamed nature and tapped its energy for the good of the community; they do not fight over ideological differences or fritter their time away smoking and chatting; child marriage is banned and female education is actively encouraged; and their only religion is adherence to Love and Truth, without the traditional rituals that divide society and induce intercommunal riots and war. This is Rokeya's blueprint for a future when humanity learns to shun male hegemony and treat all human beings as equals.

Knowing that education was the only way forward for women, Rokeya decided to start a school for girls with the money bequeathed by her husband before he died in 1909. She began the school in Bhagalpur, Bihar, Sakhawat's hometown, with only five students. But unable to cope with Sakhawat's dogmatic daughter by his first marriage (Rokeya was Sakhawat's second wife), she moved the school to Calcutta, starting with eight students this time and naming it after her husband—Sakhawat Memorial School for Girls. When Rokeya founded her school in 1911, there were only two other schools for Muslim girls in Calcutta: one established in 1897 under the patronage of Begum Ferdous Mahal, the Begum of the Nawab of Murshidabad, and the other in 1909, under the patronage of Khojesta Akhtar Banu, mother of the well-known Bangali Muslim leader, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. This speaks volumes about how Rokeya, who had never stepped into a school compound in childhood, became a trailblazer in her adult life in the education and modernisation of South Asian Muslim women.

Rokeya struggled throughout her life to run and expand the school. Her biggest challenge came from religious chauvinists who were fiercely opposed to the education of Muslim girls despite the prophet's injunction that education was obligatory for all Muslims. Unable to break Rokeya's iron will, they started spreading hideous rumours that she was a "whore" whose only intention was to make money by using the school as a façade. They also accused her of being a Christian behind her purdahnashin Muslim disguise, determined to convert the Muslim girls to Christianity. Referring to her essay "Strijatir Abanati", where Rokeya advises women to toss aside all jewellery as insignias of their slavery, one critic asked notoriously, slandering Rokeya, "But could she be truly civilised without getting rid of her clothes as well and becoming naked?"

A second problem was getting students, as Muslim girls in those days were not allowed to step out of the house without purdah. To convince the mothers, Rokeya went from door to door to explain how education would enrich their daughters' lives and assured them of using covered transports to protect the girls from the male gaze. She also experienced untold financial hardships as rich Muslim men refused to support her mission of educating girls, which violated the norms of Islam in their view. Notwithstanding such mounting hurdles, Rokeya went ahead with her feminist-cum-educational vision and mission till the very end of her life, for which she is now regarded as one of the most admirable icons in South Asian history—deserving of a university and a university hall in Bangladesh, and two schools and a library in India named after her.

Mohammad Quayum*'s books on Rokeya include* The Essential Rokeya *(Brill, 2013) and* A Feminist Foremother *(Orient Blackswan, 2017; with M.M. Hasan).*

Rokeya's most famous story is "Sultana's Dream", in which a young Muslim girl, Sultana, visits Ladyland in her dream, where women run the state and men are confined indoors or in the "mardana". In this seriocomic utopian story, Rokeya shows how beautiful and morally as well as socially prosperous a country can be when women are given their rights and opportunities, and are allowed to act according to their potential, unimpeded by male bias or misogynous policies.

POETRY

Colours

KASHFIA NAHREEN

I see colours everywhere–
I see hues of crimson scattered across the pages of my books,
The splashes getting darker by the second,
As if someone was bled dry right on top of it.
I see colours everywhere–
Shades of purple with a tinge of red overwhelm my senses throughout the day,
It reminds me of flesh turning blue
Once the last breath is taken,
And all I can think of when I see it is you.
I see colours everywhere–
Bright yellow spots scattered with white splotches
Are what I see when I feel warm and happy and content,
And god knows how long it has been
Since I watched the yellow streaks dance across me,
Maybe I stopped seeing yellow
The day you died.
I see colours everywhere-
Streaks of grey intermingled with splashes of black
Bring to mind overcast days
Where the cloud seems to pour out everything weighing them down,
And the thought of rain
Always reminds me of you
And how heavily it stormed the night you died.
I see colours everywhere-
Flecks of yellow waltzing amidst an ocean of green
Pulls me into its depth and showers me in a torrent of your memories,

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

And every time that happens
I am engulfed by the pain of losing you.
Echoes of your voice ring in my ears
As the world turns scarlet in front of my eyes.
Your face haunts my thoughts every goddamn day
And I can't help but remember the smile on your face
The last time I saw you,
You looked so peaceful in death
Like you were slumbering in the depths of the cerulean sea,
Everyone kept telling me
How they never saw anyone looking so content after death,
But all I could think of was how you were gone,
Suddenly stripping all the bright colours from my life,
That no longer do I see colours everywhere.

Kashfia Nahreen *is an aspiring poet and author who is doing her Masters in Creative Writing.*

Monsoon osmosis

REBECCA HAQUE

Soft melody of Fazr Azaan
A pre-dawn chiaroscuro
of flashing silver sky
and dusky trees
Wafting branches wild
in the sudden Kalboishaki storm
shedding fistfulls of foliage
I inhale the luxurious scent
of squelched earth
smoking under the sodden leaves
Entranced by shafts of electric
blue lightning bolts
I am drenched in the rushing rain
I feel the sentient plops of raindrops seeping into the texture
of my soft brown skin
Slowly awakening the spirit within to respond with gratitude
to the muezzin's call to prayer

Rebecca Haque *is Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka.*

PHOTO: **MAISHA SYEDA**

Cheat officer appointed to look after finances of all large corporations

Despite her stellar results, many people have criticised the actions of the cheat officer. They have gone on to social media and have misspelled her name over and over in outrage. Trolls are having a field day because it is easy to attack a woman on social media, generally.

NUTBOLTU

When you have corruption in your business. When your business partner steals all the money you were planning to steal. When you have product delivery services take your money in a backpack with a bang and disappear to a deep dark valley where you can never get it back. Who you gonna call?

Now you have someone. The government recently appointed Labiba Habiba as the official Cheat Officer (CO), not to be confused with other people who start their introductions at wedding parties with two Cs. Labiba Shabuba has taken on the job to reduce the heat of international governing agencies crying that we have too much unrestrained corruption. Cut down bad business practices to grow and so on and stuff.

"Corruption is like the moon, without it there is utter chaos," stated Patel Shwarma of the South Indian Mustachioed Businessperson's Association. They've been filing verbal corruption cases against many local firms, but no action has been taken, mainly due to difficulty in understanding the accent.

PHOTO: ALICE PASQUAL

Habiba Marhaba Labiba has been in office for exactly 63 days and she has already taken some strong corrective measures. She started with drafting old, existing laws into illustrated manuals showing corruption is bad, mmkay? These manuals were then handed out to business owners who strongly appreciated the colourful artwork showing cash taken under the table is darker than cash taken over the desk. Their appreciation was shown through supportive donations via vKash app (number provided at the end of the article).

Shabiba Fariba then went on to take extreme steps to reduce the heat put on by donor agencies and anti-corruption bodies. She encouraged people to cut down trees all across the city. Experts claimed this was a bold strategic move. Donor agencies now turned their attention to the actual rising heat in the city, potentially leading to an ecological meltdown. People started dying because of the resulting heatwave.

The good of the many outweigh the good of the few ... good ... few poor people. No one was looking at corporate and business corruption anymore. As a result, things started getting back to normal, meaning business continued as usual.

"It takes money to make money, preferably other people's money," said Tanvir Sultan, MBA. "International donor agencies have been too focused on corporate and business corruption, and the creative moves by Lafiba Shamira have taken the heat off what really matters: business," he explained.

Despite her stellar results, many people have criticised the actions of the cheat officer. They have gone on to social media and have misspelled her name over and over in outrage. Trolls are having a field day because it is easy to attack a woman on social media, generally. The traditional patriarchy feels women are still not capable of taking on challenging new social objectives. It is a social construct that we at Satireday fight constantly by ensuring women employed here have the same equal rights and salaries as other women. As such, we rally behind the CCO Larifa Labira.

Newly appointed cheat officer stays on top of business corruption.

PHOTO: DENYS NEVOZHAI

Boss goes insane trying to redefine insanity

UNPROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT

The regional manager of the Madaripur branch of Thunder Beefin, a paper company known for intra-office beef, has reportedly gone insane trying to redefine the definition of insanity.

This was confirmed by the assistant to the regional manager, who insisted we run his comments despite him not being a mental health professional qualified to diagnose mental illness. We have decided to run the comments because due diligence is so 2007.

Afaik Haroon, the assistant, said, "Well, it all started in a meeting last month called to address our lack of profits and our abundance of degrowth. There was talk about the digital revolution, which happened about a decade ago with people ordering paper from websites. Some people told the boss that our focus on doing people-to-people sales was not going to cut it anymore, and we had to hire more people to run our own website and make it seamless."

According to Afaik, the boss then came up with an idea to reallocate existing resources, because new hires were absolutely out of the question with degrowth being at the level it was.

She said in utter frustration, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

One of the meeting attendees fainted because of an overdose of déjà vu, a dangerous drug that causes the matrix to glitch, meeting sources close to the event and closer to developments told Satireday. One of the employees, now a former employee, pointed out to the boss that her colleague had fainted because this reallocation of resources was being floated as a solution for the 43rd time in the last decade.

She said in utter frustration, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

At this, the boss exploded. "What are you trying to say? Are you trying to say I am insane? What do you know about the definition? I will define it for you.

"Insanity is not solving a problem when I give you the solution. I have allocated resources to solve the problem before. It's not my problem that you aren't able to implement my solution.

"So, insanity is not being able to do the same thing asked of you repeatedly."

"Sir, isn't that incompetence?"

"Well, then insanity is you asking me to solve this problem every two months and expecting me to come up with different results," the boss shouted at the top of his voice.

"That's what she said!" exclaimed another former employee.

"Hahahahaha, then we are all insane, we are all insane!" the boss cried and ran out of the room, laughing hysterically, and has not been seen or heard from since.

Afaik said that is what led him to diagnose that the boss went insane.

He said, "As assistant to the regional manager, I have now taken the reins, and I will engage in reallocating resources. And I expect results!"

Email your satire pieces to
starsatireday@gmail.com

Official transferred to slightly worse area for embezzling Tk 10,000 crore

SHOAIB AHMED SAYAM

In a big win for justice, a government official who has abused his powers to embezzle Tk 10,000 crore is facing the harshest punishment the legal system can offer: transfer to a slightly worse work area.

M Bazlur Rahman -- a veteran tax official cum money launderer, with over 10 years of experience -- was caught when Anti-Fraud Foundation (AFF) watched TikTok videos of Bazlur buying five resorts and a cruise ship in the name of his wife and son.

Md Murshid Khoka, director of AFF, said, "We had no idea that a government official, whose financial records are available to us at all times, has amassed so much illegal wealth.

"We have taken steps to be more vigilant. Our officers have already increased our TikTok watchtime," he continued. "A case has been filed, but we think the transfer is more than enough, maybe a bit too much even."

"Imagine the barbarity: you can't meet your work friends every day anymore. The people are new, surely a nerve-racking experience. And on top of that, the commute gets disproportionately long. Does anyone deserve this?"

For over a week, netizens have been demanding justice, with the chant "Transfer him!" Critics of the movement, however, opine that the punishment is just too cruel.

"Previously, he was demoted, from the post of assistant director to assistant to the director, shattering his self-confidence. The transfer just adds to the inhumanity," said Golam Kibria, a human rights activist.

"Imagine the barbarity: you can't meet your work friends every day anymore. The people are new, surely a nerve-racking experience. And on top of that, the commute gets disproportionately long. Does anyone deserve this?" said Mukta Ahmed, a government official who owns seven duplex houses in Gulshan.

Bazlur's family members are in shock. Speaking to this correspondent at their mansion, they said everyone thought Bazlur was a humble man, but extremely adept at investing his Tk 20,000 salary into profitable ventures.

"My father has done so much for this state, and maybe Canada's economy. It's a shame that the state, or Canada, didn't come to his rescue," said Bazlur's daughter Eva Sion Rahman.

Contacted, Bazlur said, "I shouldn't have embezzled so much, knowing that I'm responsible for managing the people's hard-earned taxes. Despite this fall, I'm looking forward to working at the customs department."

Meanwhile, 10 farmers were hanged for failing to pay loans amounting to Tk 5,000.

A photo of a man barely able to cope with the darkness after being caught embezzling. The office he was transferred from had three overhead lamps.

PHOTO: FREEPIK.COM

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How we entered the era of digital money

A Bangladeshi tale of transition from money orders to electronic payments

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Digital systems have increased convenience as there is no need to drive home or face traffic to get services. Covid-19 was also a big push towards adoption of digital services.

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Rahman Ali, a 68-year-old retired primary school teacher, begins his day in a serene village in the northwestern district of Bogura with a routine he has perfected over the decades.

He methodically prepares tea, reads the newspaper, then walks around the locality, visiting the school premises or taking a stroll through the market.

Today, however, he has a different purpose. He is going to the local post office to send a money order to his daughter in Dhaka, just as he has done countless times before. But when he goes there nowadays, something feels different -- the once bustling post office has only a few people.

THE COMFORT OF TRADITION

For Rahman, the process of sending a money order is more than a mere transaction – it is a ritual.

He meticulously fills out the form, carefully counts the notes, and hands them over to the postmaster with a familiar nod.

"I trust this method," he says with a sense of nostalgia. "It's reliable. I know my daughter will receive the money safely."

In contrast, Ayman Siddique, a 25-year-old entrepreneur, runs a handicraft business from his small office in Dhaka. He is busy with orders and payments. For him, time is of the essence.

"I used to hate the wait at the post office," he recalls. "But now, thanks to mobile financial services, I can send and receive money in seconds. It's a game-changer."

A GENERATION GAP

The contrasting experiences of Rahman and Ayman highlight the generational divide in Bangladesh's financial landscape. While the older generation continues to hold onto the familiarity of money orders, the younger generation has swiftly adapted to the convenience of digital payments.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the heyday of money orders came over a decade ago in 2011-12, when 2,218 transactions, totaling Tk 625.92 crore were conducted. These figures illustrate the significant reliance on this traditional method at the time.

But by 2015-16, the number reduced by nearly two-thirds as only 796 money orders amounting to Tk 197.91 crore were dispatched. This represents the initial phase of digital adoption.

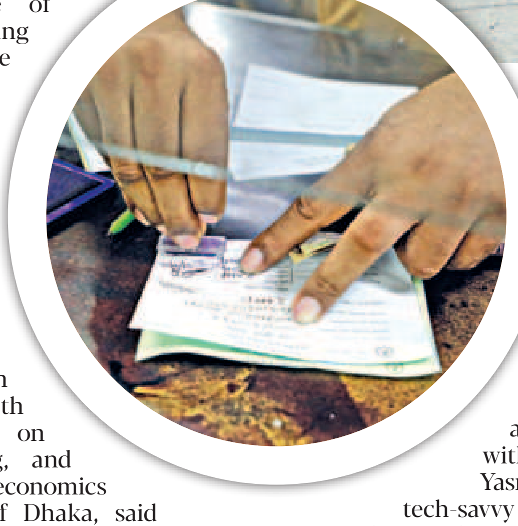
Fast forward a few years, the decline became even more apparent: by 2019-20, transactions plummeted 62.19 percent to 301 worth Tk 114.34 crore.

In July-December of 2023-24, the last fiscal year, only 99 money orders were booked, involving Tk 22.76 crore, underscoring a near-complete transition to digital methods.

Also reflecting the increasing reliance on digital financial transactions has been the significant growth of the mobile financial service (MFS) sector in Bangladesh over the years. The number of cash-out transactions and the money involved have consistently increased.

In January 2019, the total amounted to Tk 13,282 crore. It skyrocketed to Tk 42,230 crore by March 2024, according to Bangladesh Bank data. This reflects both higher frequency and larger individual transaction values.

The remarkable transition of Bangladesh from traditional money transfer methods to digital payments through internet banking is also worth showcasing. Over the years, the number of internet banking customers has steadily risen, hitting over 85 lakh in April.



Simultaneously, the volume and value of internet banking transactions have significantly increased, with the total transaction amount surpassing Tk 97,100 crore in April, a substantial leap from Tk 3,790 crore in December 2018.

Sayema Haque Bidisha, research director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, and a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said technologies are more advanced nowadays, allowing technological adoption to take place for both senders and receivers.

Digital systems have increased convenience as there is no need to drive home or face traffic to get services. Covid-19 was also a big push towards adoption of digital services as people needed to get everything without going outside.

Speaking of the challenges, Prof Bidisha highlighted that the whole cashless economy system depends on electricity and internet, which are not always available in rural areas.

"A lack of digital and financial literacy is another barrier as the full process is self-administered. For example, sharing your PIN code can harm customers because they can be tricked, but many do so due to a lack of awareness."

The digital money transfer system impacts the economy since the more money is transacted, the more money spreads and circulation increases. Also, people, especially females, who are out of the market system, can get involved through such services, which fosters an inclusive economy, she added.

The Directorate of Posts has an electronic money transfer service (EMTS) at a very low cost, said Farid Ahmed, postmaster general for metropolitan circle in Dhaka.

"But the facility must be strengthened at the union level to make it more effective by including rural parts of the country. Notably, sub-post offices of upazilas provide EMTS effectively."

EMBRACING CHANGE

Sharifa Oishee, a third-year university student, shared her experience.

"Managing finances was always a hassle. I remember my parents sending money orders to my grandparents before festivals. It was a slow process."

"Nowadays, I never use money orders. With bKash and Nagad, I can pay tuition, buy books, and even split bills with friends instantly. I even get the tuition from the students who receive lessons privately."

Oishee's story echoes those of millions of young Bangladeshis who have embraced digital wallets. These platforms offer unprecedented convenience – no long waits, no need for physical currency, and the ability to handle transactions anytime, anywhere.

Muhammad Zahidul Islam, vice-president and head of media and communications at Nagad Ltd, opined that the maximum utilisation of technological advancement has been possible in the last 13 to 14 years regarding digital money transfer.

"Sending money now takes a fraction of a second. If we can ensure the benefits of digital banking, rural communities will easily adapt to the process."

Awareness must be raised to make the rural people more knowledgeable about these facilities and systems, he added.

THE STRUGGLE TO ADAPT

However, not everyone finds the transition easy.

Yasmin Ara, a 55-year-old, struggles with the technology-based service. "I have always trusted the post office," she confesses. "This digital system feels complicated and confusing. I once sent money to the wrong number, and it was a nightmare to get it back."

Her experience is not unique. Many older Bangladeshis find digital payments intimidating and worry about security. They also miss the personal interaction and assurance that comes with traditional methods.

Yasmin, with the help of his tech-savvy younger son, recently started to make payments through digital transactions. "It was easier than I thought," she admitted, though still wary of abandoning her trusted money orders entirely.

As Bangladesh continues to innovate, the future of financial transactions looks increasingly digital. The decline in money orders is not just a statistic but a reflection of a broader shift towards a more connected, efficient, and inclusive financial ecosystem.

For Ayman, Oishee, and millions like them, digital payments are a testament to progress and convenience. For Rahman and Yasmin, they represent a challenging but inevitable transition.

The journey from money orders to digital payments is a story of adaptation, resilience, and the promise of a better, more efficient future. In the heart of the bustling city and the quiet corners of rural villages, the echoes of this transition resonate.

Ali Ahmmed, chief commercial officer of bKash, added: "If time-befitting guidance from the regulator continues along with support from stakeholders, it won't be hard to strengthen the country's digital financial ecosystem with continuous innovation in the MFS sector."

There are 22.6 crore MFS accounts in the country, of which 56.21 percent are owned by people living in rural areas. Women account for 57.07 percent of rural MFS users.

These numbers indicate that people living in the countryside are ahead in terms of owning MFS accounts compared to urbanites. Such financial inclusion, especially for women, through MFS has multifarious impacts on rural communities.

At its heart, it is a tale of two generations, each navigating the changing tides of technology in their own way. As Bangladesh steps boldly into the digital age, this transformation promises to bring greater convenience and financial inclusion to every corner of the nation.

EMTS: The cheapest way to send money across Bangladesh

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Many may be surprised to learn that the most cost-effective way to transfer money from one place to another without a bank is through the post office.

The Bangladesh Postal Department provides this facility, named the Electronic Money Transfer Service (EMTS), widely known as a digital money order.

EMTS keeps a commission or cost of Tk 5 per thousand, meaning an individual can send Tk 50,000 taka for a cost of just Tk 250.

The process is simplified by the fact that customers, irrespective of their address, can send and withdraw money from any post office in the country.

The Directorate of Posts took a significant step towards modernising its financial services by inaugurating the service on March 26, 2010.

After necessary training, the service was launched on May 5, 2010.

This system has allowed rapid and secure transfer of funds across the country.

Al Mahbub, additional postmaster general of central circle, Dhaka, said the EMTS provides a way to send money at a low cost, with the caveat that deposits or withdrawals cannot be made after 5:00pm.

The fact that the post office is closed on Friday and Saturday also poses a barrier to popularity.

But in some aspects, the EMTS bests modern technology.

"Fortunately, a sender can freeze the transferred money and get a refund if he wants, which is not possible through mobile financial services," he added.

Speaking about security issues, Farid Ahmed, postmaster general of Metropolitan Circle, Dhaka said: "The security of the money is fully ensured as a PIN is provided to the sender and receiver. The post office also gives a receipt to confirm the transaction from both sides.

"If there is any complaint, it is solved then and there."

A proposal to make the EMTS available through an app has been placed to the Ministry of Finance, he added.

Currently, the EMTS service is available in 2,752 post offices across Bangladesh.

According to official data, from 2010 to 2023, more than 27,700,000 transactions, amounting to Tk 7,677 crore, were made through the EMTS.

Notably, during this period, the Directorate of Posts made an income of about Tk 90 crore.

Md Moneruzzaman, programmer of the central ICT cell of the directorate and desk officer of EMTS, said: "Generally, due to a weak financial infrastructure, there are no banks in many parts of the country. But a post office can be found in most places, even if it is not in the best shape. The only hope for marginalised people looking to send money is the post office. Hence, unbanked and rural communities mostly avail and still avail this service."

Increasing the budget for the Directorate of Posts and advancing ICT infrastructure can make the EMTS service more functional and efficient, he added.

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Keeping the spirit of 'Ratha Yatra' alive for centuries
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Freedom fighters' quota goes against the 1971 spirit
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A tournament too far Ronaldo!
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Matiur thrived on insider trading

The now-removed taxman, his family used stock market to mint tens of millions

ZYMA ISLAM *and* **MOHAMMAD SUMAN**

Former NBR official Md Matiur Rahman, who became a subject of controversy thanks to a high-profile sacrificial goat, has made much of his wealth by minting pre-public shares, an analysis of his and his family's shareholding in at least 15 publicly listed companies show.

Pre-public shares, or placement shares, are those that are offered privately to individual investors, before a company goes public, or releases shares on the stock market for investment.

By its very nature, placement share trading requires a prior association between the company and the investor.

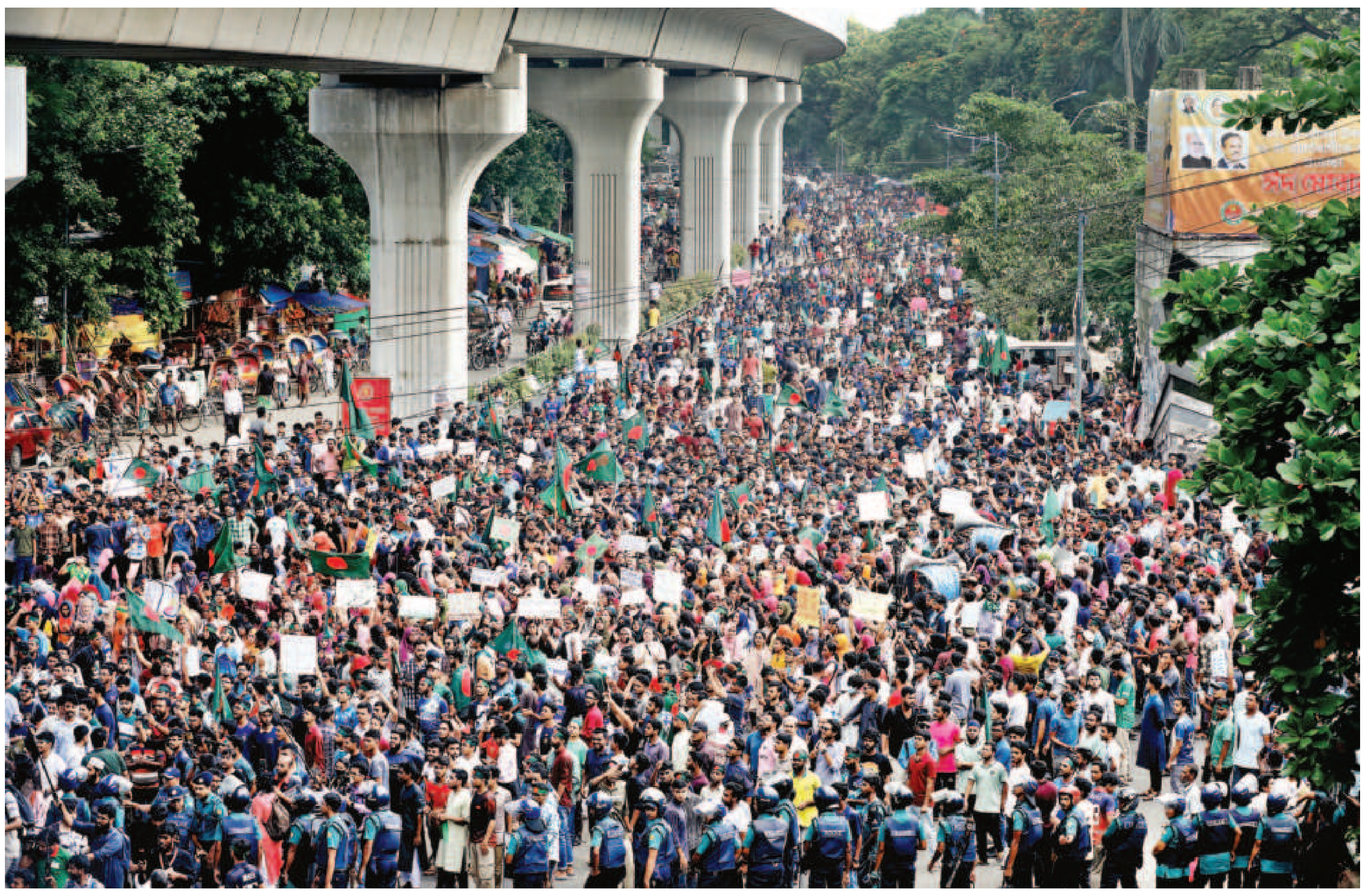
This becomes problematic when the investor in question is a tax regulator himself, holding various positions at NBR with the last being president of Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal.

Millions of these placement shares were not just offered to him, but to a large number of his immediate and extended family members.

Over the last three weeks, The Daily Star tracked the pattern of their buying at least 9.8 crore placement shares across 15 companies before the companies went public.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

- Matiur, family held at least 9.8cr shares across 20 firms
- Their current market value would be Tk 174cr
- He and his family also set up five firms from 2013 to 2018
- The companies have a paid-up capital of Tk 6.82cr

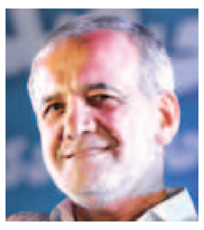


Protesting against the reinstatement of quota system in government jobs, a mammoth crowd of students march from Dhaka University to Shahbagh. They occupied the intersection for an hour before withdrawing for the day yesterday afternoon.
PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Iran reformist wins presidency

Congratulations pour in as Masoud Pezeshkian wins run-off

AFP, *Tehran*



Iran's reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian yesterday won a runoff presidential election against ultraconservative Saeed Jalili, the interior ministry said.

Pezeshkian received more than 16 million votes and Jalili more than 13 million out of about 30 million votes cast, electoral authority spokesman Mohsen Eslami said, adding that voter turnout stood at 49.8 percent.

The number of spoiled ballots was reported to be over 600,000.

Pezeshkian said the vote was the start of a "partnership" with the Iranian people.

"The difficult path ahead will not be smooth except with your companionship, empathy, and trust. I extend my hand to you," Pezeshkian said in a post on social media platform X, after on Tuesday saying he would "extend the hand of friendship to everyone" if he won.

The election, called early after the death of ultraconservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, followed a first round marked by a historically low turnout last week.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who wields ultimate authority, had called for a higher turnout

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

PROTESTS AGAINST QUOTAS

Students go for 'Bangla Blockade'

STAR REPORT

Students demonstrating against quotas in government jobs are set to block key intersections in the capital and highways next to campuses across the country this afternoon.

As per their announcement, college and university students will go on an indefinite strike from today, demanding reinstatement of a 2018 order that abolished quotas.

Protestors also threatened to enforce hartal.

There were demonstrations in the capital for the fifth straight day yesterday. Students kept the Shahbagh intersection blocked for an hour in the afternoon.

Several other streets were also blocked for a while, causing long tailbacks.

Dhaka University student Nahid Islam, a key organiser, announced that the demonstrations, "Bangla Blockade", will begin at 3:00pm at key intersections in Dhaka and highways.

"We will not return to classrooms until our demands are met," he told a rally.

In Dhaka, Shahbagh, Science Lab, Chankharpool, Nilkhet, Motijheel and other intersections near educational institutions will be blocked, he said.

College and university students elsewhere will block highways, he added.

In Dhaka, Shahbagh, Science Lab, Chankharpool, Nilkhet, Motijheel and other intersections near educational institutions will be blocked.

"The government is behaving irresponsibly... The executive branch cannot avoid its responsibility. The prime minister in 2018 said there will be no quota," he said.

Nahid urged parents to take to the streets too and alleged that Chhatra League men were trying to keep students away from the demonstrations.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PATIENT REFERRAL SYSTEM

Three out of 5 still going straight to major hospitals

AHMED DEEPTO

Subarna Akhter, a 31-year-old mother of two from Chuadanga, was diagnosed with gallbladder stones recently.

Doctors were willing to do the surgery, but the family, doubtful of the skills of small town physicians, decided to travel over 200-km to Dhaka for the treatment.

Since the family cannot afford the costs at reputed private hospitals, Subarna and her husband tried tertiary-level public hospitals in the city. But they found out after a few days that they would have to wait for weeks to get the procedure done at such facilities because of the long queue of patients.

"Eventually, we left Dhaka and I got treated in Rajshahi without having to wait for days," Subarna said.

Like the couple, thousands of people go through unnecessary hassles due to what experts say is the absence of a patient referral system.

This also disproportionately increases the number of patients at tertiary-level facilities, they added.

In a proper referral system, a patient first goes to a nearby primary healthcare centre, which, if needed, will send them to more advanced facilities.

This way, advanced hospitals do not have to deal

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BENAZIR, FAMILY

Illegal assets worth Tk 43.5 crore found by ACC

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission has found illegal assets worth Tk 43.5 crore belonging to former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, his wife, and two daughters.

ACC investigators have said their initial probe found no authentic sources for these assets.

Among the illegal assets are several flats in Dhaka and substantial amounts of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

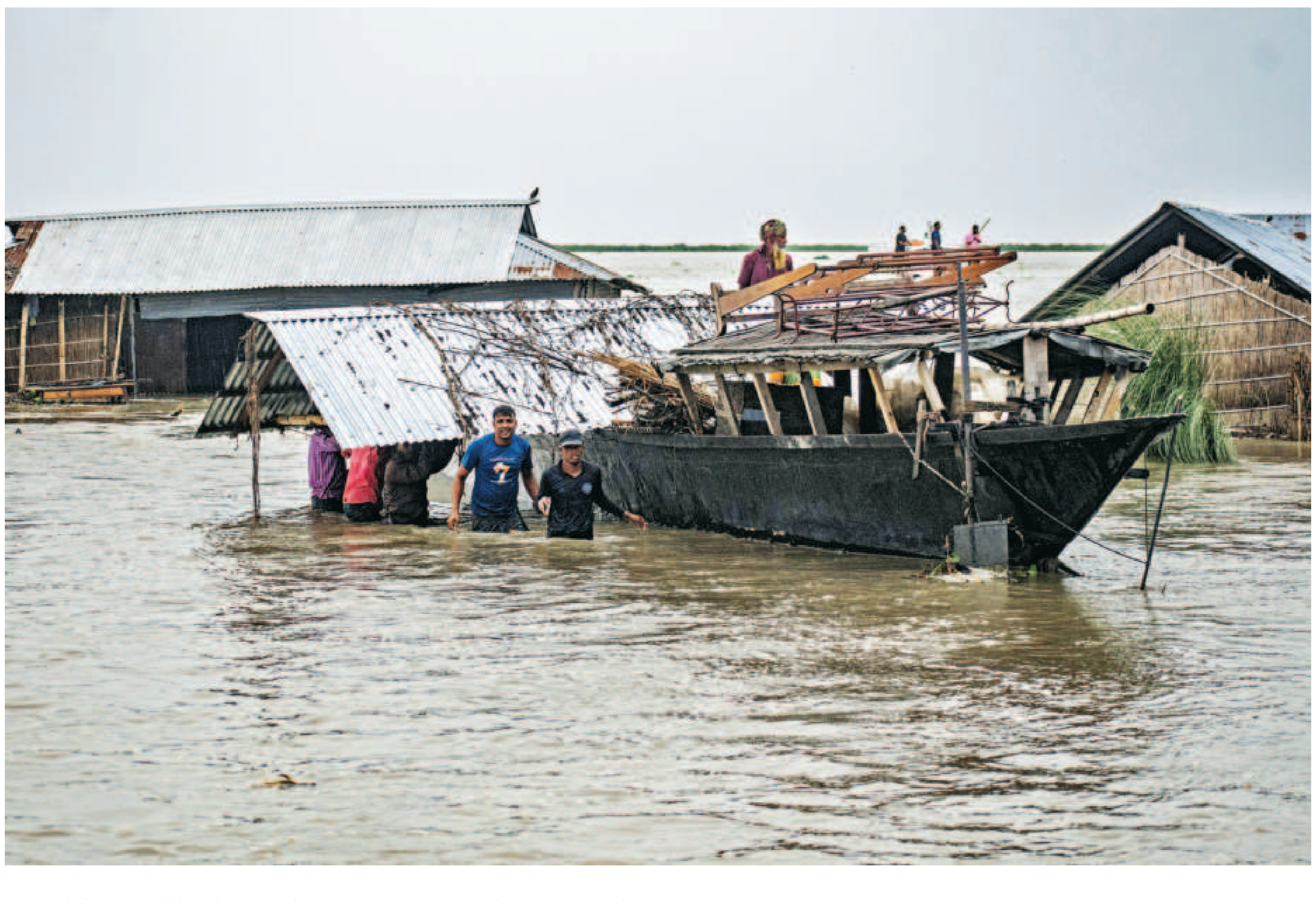
BUSINESS

Slow progress in setting up hi-tech parks

A project to set up a dozen hi-tech parks at the district level is moving at such a glacial pace that it may hold the government from attaining its vision of building a smart nation and readying the workforce for the digitalised world.

The government initiated the project in April 2017 to construct 12 hi-tech parks in as many districts to create a skilled workforce and job opportunities. But the project has so far achieved 14.34 percent physical progress, according to a report.

STORY ON B1



TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE… To flee the rapidly rising floodwater, a family dismantles their house, loads the salvaged pieces and other belongings onto a boat, and makes a hasty retreat to higher ground. The photo was taken on Friday from Rasulpur Char under Gaibandha's Phulchhari upazila.
PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

20 lakh people hit by floods in 15 districts

STAR REPORT

Around 20 lakh people in 15 districts across the country have been affected by the ongoing floods caused by torrential rains and the onrush of water from upstream, said State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Md Mohibur Rahman.

The worst-hit districts include Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrakona, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Rangpur, Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Feni, Rangamati, Bogura, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat, and Cox's Bazar, he told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said that the flood situation in Kurigram, Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Bogura, Tangail, and Sirajganj may remain unchanged today (Sunday).

"In the next 24 hours, the overall flood situation in various low-lying areas of the northeastern region may improve slightly," added the FFWC bulletin issued at 9:00am yesterday.

In Gaibandha, over 67,000 families remain waterlogged in 164 char areas under Sundarganj, Sadar, Phulchhari, and Shaghata upazilas since Tuesday night.

The Jamuna River was flowing 83cm above danger level at Phulchhari point at 6:00pm. The strong current of the floodwaters was causing erosion in many char areas.

In Kurigram, the flood situation worsened significantly, leaving an estimated 1.5 lakh people stranded.

According to Saidul Arif, deputy commissioner of Kurigram, all major rivers, including the Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar, were flowing above their danger levels.

At least 37 government primary schools have suspended

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Prepare to reach the moon

PM asks children

UNB, *Gopalganj*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked children of the country to aim big in life and prepare themselves for bigger tasks for the country.

"We will go to the moon one day. So, you have to take preparation to achieve that from now on," she said.

The prime minister made the remarks while opening "Bangabandhu Corner" at Gimadanga Tungipara Government Model Primary School.

She also unveiled cover of an album titled "Eso Bangabandhuke Jani" (Let's know Bangabandhu) drawn by specially needed children at the school which was established in 1912.

"Study attentively to become great human beings. We will build Smart Bangladesh. You will be really smart. You will run the state one day. You will be prime minister, minister and sceintist and going to greater places and doing researches," she said.

About the album of the pictures on the country's history drawn by the children with special need, she said it will help them know the country's history.

The capital's Dholaikhal, which has been in a sorry state for years, is going to change. Dhaka South City Corporation has taken up a project to build two amphitheatres, walkways, bicycle lanes, and improve the waterbody on five acres. PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Holy Ashura to be observed on July 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The holy Ashura will be observed on July 17 as the moon marking the month of Muharram was not sighted anywhere in Bangladesh last evening.

Therefore, the month of Muharram will start from tomorrow.

The National Moon Sighting Committee yesterday took the decision at a meeting, presided over by A Awal Howlader, additional secretary to the religious affairs minister, held in the conference room of the Islamic Foundation in Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

According to the Islamic Foundation's press release, the meeting reviewed the information received from all the district administrations, the foundation's head office, its divisional offices, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, and Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization regarding the sighting of the moon of the month of Muharram of 1446 Hijri.

As there was no news of the moon sighting last evening, the holy Ashura will be celebrated on July 17, the press release added.

Ashura, a public holiday in Bangladesh, is observed on the 10th day of Muharram.

Muslims across the world recall the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA), his family members, and 72 followers, who embraced martyrdom in 680 AD in the desert of Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates River in Iraq while fighting for truth and justice against the Yazidi forces.

Matiur thrived on insider trading

FROM PAGE 1

The shareholders include his immediate family: his first wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, his second wife Shammi Akter Shibli, his son and daughter from the first marriage Ahmed Towfiqur Rahman Arnab and Farjana Rahman Epshita.

The shareholders also include his sister Howa Nur Begum, his brothers MA Kayum Howlader and Md Nurul Huda, his sister-in-law Sharmin Akter Lovely, and his brother-in-law Mohammed Nasar Uddin. The Daily Star also tracked the shares of two of his relatives from his village, Md Rashiduzzaman and Md Mijanur Rahman.

Most of these shares -- about 63.5 percent -- were bought in their own names, while 36.5 percent of the shares were bought in the name of five companies owned wholly or partially by Matiur and his family members.

With a combined paid-up capital of Tk 6.82 crore, all the five family-owned companies were set up or acquired between 2013-2018 when Matiur held important positions in NBR, according to the company filings at Registrar of Joint Stock Company obtained by The Daily Star.

A significant portion of the placement shares were also bought during this period, although millions of such shares can be traced back to 2011, 2010, 2008, and even 2002.

Between June 24 and July 5, repeated attempts were made to contact Matiur Rahman, Howa Noor Begum, Sharmin Akhtar Lovely, and Farzana Rahman, but their phones were found switched off. Arnab, Laila Kaniz, and Kayum Howlader did not respond to our phones and text messages.

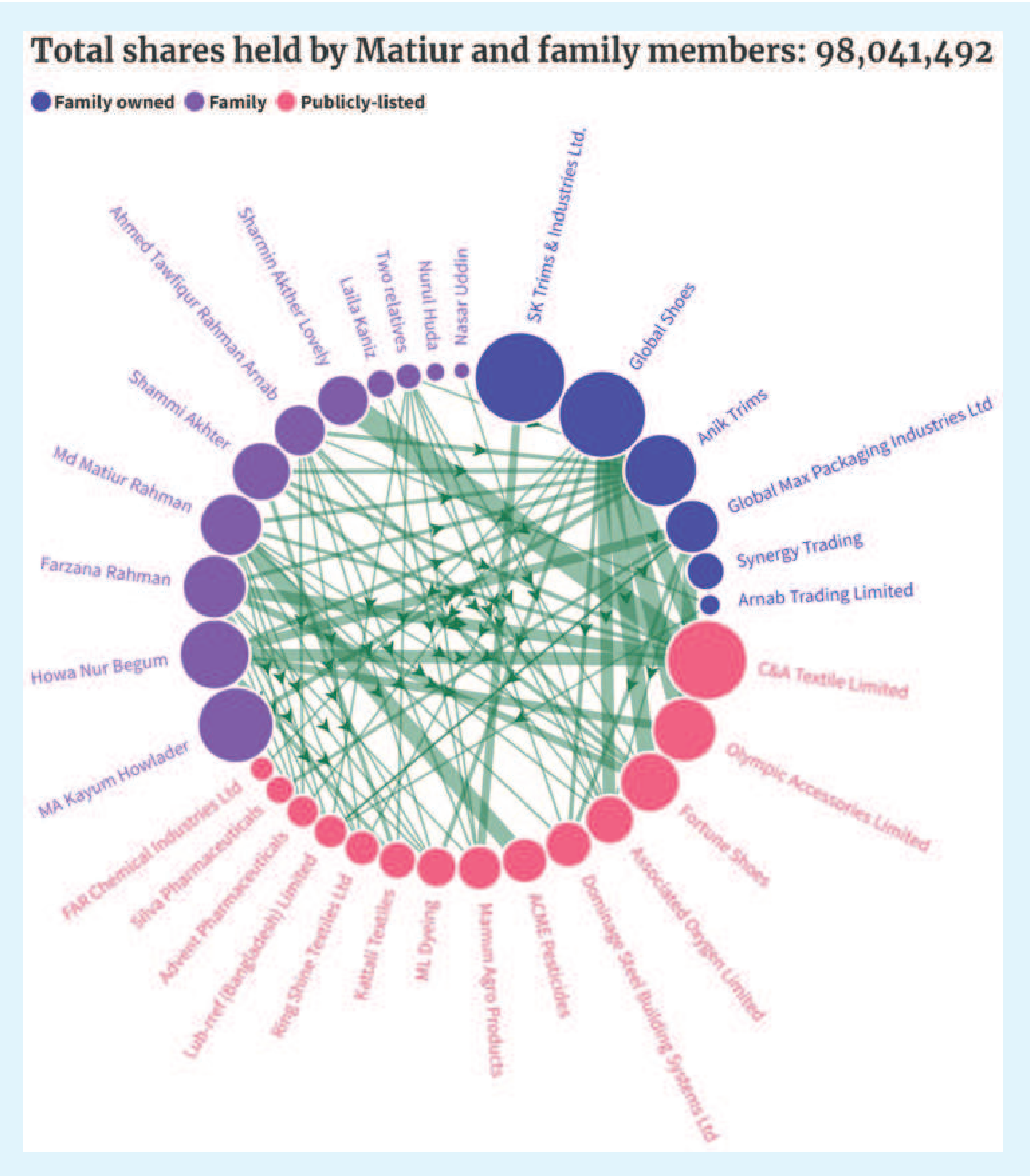
Service rules do not allow government officials to be involved in speculative trading. Service rules also do not permit any member of his family "to make any investment likely to embarrass or influence him in the discharge of his official duties."

The rules also bar public officials from investing in any stocks about which he would have had information, which Matiur clearly had as a revenue official during these years. In other words, the placement shares he and his family members accepted before the companies released their IPOs was essentially insider trading, a violation of capital market rules.

Matiur and his family's wealth made headlines after, Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat, reportedly his son from his second marriage, posted a photo of a sacrificial goat on social media and claimed to have bought it for Tk 12 lakh. According to the owner of the farm where the goat was raised, Ifat eventually did not take the delivery in the face of the controversy, although he had made an advance of Tk 1 lakh.

Matiur publicly denied that Ifat was his son.

Assuming that the shares were bought at a face value of at least Tk 10, the cumulative purchase value of the shares held by Matiur and his family over the years is at least Tk 101.3 crore, according to our calculation based on publicly available data from the capital market.



Total shares held by Matiur and family members: 98,041,492

These shares are spread across 15 publicly listed companies and five non-listed companies where he and his family members have significant ownership.

The current market value of the shares of the publicly listed companies would be about Tk 175 crore, although The Daily Star cannot confirm if they still hold all the shares or if they hold shares in any other companies.

The five privately owned companies are Global Shoes, Global Max, SK Trims, Anik Trims and Synergy Trading.

Matiur, who joined government service in trade cadre in 1994 and was transferred to customs in 1998 on deputation, is currently a first-class officer, with a monthly basic salary of Tk 78,000. In the wake of the recent development surrounding his and his family wealth, he has been removed from NBR and attached to the finance ministry.

His first wife, Laila Kaniz Lucky, retired as an associate professor from Government Titumir College in the capital four years ago. Her yearly pension is Tk 4.63 lakh.

Also chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura upazila, Lucky's tax files submitted to the Election Commission before this year's upazila polls show she is worth Tk 10.31 crore, although a closer look by The Daily Star indicates she may have understated her wealth by dozens of times.

Their son Arnab is a 2021 graduate from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor in Arts, while his daughter Farjana is a makeup artist and runs a makeover business in Canada, according to the university website and Farjana's Instagram profile.

Matiur's brother MA Kayum Howlader owns or has owned the most shares among his immediate family members -- 1.4 crore shares across three companies.

His sister Howa Nur Begum has had 1.15 crore shares in her name, spread across eight companies.

Matiur's daughter Farjana Rahman Epshita, who now lives in Canada, has owned the third highest number of shares -- 90.5 lakh across nine companies.

Matiur has owned 86.3 lakh shares across nine companies.

His second wife Shammi Akhter (Shibli) has owned 74 lakh shares across five companies while her sister Sharmin Akhter Lovely 52.5 lakh shares in one publicly listed company.

Matiur's son Ahmed Tawfiqur Rahman Arnab has had 52.9 lakh shares in these 10 public companies. His first wife Laila Kaniz Lucky has had 9.1 lakh shares, while his second brother Md Nurul Huda 1.5 lakh shares. Matiur's brother-in-law Md Nasar Uddin has had 60,000 shares.

In addition, two other relatives from his village home held 60,000 shares.

The 15 publicly listed companies include garment and garment accessories manufacturers like C&A Textiles Ltd, SK Trims & Industries Ltd, ML Dyeing, Olympic Accessories Ltd, Ring-Shine Textiles, Kattali Textiles; chemical and pharmaceutical companies like Associated Oxygen Ltd, Lub-rref (Bangladesh) Ltd, Silva Pharmaceuticals, FAR Chemical Industries Ltd, ACME Pesticides, Advent Pharmaceuticals, Mamun Agro Products and a steel builder named Dominage Steel.

"It is public knowledge that placement shares are given as favour. Why did so many companies favour him?" said former BSEC chairman Faruq Ahmed Siddiqi.

In addition to the stock market shares, this newspaper found 3.5 crore placement shares held by the companies owned by Matiur and his family members.

A shoe company called Global Shoes Ltd whose managing director is Matiur's brother, MA Kayum Howlader, and whose shareholder is his brother-in-law Nasar Uddin was found to have owned placement shares in 10 of the same companies where Matiur and his family members have pre-IPO shares.

Global Shoes has held 1.96 crore shares in Matiur and his families' private companies since long.

Another of their family-owned company named Global Max Packaging Industries Ltd has held 58.5 lakh shares in at least four companies as Matiur's family members for over a decade. The managing director of Global Max was Matiur's sister-in-law Sharmin Akhter Lovely. Its director was his brother-in-law Nasar Uddin, while the chairman is his sister Howa Nur Begum.

Three other such family-owned companies are Arnab Trading Ltd, SK Trims Ltd and Synergy Trading Ltd, which collectively hold 97.4 lakh placement shares in three publicly listed companies where Matiur's family members also hold placement shares.

On more than one occasion, the placement shares were bought by these family-owned companies on the same day or adjacent dates.

For example, Global Shoes bought placement shares from ML Dyeing Ltd on May 2, 2010, the same day that Matiur Rahman, his son, his daughter, and his sister purchased placement shares in the company.

One of the companies, Ring-Shine Textiles, in which Matiur, his son, his daughter and their company Global Shoes own placement shares, was accused of disbursing placement shares but not taking any cash in return.

Ring-Shine had raised its paid-up capital from Tk 9.95 crore to Tk 285 crore allegedly by issuing placement shares before opening to the public in 2019. Bangladesh Securities Exchange Commission later found that 11 sponsor directors and 33 external shareholders were given the shares for free.

Matiur and his family got 17.5 lakh placement shares from Ring-Shine in October 2008.

"Why was no action taken against them and their shareholders for such a crime?" questioned former BSEC chairman Faruq Ahmed Siddiqi.

Matiur told an interview with a private television on June 19 that he would sit with owners of listed companies and visit firms to identify their weaknesses and offer solutions for growth, and took placement shares in exchange. He offered consultancy for initial public offerings (IPOs) to help companies float shares to raise money from the public.

He also said that in exchange for his "consultancy," he got shares of Fortune Shoes at a discount rate of Tk 8 (as opposed to the face value of Tk 10 per share), which is a violation of the law.

"As a government servant, he has violated government rules. He cannot provide such consultancy. They should take action against such misconducts," said Faruq.

However, Matiur committed a graver crime, he added. "He knew insider information. It is a crime to trade when you have such critical inside information. This is insider trading."

20 lakh people hit by floods in 15 districts

FROM PAGE 1

classes due to flood waters entering the buildings. A total of 20 madrasas and 43 secondary schools have also been forced to close.

The number of people seeking refuge is increasing, with many heading to shelter centres as their homes are submerged in chest-deep water. Others are spending their nights on boats.

The floods have inundated 6,615 hectares of cropland in the district.

"Vegetables on my three bigha land have been damaged by floodwater. Even, our house has been submerged. We've been living on dry food for the last few days as we can't cook," said Shafiqul Islam, 60, of Char Madhya Kadamtala area under Kurigram Sadar upazila.

"We have yet to get any relief," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Maidul Islam, 48, of the same village, said, "We've taken shelter on an embankment as our house has gone under water. We were facing a crisis of food and fresh water. We are passing hard days."

On Friday afternoon, three people, including two sisters, were electrocuted to death while they were riding on rafts in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila.

Monzu Ali, of Marnea in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila, said, "We have been waterlogged for 10 days. We are yet to get any relief assistance."

Abdus Sattar, 70, of Alfajtarir village under the same upazila, said, "My house and croplands have been devoured by the Teesta. I've become homeless."

A day labourer in Sayedpur village in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila, said, "All of our croplands have gone under water. We don't have any work now. We are struggling to survive,".

Mifta Miah, a trader of Fenchuganj market in Sylhet, said, "The market has gone under knee-deep water. Most of us are suffering from skin disease as we stay in the water all day."

For flood-hit districts, the government has so far allocated a total of 8,700 tonnes of rice, Tk 3.10 crore in cash, 58,500 sacks of dry food, Tk 60 lakh for baby food, and Tk 60 lakh for cattle fodder.

Illegal assets worth Tk 43.5 crore found

FROM PAGE 1

money deposited in various banks. The ACC has also obtained documentary evidence of these movable and immovable properties owned by Benazir's family.

The anti-graft body has chosen not to disclose further details at the moment for the sake of investigation.

The investigation team has preliminarily identified assets worth around Tk 9.26 crore in Benazir's name; Tk 2.13 crore in his wife Jissan Mirza's name; Tk 8.11 crore in their elder daughter Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir's name; and around Tk 4.76 crore in their younger daughter Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir's name.

Based on this information, the ACC has already issued separate notices to Benazir and his family members requesting details of their assets.

It also issued asset declaration notices to the family members under section 26(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act-2004 on July 2.

A high official of the ACC said, "Following a court order, almost TK 1,000 crore worth of Benazir Ahmed's movable and immovable assets have been seized or frozen. Their primary objective was to ensure that these assets were not misappropriated or smuggled.

"Currently, each asset is being verified individually. Many of them are reported in his tax records. For now, these assets are being considered, and the calculation of illegal assets is ongoing as documentary evidence is required in ACC cases."

The source added, "Although the assets appear to be worth crores, only official documents will be considered for case purposes. Accordingly, the ACC team has so far proven that Tk 43.5 crore worth of movable and immovable assets are beyond known income sources."

On April 22, the ACC began investigating allegations of illegal asset acquisition against Benazir and his family members. A three-member team, led by Deputy Director Hafizul Islam from the ACC headquarters, is conducting the probe.

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Take stance against propagandists

Arafat tells event

BSS, *Dhaka*

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday urged all to take stance against those who are spreading “falsehood and misinformation” against the government.

“If the government makes any mistake and it has any failure, you may highlight, criticise and oppose it... but you should unmask and protest against those who mislead people by telling lies and half-truths,” he said.

The state minister made the remarks while distributing government grants for making films at the Tathya Bhaban.

Arafat said there are some vested quarters in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

‘Lots of noise, no real penalties’

GM Quader says the corrupt will get away with crimes

UNB, *Dhaka*

Jatiya Party Chairman and leader of the opposition GM Quader yesterday alleged that the corrupt people currently under scrutiny would get away with their crimes, saying that none of them will face any punishment.

“We've seen this before with the casino cases -- lots of noise, but no real penalties. It's all just a show, a drama. Some individuals have even been allowed to legalise their illicit money under the guise of amnesty,” he said.

The opposition leader came up with the remarks while addressing the biennial conference of Gazipur district unit of the party as chief guest.

Criticising the current state of the country, GM

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

‘They mostly targeted madrasa teachers, students’

Ansar Al Islam tried to form new platform led by Indian national to avoid surveillance, says Rab after arresting six members

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **EMRUL HASAN BAPPI**

Ansar Al Islam, under scrutiny by law enforcers, tried to form a new platform, “As Shahadat,” led by an Indian national named Muhammed Habibullah, according to Rab.

Rab said the supposed ameer of the outfit is one Salahuddin.

From India, the outfit leaders were recruiting members, collecting funds, and providing training -- mainly targeting the madrasa students and teachers in Bangladesh.

The majority of the students, who were targeted by the outfit's new platform, are aged between 19 and 20.

The outfit maintains communication through encrypted applications.

The information came to light after Rab-3, Rab-7, and Rab-15 in separate drives arrested six outfit members from Dhaka and Cox's Bazar in May and June.

According to the case statement filed with the Paltan Police Station in May, and the police investigation progress report, the group has been recruiting members in different districts of Bangladesh for a long time.

Commander Arafat Islam, director of the legal and media wing of the Rapid Action Battalion told The Daily Star yesterday, “The outfit has at least 80 to 100 members.”

“But we have successfully been able to detect the outfit's activities at the beginning, and one of their top leaders in Bangladesh is now under surveillance,” he said.

Asked about whether they have reports of missing madrasa students, he replied in the negative.

“Three students, who did not return to a madrasa after spending Eid vacation, were arrested in Cox's Bazar in connection with the outfit,” he added.

In another development, the West Bengal Special Task Force on June 22 arrested Muhammed Habibullah, at his residence in Paschim Bardhaman, according to a report of India Today.

Within a week after the arrest, the STF also arrested two other operatives -- Anwar Sheikh, and Harej Sheikh, from Chennai and Howrah, reports Times of India.

This is not the first time that Ansar Al Islam has tried to form a new platform.

Ansar Al Islam was linked to the financial support and recruitment of Jamatul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, a new outfit.

Mainul Islam, an Ansar Al Islam member, participated in Sharqiya's formation meeting in jail, according to counterterrorism officials.

Due to its cut-out strategy, Ansar Al Islam members remain out of law enforcers' radar and continue their activities on offline and online platforms.

For the past one and a half years, law enforcers have failed to trace two top Ansar Al Islam leaders, Moinul Hasan Shamim and Abu Siddiq Sohel, who were snatched from police custody while returning to jail after a hearing in a Dhaka court on November 20, 2022.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the CTTC unit, said the two are hiding in Bangladesh, and efforts to arrest them are ongoing.

AT A GLANCE

- The new platform has at least 80 to 100 members
- Formed by an Indian national Habibullah, who was arrested by West Bengal STF
- Ansar Al Islam has link with new outfit Sharqiya
- No trace of two Ansar Al Islam members who were snatched from court

India a political friend, China dev partner: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has described India as Bangladesh's political friend and China as its development partner.

“China has contributed significantly to the development of many sectors in our country. Why will we not accept support from China for the sake of the country's overall progress?” Quader said yesterday.

He made the remarks after inaugurating a seven-day “Hilly Fruits Fair-2024” at the Sheikh Hasina Chittagong Hill Tracts Historic Protection and Research Centre in the city's Baily Road area.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

BNP supports protests of teachers, students

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party morally supports the ongoing movements by public university teachers and students based on “justified” demands.

Speaking at a press conference, he dismissed allegations of the ruling party leaders that BNP is inciting the teachers' protest against the new universal pension scheme “Prottoy” and the students' agitation protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

A team of Narayanganj district administration officials and ACC sealed off a duplex bungalow belonging to former IGP Benazir Ahmed at Purbachal in Narayanganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Benazir's Purbachal resort now under N'ganj admin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

Narayanganj district administration has taken control of a resort belonging to former IGP Benazir Ahmed at Purbachal in Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila.

The development comes after Dhaka court earlier ordered appointment of administrators to look after the confiscated properties of Benazir and his family members.

A team of Narayanganj district administration officials, led by ADC (Revenue) Shafikur Alam, sealed off the resort by attaching a notice at the front gate yesterday.

A team of the Anti-Corruption Commission was also present during the drive.

ADC Shafikur told reporters that the district administration sealed off the property -- Savanna Eco Resort Private Ltd -- and took it under control following the court order.

“We found some birds and animals inside the property but couldn't enter into the duplex house as it was locked with a digital lock system. We will take a decision about the property later,” the ADC said.

According to the notice, Benzir's daughter Farheen Rishta Binte Benzir is mentioned as the owner of the resort.

‘Party feud behind my father's killing’

Claims MP Azim's daughter

UNB, *Dhaka*

Daughter of slain Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar yesterday said her father was killed for political reasons.

Anar's daughter Muntarin Ferdous Dorin said this while talking to reporters in front of Jatiya Press Club.

She said, “Of course, there must be internal party feuds [within Awami League] behind my father's killing. Otherwise, why would they [arrested suspects belonging to the ruling party] be involved in the brutal murder? They knew everything. They even came to comfort me!”

Two top leaders of Jhenaidah Awami League, Saidul Karim Mintu, the general secretary, and Kamal Ahmed Babu, the welfare affairs secretary, are currently in jail in connection with the murder.

Babu initially gave a confessional statement, but has recently applied to recant it alleging that he was coerced.

The two local Awami League leaders were arrested based on enough information, Doreen claimed.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the next day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, police from India and Bangladesh said Azim was killed in a Kolkata flat.

MP AZIM
MURDER

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Six killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed in road accidents in four districts yesterday.

In Bagerhat, a motorcyclist was killed as an unidentified vehicle hit him in Mollahat upazila.

The deceased is Asad Sheikh, 40, from Jugihati in Khulna.

The accident occurred around 7:30am on Khulna-Mawa highway in Kahulpur.

Hours later, Md Anwar, 35, from Gangni in Mollahat, was killed when a bus hit a rickshaw-van carrying him in front of Sagar Filling Station, said Mollahat Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sheikh Nuruzzaman.

In Rajbari, two helpers of a driver were killed as a truck hit another parked truck at Kalibari.

The deceased are Anisur Rahman, 35, and Md Liton Sheikh, 35.

In Dinajpur, Hosen Ali, 70, died as a pickup ran him over while he was crossing the Dinajpur-Gobindaganj road at Tatakpur intersection.

In Joypurhat, Rabeya Begum, 60, was killed when a truck hit her in Sadar upazila.

Construction

FROM PAGE 5

At another programme of cardiologists at a city hotel on Friday evening, the minister said a Health Safety Act would be placed in the parliament soon.

He said no one has the right to say "wrong treatment" except the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC).

If anyone wants to lodge any complaint over wrong treatment, he will have to apply to BMDC, he added.

Samanta said whenever a doctor is posted to an upazila health complex, she or he starts lobbying to cancel the order. "The doctors will have to work in rural and suburban areas," he said.

"We are taking initiatives to improve the residence facilities of doctors there," he added.

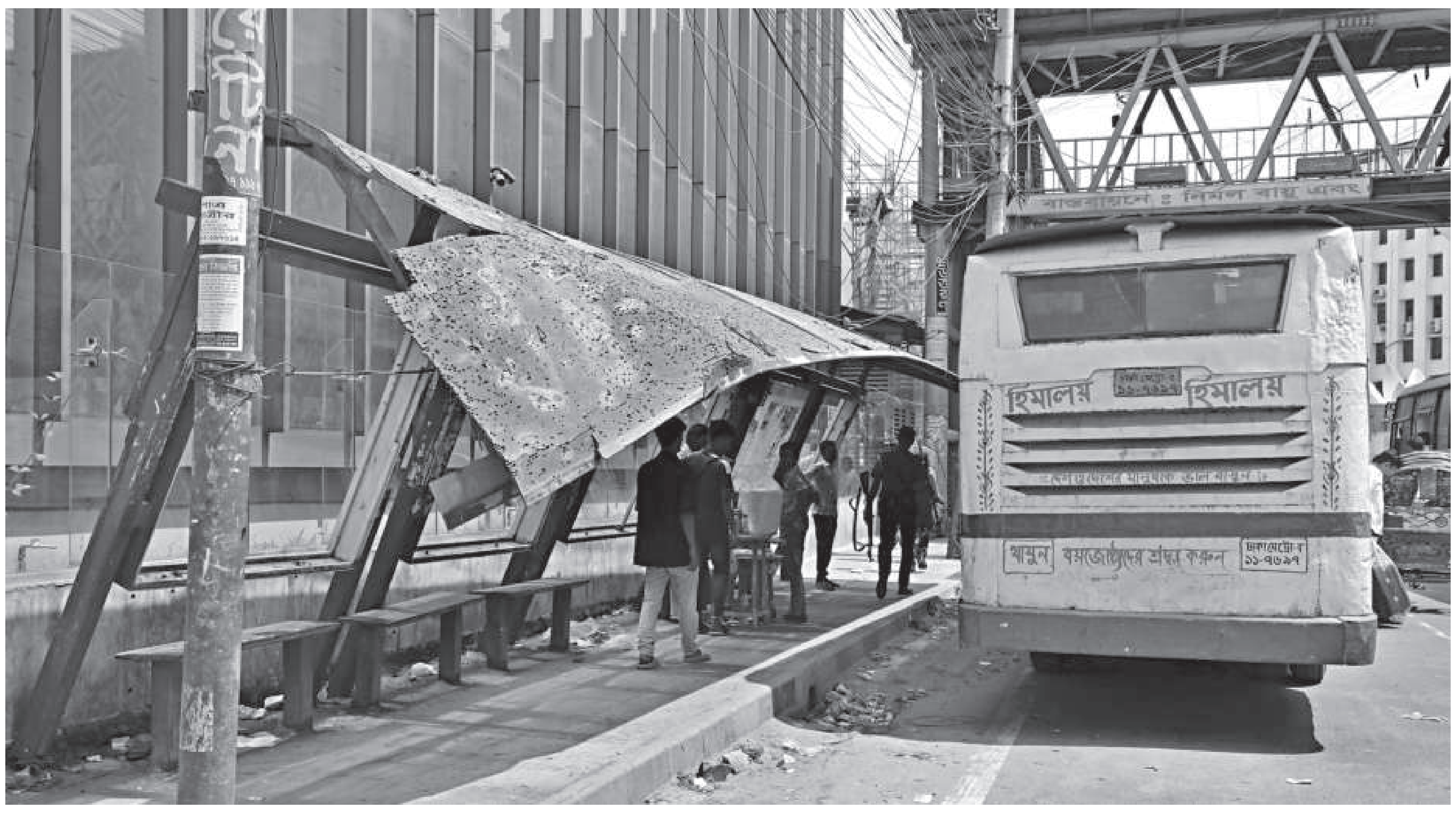
Lots of noise

FROM PAGE 3

Quader said everyone except for Awami League supporters agrees that the current situation of the country is not good.

Ordinary people are struggling; many can't even afford an egg. It is happening due to the government's flawed policies and corruption.

Regarding the anti-quota movement, he said, "University students are now protesting against the quota system. This quota system is unconstitutional. There is no way to legalise it according to the constitution. So why does the current government need this quota?"



The shed of this bus stop in the capital's Motijheel area got damaged around a month back during a storm. Ever since, it has been leaning forward precariously, held back from collapsing by the damaged welding at its foundation and cables tied to an electric pole. At any moment, it could collapse and lead to a disaster. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Bitumen that lasts 10 days!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Within merely 10 days after renovation, the bitumen cover of a road in Nizampur area of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila is coming off.

The Local Government Engineering Department recently renovated the 3.3-kilometre-long and 3-metre-wide road from Sagar Cinema Hall to Nizampur Kheyaghat area in the upazila at a cost of Tk 1.33 crore, and opened it to traffic 10 days back.

However, soon after vehicular movement resumed on the road, the bitumen cover started getting removed at numerous places, alleged locals.

Visiting the road yesterday, this correspondent observed that the bitumen is coming off even if scraped by hand, or rubbed by feet.

Locals said 25mm thick bitumen cover was supposed to be made throughout the road, but most places got only 15-20mm cover.

According to sources at Kalapara upazila LGED office, the road was renovated recently after it got damaged in Cyclone Amphan-induced flood.

A contractor named Shahidul Enterprises got the Tk 1.33 crore renovation work and has been paid Tk 90 lakh already. However, within 10 days the road returned to a dilapidated state.

"Poor-quality materials were used to renovate the road. We demand exemplary punishment of the officials concerned and the contractor for irregularities, and proper renovation of the road," said Nasir Mia, a local resident.

Solaiman Munshi, another local, echoed him.

Contacted, Shahidul Islam, the contractor, said the upazila administration is looking into the matter, and declined to comment any further.

Refusing to provide details, Mohammad Sadekur Rahman, Kalapara upazila engineer of LGED, said the final bill will be withheld until the road is reconstructed.

Contacted, Rabiul Islam, UNO of Kalapara upazila, said he inspected the renovated road and found it to be of sub-standard work.

"Instructions have been given not to pay the final bill until the road is rebuilt. The contractor's security money has also been asked to be forfeited," he added.

Motaleb Talukder, chairman of Kalapara upazila parishad, said the supervising official has been directed to rebuild the road at the earliest.

Fish, veggie prices soar amid supply shortage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

The prices of fish and vegetables have surged in Bagerhat due to a supply shortage, leaving consumers in dire straits.

Visiting different markets in the district recently, including Bagerhat Bazaar, Darga Haat, and Signboard Haat, this correspondent found hilsa weighing one kilogramme or more are being sold at Tk 1,700-1,900 per kg, while those weighing around 500 grammes are being sold at Tk 800-1,300 per kg.

Other local fish varieties like rohu and katla are priced at Tk 350-400 per kg, bhetki at Tk 700-1,00 per kg, pangasius at Tk 190-250 per kg, tilapia at around Tk 210 per kg, and different shrimp varieties such as harina, chami and chaka at Tk 600-800 per kg.

"I usually buy pangas or silver carp for my family as those tend to be less pricey. However, even those saw a hike in price by Tk 80-90 per kg. If this trend continues, middle and lower-income families will struggle to afford fish for consumption," said Ruhul Amin Sheikh, a local resident.

Meanwhile, vegetables including potatoes are now selling for Tk 55-60 per kg, eggplants for Tk 155-170, tomatoes for Tk 150-160, bitter gourds for Tk 100 kg, bottle gourds for Tk 40-60 each, green chilies for Tk 350-400 per kg, while leafy greens are now Tk 20-40 per bunch. However, pumpkins and pointed gourds remain relatively affordable at Tk 30-40 and Tk 25-35 per kg respectively.

"People are finding it difficult to sustain as the market prices of fish, vegetables and other essentials keep on rising," said Asit, a shopper at Signboard Haat.

In contrast, meat prices remained somewhat unchanged since last month, with beef selling for Tk 750, mutton for Tk 1,000, broiler chicken for Tk 180-220, sonali chicken for Tk 300, and local chicken for Tk 500-550 per kg. Salam Sheikh, a meat seller, however, remarked that the sale of meat dropped considerably since Eid-ul-Azha.

Abdullah Al Imran, assistant director of Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection in Bagerhat, said they are regularly monitoring the markets and will take legal actions if irregularities are found.

Take stance against propagandists

FROM PAGE 3

the country, who mislead people by spreading misinformation against the government.

"Anyone can oppose the government's decisions and can give different opinions, but, if anyone misleads people by spreading falsehoods and misinformation, artistes and creative industry members have a responsibility to stand against the propagandists."

In this connection, he referred to a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent India visit saying "a vested quarter are carrying out misinformation campaigns to mislead the people over the contents of the MoUs".

Responding to the criticism over Bangladesh-India MoU on regional connectivity, he said, the propagators are saying that Indian trains will run through Bangladesh carrying arms, ammunition and explosive posing a security risk here, which is an absolute lie.

The state minister said the MoU clearly stated about establishing a regional connectivity since Bangladesh has a business with Nepal and Bhutan worth of US $50 million.

"We export our products to those countries. Now these products are being exported through transshipment process via India to Nepal and Bhutan," he said, adding, if a straight train line is established, it will help Bangladesh expand its business and export.

Arafat said, "We also inserted a provision in the MoU that we will go to Nepal and Bhutan through India."

He said another important aspect of this MoU is that Bangladesh under the agreement will import 40MW electricity from Nepal using India's national gridline. At present, Nepal is producing electricity considering its domestic demand although it has the potential of generating 72,000 MW of electricity.

"We can reduce our dependency on fossil fuels if we import clean energy from Nepal that will be good for Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the entire world," Arafat said. So, how does it go against the country's interest? he questioned.

On government grants for film production, he said the government wants to ensure transparency and accountability in the selection process of the scripts for getting the grant.

"We want to focus on quality rather than quantity to this end. So, international standards will be followed in the selection process next time," Arafat said.

The government has selected 26 films, including 20 feature-length and six short films, to provide Tk 15.20 crore as grants in 2023-24 fiscal.

A teacher

FROM PAGE 5

behind in studies due to the flood-induced school closure. Thanks to Bidhan Das, they are not only able to continue their studies, but also get necessary school supplies and a nurturing environment," she said.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mohammad Ali, a seventh grader sheltered at the school.

"Our house got damaged in the flood, so we took shelter here. I did not expect to be able to study in the present situation, but here we are receiving enough support to make sure our studies are not disrupted."

Bidhan's commitment resonates deeply with his purpose as an educator.

"As a teacher, I have a commitment to do everything possible to make sure that education remains uninterrupted for the students, even during a natural disaster," he told this correspondent.

India a political

FROM PAGE 3

"Our foreign policy is friendship with everyone, malice to none. India has been our faithful friend since 1971. We cannot forget our friends in times of trouble," Obaidul Quader said, asking "what did the post-75 governments achieve by having hostile relations with India for 21 years?"

He also said the friendly relations with India contributed to resolving the border and chhitmahal problems.

Speaking of the BNP's demand for UN intervention on Khaleda Zia's proper treatment, he said, "There is no point in doing that, it is a matter of law. BNP is playing politics over Khaleda Zia's treatment."

Quader said that the BNP has resorted to the quota and teachers' protests after failing to wage their own movement.

BNP supports

FROM PAGE 3

"What they [AL leaders] are saying is illogical," Fakhrul said.

However, he said BNP, as a responsible party, must react to incidents happening within the country.

"They [teachers and students] are carrying out their movements, and we have moral support for them now and will continue to do so. Can't we support a justified movement?" the BNP leader said.

Fakhrul urged the government to meet the protesters' demands by rescinding the "Prottoy" pension scheme for teachers and reducing the current quota in government jobs to a reasonable level.

জমি বিক্রয়

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(Muhammad Jamal Hussain)
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Mymensingh Division, Mymensingh.

GD- 17

CMCH BURN UNIT

Construction work to start in September

Says health minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen yesterday said the construction works of a 150-bed specialised Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit at Chittagong Medical College Hospital will start from September.

The prime minister is likely to lay the foundation stone of the project after returning from her visit to China, he said while briefing reporters.

Of the Tk 284.76 crore project, the Chinese government will fund Tk 179.83 crore as grants and the Bangladesh government will fund the rest.

Later, the health minister held a views-exchange with doctors and officials of CMCH.

The minister said, "I feel bad knowing that the MRI machine in the hospital is out of order. Chattogram is the second largest city after Dhaka. I will do whatever is necessary to fix the problem."

The minister said despite the availability of quality medical services in the country, people go abroad for treatment.

"Our prime minister receives treatment in the country... If the members of parliament use local hospitals for checkups, then the quality of treatment in the hospitals will improve and people's confidence in our treatment will return," he added.

The minister arrived in the port city on Friday and made unscheduled visits to a number of hospitals. He expressed dissatisfaction over different irregularities in some of those and asked DGHS officials to take action.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 7

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Teaching suspended at 37 Kurigram schools

Chilmari-Roumari ferry service halted; flood situation may worsen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

At least 37 government primary schools across Kurigram have suspended their academic activities after being submerged under floodwater.

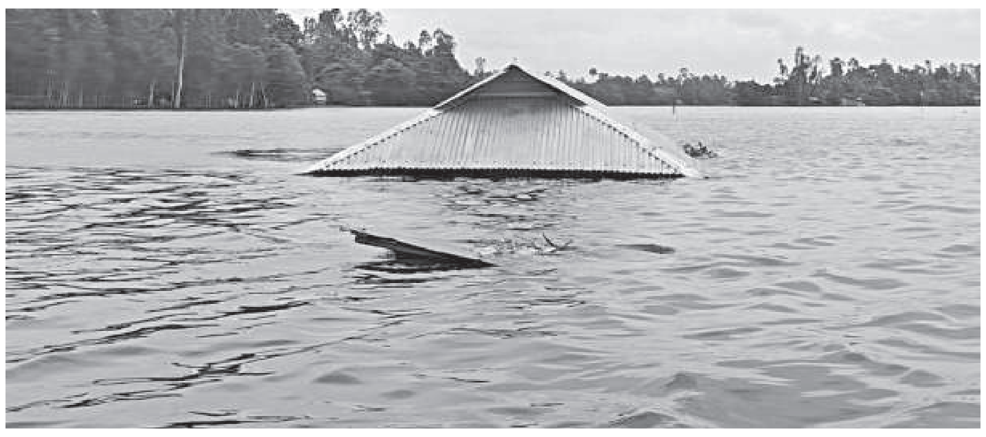
Visiting Uttar Majherchar Government Primary School in Krishnapur village under Kurigram Sadar upazila, this correspondent saw floodwater flowing over the roof of its one-storey building.

"There are 80 students in this school. Classes have been suspended as the school is completely submerged. The school building has to be repaired once the water recedes, before classes can resume," said Sabina Yasmin, headteacher of the school.

Around 36 other schools are also going through a similar situation.

Nabez Uddin Sarkar, district primary education officer in Kurigram, said, "There are 280 government primary schools in the shoals and riverbank areas in the district. Of those, 37 have been inundated by floodwater and had to suspend academic activities."

"With the water level of the Brahmaputra continuing to rise, more schools in these areas may have to suspend classes," he added.



This tin roof belongs to Uttar Majherchar Govt Primary School in Krishnapur village under Kurigram Sadar upazila. The entire school is now submerged due to flood. PHOTO: **STAR**

Meanwhile, the ferry service on Chilmari-Roumari route in Kurigram has stopped as the connecting roads at the ghats are submerged, putting commuters at risk.

Prafulla Chauhan, manager at Chilmari Ferry Ghat of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation, said the ferry service will resume once the water recedes.

"The Brahmaputra was flowing 78cm above danger level at Chilmari point on Friday morning, with its water level having risen by 19cm in 12 hours since 6:00pm on Thursday," said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Kurigram.

"The water level is expected to rise further as onrush of water from upstream in India continues," he added.

Damaged by Remal, 133 Barishal schools yet to be repaired

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barishal*

At least 133 educational institutions -- including seven colleges, 70 schools and 56 madrasas -- in the Barishal district sustained damages from Cyclone Remal that lashed the country on May 26, according to sources at Education Engineering Department (EED) in Barishal. However, the authorities concerned are yet to come up with any steps to repair the educational institutions.

As such, academic activities at these institutions are being severely disrupted.

At many of these institutions, doors, windows and furniture were damaged, while some tin-shed roofs were even blown away.

Currently, these institutions are unable to conduct classes.

Despite urging authorities for necessary repairs to resume academic activities, there has been no response yet, said teachers and guardians.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

> **Education will be severely disrupted for around 50,000 students from these 133 institutions unless urgent repairs are made.**
>
> **SUNIL BARAN HALDER**
> President of Teachers Association, Barishal

Amirul Islam, president of the governing body of Chandradwip College in Bakerganj upazila, said, "The tin-shed roof was blown away in the cyclone. We applied to EED and local UNO several times for repairs, but to no end. It is not possible to conduct classes amid monsoon without any roof."

According to EED sources, Bakerganj has been the most affected area, with 38 of its schools sustaining damages.

The repairs at each institution will require between Tk 50,000 and Tk 10 lakh, sources said, adding that further delay will only raise repair costs.

Sunil Baran Halder, president of Bangladesh Teachers Association's Barishal regional branch, said education will be severely disrupted for around 50,000 students from these 133 institutions unless urgent repairs are made.

Mujibur Rahman, parent of a seventh-grader from Baherchar Lakshipur Secondary School in Hijla upazila, urged authorities for urgent repairs.

Ashikur Rahman, deputy assistant engineer of EED, Barishal, informed that while Tk 5 crore was demanded for emergency repairs, no allocation has been made yet.

Md Shahidul Islam, executive engineer of EED, Barishal, said, "The cyclone-hit educational institutions will be repaired urgently once allocation is received."

A teacher dedicated to the cause

Schools remain closed but Bidhan makes sure children don't fall behind

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

The relentless floods ravaging Sylhet have forced a harsh reality -- the closure of many educational institutions.

In Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar district alone, over 252 villages have been submerged in the past 20 days.

At least 500 families sought refuge in 30 designated locations, many of which are schools repurposed as shelters.

According to official data till July 4, as many as 889 primary schools have been closed across Sylhet division either due to flood waters breaching its premises or for being converted into shelters.

For students, guardians, and teachers, learning gaps caused by forced closures of educational institutions is nothing new. This is a recurring event every monsoon, although it keeps getting worse every year.

Besides, the scars left by prolonged school closures during the pandemic are still fresh in everyone's minds.

However, one teacher has decided to take matters into his own hands.

Bidhan Chandra Das, headteacher of Hakaluki High School, has been holding classes for 25 students from 32 families currently sheltered at the flood-stricken school.

The students come not only from Hakaluki High School but also from other schools and madrasas in the area.

But the little ones have one thing in common -- the shared need for education.

Bidhan has refused to let the flood drown their learning spirit.

He has dedicated himself to the students' well-being, remaining at the shelter throughout the day.

Bidhan's makeshift classroom offers a shred of normalcy when everything around these children are under water.

He offers Bengali, English, Mathematics, and Science lessons throughout the day, alongside holding cultural events.

Bidhan's efforts ensure these children, displaced by the floods, continue to receive the education they deserve.

Khaleda Begum, a homemaker from Murshibadkura village who took shelter at the school with her family, expressed her relief.

"I was worried that my children would lag

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

HANDIAL JAGANNATH TEMPLE

Upholding the spirit of 'Ratha Yatra' for 6 centuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

For over six centuries, the Handial Jagannath Temple, located in Handial village under Chatmohar upazila of Pabna, has been celebrating the vibrant Ratha Yatra festival.

The Ratha Yatra, or chariot procession of Jagannath Dev, became popular in the subcontinent during the Ganga dynasty in the 11th century.

Historical records from the Calcutta Gazette suggest the Handial temple itself was established between 1300 and 1400 AD, on a vast 1.19-acre plot within the Chalan Beel region.

It was later renovated by one Bhawani Prashad in 1590 AD, according to a terracotta plaque on the temple's wall.

The temple's rich history, however, is not without its scars.

Its structures were damaged significantly during the 1971 Liberation War. Then it was renovated with modern designs with funding from devotees.

Yet, a single-door structure from the ancient temple remains, a symbol of its enduring heritage.

Today, the Handial Jagannath Temple continues to be a centre of cultural and spiritual significance. The annual Ratha Yatra festival draws devotees from far and wide, celebrating the timeless traditions that have bound this community for generations.

At present, the temple is an archaeological site while being maintained by devotees, said Md Abu Sayeed, an official of archaeology department.

The temple was last renovated by the archaeology department in 2009-10, he added.

The temple's eye-catching architecture and intricate terracotta motifs attract tourists and visitors from across the country and beyond, Abu Sayeed added.

Dilip Kumar Brahmacharya, senior sebayet (manager) of the temple, said it is one of the three ancient temples in the subcontinent with Jagannath Dev's idol, and has been celebrating Ratha Yatra over the past 600 years.

"The temple consists of Jagannath Dev's temple, Mahaprabhu temple, Lakshmi-Vishnu temple, Durga temple and Ratha temple. Religious festivities are held for each of the temples every year," he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1:
National Single Window Implementation and Strengthening Customs Modernization
National Board of Revenue (NBR)
IDEB Bhaban (10th Floor), 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka -1000, Bangladesh.

Memo No. 1(192)/Active Items/Hardware/NSW/2024/2134 Date: 04.07.2024

Subject: Addendum to Bidding Document for Supply and installation of Hardware and infrastructure (network, communication, cabling, etc.) and standard software for NSW solution; other network, communication equipment, structure, hardware and cabling: Server & Storage and Network & Security components for NSW Server Room & DR. Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1. Request for Bids (RFB) No. NBR-GD2A.1.

Addendum No. 1

This is for the information of all Bidders concerned that the following amendments have been made for the procurement mentioned in the subject above:

Ref.	Existing entry	Amended entry
Sl. No. of 06, SPN. ITP- 23.1 & 26.1	The deadline for Bid submission is: Date: July 08, 2024; Time: 14.00 hours. Date & time for bid opening July 08, 2024; Time: 14.30 hours.	The deadline for Bid submission is: Date: July 23, 2024; Time: 14.00 hours. Date & time for bid opening July 23, 2024; Time: 14.30 hours.

All other terms and conditions of Bidding Document (RFB) No. NBR-GD2A.1 shall remain unchanged. This Addendum No. 1 shall be considered an integral part of the Bidding Document and shall be binding on all Bidders who have obtained or will obtain the Bidding Document from the Purchaser.

4-7-2024
(Abul Bashar Md Shafiqur Rahman)
Project Director
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1:
National Single Window Implementation & Strengthening Customs Modernization
Email: pdnsw.nbr@gmail.com

GD- 16

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

DHVANI IN DHAKA

Indian YouTube sensation eager for Bangladeshi concert

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

It felt surreal seeing Dhvani Bhanushali in person, as I was used to seeing her on YouTube in a 16:9 ratio. While on the sofa, I noticed how refreshing she looked in her white top and blue jeans. She didn't have any makeup on, nor did she need it. The vibrant singer was recently in Dhaka for a two-day trip, during which she spoke exclusively with The Daily Star about her music and her strong desire to perform a concert in Dhaka.

Dhvani's path to stardom has been swift. Her 2019 hit ***Vaaste*** brought her immense popularity, with the music video crossing 1.5 billion views on YouTube, making her the youngest and fastest Indian pop star to hit 1 billion views on the platform. However, people in Bangladesh mostly remember her for her girl-next-door vibe in her sweet rendition of ***Leja Leja Re***.

Her latest hit track, ***Thank You God***, is also trending on YouTube, garnering 14 million views within three months. Besides singing in music videos, she has also voiced numerous Bollywood tracks, including ***Psycho Saiyaan*** from ***Saaho***, ***Duniya*** from ***Luka Chuppi***, and ***Kinna Sona*** from ***Marjaavaan***, among others.

She enjoys massive followings on social media, with 7.5 million on Instagram and 4.7 million on Facebook. With a large number of Indian youths being inspired by her music, she feels it's her responsibility to reflect the ideas of tradition, love, and culture through her songs.

"While growing up, we all have ideals we want to follow as adults. Now that I am an adult and making my own music, I try to ensure that my music videos are suitable for families to watch together. I have this wholesome, good-girl vibe, and I make sure it is reflected in my music videos as well. It's nice to see that youths, particularly little girls, are inspired by my work. As an artiste, I want to positively influence them," said the singer.

Dhvani's sudden trip to Dhaka was mostly kept under wraps; she came for a private event. However, she would love to do a ticketed event, hopefully within the next year. The singer was surprised when I told her that she also enjoys a fan base in Bangladesh. She shared an interesting story when asked if she had interacted with fans in our country.

"I did meet some of my fans at the Bangladeshi airport, and when I came to the hotel, they were playing my songs. This is my first time coming to Bangladesh, and I really respect its culture. Although I haven't listened to any Bangladeshi songs yet, as soon as you leave, I will look them up on Spotify and listen to a few Bangladeshi artistes," revealed the singer.

Whenever a song has a catchy tune and hook, you can be sure it will trend on Instagram Reels. When I first heard ***Thank You God***, I thought an American artiste might have voiced it. Later on, when I searched for the song on YouTube, I found that many people felt the same and were surprised to discover it was an Indian song.

"One day during the writing process of 'Thank You God,' I went to the washroom. While looking in the mirror, I noticed this one ab line and thought, 'Oh my God, this is amazing! I look so good today.' I went back to my writing room and shared it with my fellow writers. They were like, 'Oh my God! This is great! Let's make a song out of it.' And that's how I came up with the line 'Every time I look into the mirror, I say thank you God.' At first, I had no idea people would think it wasn't Indian, but when I went back and listened to it, I realised the hook line might sound accented," laughed the singer.

Nowadays, Instagram and TikTok reels play a crucial role in opening doors for newcomers who want to expand their careers in music. When asked if this was true for her as well, the singer agreed.

"Fortunately or unfortunately, we all discover music on Instagram or TikTok. Regardless of what we say, I think it is an integral part of marketing, and that's really important. Otherwise, you might as well play your music in your living room. As musicians, I believe there needs to be a full-term creative effort in terms of visuals and music, and they need to be connected to the whole product. I think a sample fit can be tested on Instagram, and if a person likes the song, they can go to YouTube and listen to it," stated Dhvani.

My personal favourite song by Dhvani is ***Mera Yaar***. While talking about it, she revealed that this song is really special to her as she wrote it for a boy whom she had a crush on. "I felt like this song was the cleanest way to describe my feelings to someone you don't know well or would love to know," said the singer, blushing.

When asked whether she sees herself on the silver screen, she replied, "Of course, I see myself working on films. However, I would like to add that it's quite different from acting in music videos. Playing a full-length character is really difficult. I am looking forward to an exciting project that might hit theatres this year," said the singer.

Later on, the doorbell rang, and her crew members arrived. Dhvani's face lit up as she saw them. I bid her goodbye, feeling a little giddy and happy with the whole experience. I hugged her wishing with all my heart that I would be able to see her perform soon.

NEWS

Transport sector projects fare poorly

FROM PAGE 12

Tk 34,989 crore. The project was supposed to be completed within June 2022.

But the loan agreement with China was delayed. In April 2018, the ERD inked a Tk 21,036 crore loan agreement with Exim Bank of China, and the physical work of the project finally started in October 2018.

As the project deadline was deferred to June 2025, the cost went up to Tk 39,246 crore.

The Dhaka-Bhanga section of the line was opened in October last year while the Bhanga-Jashore section is expected to be inaugurated within a month or two.

The Joydebpur-Ishwardi double line project, taken up in November 2018, was supposed to be implemented within December 2024.

But China in March 2021 refused to finance the Tk 14,250.61 crore project citing "a lack of in-depth preliminary work and insufficient feasibility study".

China's decision came four months after the Prime Minister's Office in November 2020 directed the BR to cut the negotiation price of three projects, including the Joydebpur-Ishwardi double line scheme, as the cost review committee found that the costs were relatively high.

The two other projects involve converting the Akhaura to Sylhet and Joydebpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur sections into dual-gauge from metre-gauge.

The government decided to implement the Joydebpur-Ishwardi double line project with Japanese loan and the PMO directed the railway authorities to look for other financiers for the Tk 16,780.95 crore Akhaura-Sylhet project.

The Joydebpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur project has not been approved by Ecnec yet and the railways authorities are continuing negotiation with the selected Chinese contractor for the last three years without any visible progress, officials said.

TUNNEL, ROAD, FLYOVER PROJECTS

Construction of the Bangabandhu Tunnel under the Karnaphuli river in Chattogram is the only transport sector project completed so far under the Chinese loan facility.

The tunnel was opened to traffic in October last year after the Tk 10,690 crore project was implemented by Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA).

The BBA is now implementing the Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway Project with Chinese loan.

The project, which was supposed to be completed within June 2022 at a cost of Tk 16,901 crore, was delayed as the Chinese authorities took time to approve the loan. The project cost has now gone up to Tk 17,553 crore and deadline has been deferred to June 2026.

Another project, which was supposed to be implemented with Chinese loan, was to convert the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway into four-lane one.

A Chinse contractor was selected for the work and the government signed a primary deal in this regard.

But the Chinese firm then allegedly offered bribes to then newly appointed secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division to give the go-ahead to the work at an inflated cost.

Speaking at a programme in January 2018, then finance minister AMA Muhith said the company was blacklisted for trying to bribe the government official.

Roads and Highways Department is now implementing the project with the Asian Development Bank's loan.

MONGLA PORT PROJECT

Another transport project was supposed to be implemented for expansion and modernisation of the Mongla port facilities with Chinese loan.

The Mongla Port Authority submitted a Development Project Proposal (DPP) long ago but and Planning Commission in November last year sent back the DPP, involving around Tk 4,500 crore, recommending more scrutiny, a port authority official said.

"We have already sent back the DPP to the shipping ministry after scrutiny," the official said wishing not to be named.

Students go

FROM PAGE 1

The protests intensified on Thursday after the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court decided to uphold until further orders the June 5 High Court verdict that reinstated the 30 percent quotas for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren.

University students demand formation of a commission to remove "irrational and discriminatory" quotas; some quotas for underprivileged communities; and regular recruitment when there is no job seeker from such communities.

They also demand an individual be allowed to use the quota privilege only once in recruitment tests.

In 2018, the government abolished quotas amid widespread student protests.

Before that, there were 30 percent quotas for children and grandchildren of freedom fighters; 10 percent for women; 10 for underdeveloped districts; five percent for indigenous communities; and one percent for people with disabilities.

Thousands marched on DU, Buet, and Eden College campuses around 3:00pm yesterday while Jagannath University students blocked Tanti Bazar intersection.

At a rally there, Rakibul Hasan, a student, said, "The government forced us to take to the streets."

There were also demonstrations on campuses of Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University and Begum Rokeya University.

Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Dhaka-Rajshahi, Dhaka-Tangail, and Dhaka-Rangpur highways were blocked for a while.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday announced his party's support for the protesters.

England into Euro semis

FROM PAGE 12

A dreary encounter for the first 75 minutes came to life after Breel Embolo put Switzerland in front.

Saka's fine strike from outside the box levelled with England's first shot on target five minutes later.

Manchester City defender Akanji was then the unfortunate penalty villain as Switzerland's horrible record in major tournament quarter-finals goes on.

They have now lost five without ever reaching a semi-final.

By contrast, England march on despite another in a string of underwhelming performances from Gareth Southgate's men.

In his 100th match in charge of his country, Southgate again resisted calls for mass changes in personnel but did alter his system.

Zia was devoted to chess till his last day

FROM PAGE 12

much greater than mine. He had a degree in anthropology from Dhaka University but his true love had always been chess. He trained his son as a chess player as well.

Zia took chess as a profession, which is a really challenging thing to do. I was never a fully professional chess player. I dabbled in many things but Zia was completely devoted to chess till his last day.

People remember me, because I was the first to get GM norm in South Asia, but in terms of quality, Zia was better than me.

No player from Bangladesh has ever made it to the Super GM level in chess. But the only one who came close to doing it was Zia. He was on path to reaching that level when he peaked in 2007-8, but eventually couldn't break through.

He coached professionally in India. He also taught chess to players from other countries as well through online coaching.

I wasn't there at the Chess Federation hall room when he fell down, I had left at around 5:00 pm. I had spoken to him the day before yesterday. We spoke for a long time about many things in good humour.

To me, he looked very tired. His hair was scuffed up and looked dishevelled. I asked him why he was wearing a muffler in the heat. He said he was feeling cold. I found that a bit strange. He didn't look too well. But he was speaking normally.

I had told him to go to a doctor many times before, but he never listened. In the Chennai Olympiad in 2022, he fell sick after the opening ceremony. He vomited a few times, I told him it could be a cardiac issue. But he said it was nothing like that, it was just some indigestion. He could've gotten it checked for free over there, but he didn't do it. He always ignored his health, he thought his condition wasn't that serious. But he couldn't play for three days in that Olympiad.

He led the life of a school headmaster. He was dedicated to chess like how a headmaster looks after a school. He lived a simple life. Whenever we would approach him saying, 'Zia, let's go to this place,' he would say, 'No, Niaz bhai, I don't want to go'. He wasn't outgoing, only obsessing over chess.

Zia hardly got anything in return for his dedication to chess. We need to ensure that his family doesn't suffer and that his wife and son are fine. The federation needs to take that initiative and the government also needs to take some steps.

I still can't believe that I won't get to hear Zia's deep voice, his jokes and laughter anymore. His death has left a huge gap. He had become an inseparable part of our chess community. Whether it was the World Cup or the Olympiad or the National Championship, he was everywhere. He was the heart and soul of our chess, and now, he will no longer be here, this realisation is hurting me the most.

The writer Niaz Murshed is Bangladesh's first chess Grandmaster

Three out of 5 still going straight to tertiary hospitals

FROM PAGE 1

with patients with minor problems. They will treat only patients referred by the smaller facilities.

The system creates a link between the primary, secondary and tertiary hospitals.

A recent study published in the peer-reviewed journal BMC Health Services Research said three out of five patients in the country go to tertiary-level hospitals without being referred there.

It also found that 58 percent of the 822 respondents were unaware of the referral system.

The study was conducted at two tertiary hospitals' outpatient and inpatient sections.

It found that only 41 percent of the patients were referred by other facilities.

In 2014, then health minister Mohammad Nasim introduced a patient referral system in Rangpur.

But it did not work because of a lack of facilities, expert physicians, and staff at primary healthcare centres, officials said.

In 2016, National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM), conducted a feasibility study in Rangpur, Kurigram, Panchagarh and Nilphamari for a referral system.

Prof Samiul Islam, director of the institute, said, "An effective referral system guideline should be formulated.

"Doctors have to be motivated and trained. People's trust has to be earned for the system to work."

He added that decentralising specialised health services will also reduce the pressure of patients in secondary- and tertiary-level hospitals.

Unless primary healthcare facilities are improved and there are more specialists, a referral system will frustrate people, he said.

The health directorate took an initiative to introduce a system in Manikganj and Chapainawabganj in 2019. But that too failed.

Syed Abdul Hamid, professor at the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) at Dhaka University, said that the lack of a proper referral system leads patients to often bypass primary care and head straight to specialists, creating a long queue.

Dr Supriya Sarkar, deputy programme manager (hospital) at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said a directive for the community clinics was made in 2019, but it was not fully implemented.

The health directorate will soon introduce a guideline, he said.

Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general (administration) at DGHS, said, "We are working on creating an effective referral system. The work on digitising patient data is underway."

Ahmedul said poor services in primary facilities were major barriers to the referral system.

MYANMAR CRISIS

Ethnic fighters battling way into key town

AFP, *Mandalay*

Myanmar ethnic minority fighters were battling their way into a town housing a regional military command, one of their leaders yesterday.

Soldiers were "surrounding" the northern Shan state town of Lashio, home to the junta's northeastern command, General Tar Bhone Kyaw of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) told AFP.

Clashes first broke out on Wednesday as the ethnic fighters moved into the area.

A member of a local group of volunteers helping to treat the injured and bury the dead told AFP yesterday that at least 16 civilians had been killed since fighting broke out in Lashio.

"There has been very strong fighting around the town," the rescuer said.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

China anchors 'monster ship'

Says Philippine coast guard

REUTERS, *Manila*

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said yesterday that China's largest coast guard vessel has anchored in Manila's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea, and is meant to intimidate its smaller Asian neighbour.

The China coastguard's 165-metre 'monster ship' entered Manila's 200-nautical mile EEZ on July 2, spokesperson for the PCG Jay Tarriela told a news forum.

The PCG warned the Chinese vessel it was in the Philippine's EEZ and asked about their intentions, he said.

"It's an intimidation on the part of the China Coast Guard," Tarriela said. "We're not going to pull out and we're not going to be intimidated."

The Chinese ship, which has also deployed a small boat, was anchored 800 yards away from the PCG's vessel, Tarriela said.

China's embassy in Manila and the Chinese foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. China's coast guard has no publicly available contact information.

Palestinians asses the damage following an Israeli strike in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The health ministry in Gaza said yesterday that at least 38,098 people have been killed in Gaza since Oct 7.
PHOTO: **AFP**

GAZA OFFENSIVE

Strikes in Gaza as Israel commits to talks

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Israel carried out deadly airstrikes in Gaza yesterday and engaged in combat with Hamas fighters, while to the north it exchanged fire with Hezbollah fighters across the Lebanese border.

The fighting raged as diplomatic efforts to halt the war, which will enter its tenth month today, continued with Israel saying on Friday it would send a delegation next week to continue talks with Qatari mediators.

There has been no truce since a one-week pause in November during which 80 Israeli hostages were freed in return for 240 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

The war continued unabated yesterday, with Israel's military saying it had conducted operations across much of the Gaza Strip, including Shujaiya in the north, Deir al-Balah in central Gaza and Rafah in the south.

Shujaiya is among the areas the military had previously declared to be cleared of Hamas, but where fighting is again taking place.

Israel has carried out a military offensive that has killed at least 38,098 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, since Oct 7 according to the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said at least 87 people had been killed in the past 48 hours, and paramedics yesterday reported 10 deaths in an air strike on a house in Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

The Hamas press office and paramedics said four journalists working for local media outlets were killed in strikes overnight, and the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said two of its employees had been killed.

According to UNRWA, which coordinated much of the aid delivered to Gaza, 194 of its employees have been killed in the war.

The United States, which has mediated talks alongside Qatar and Egypt, has talked up the prospects of a deal saying there is a "pretty significant opening" for both sides.

US President Joe Biden announced a pathway to a truce deal in May that he said had been proposed by Israel.

This included an initial six-week truce, Israeli withdrawal from Gaza population centres and the freeing of hostages by Palestinian fighters.

Talks subsequently stalled, but a US official said on Thursday that a new proposal from Hamas "moves the process forward and may provide the basis for closing the deal".

Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told AFP that new ideas from the group had been "conveyed by the mediators to the American side, which welcomed them and passed them on to the Israeli side. Now the ball is in the Israeli court."

The war has uprooted 90 percent of Gaza's population, destroyed much of its housing and other infrastructure, and left almost 500,000 people enduring "catastrophic" hunger, UN agencies say.

Netanyahu demands the release of the hostages but also insists the war will not end until Israel has destroyed Hamas's ability to make war or govern.

Cross-border fire between Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement has occurred almost daily since the Gaza war began, but has escalated notably over the past month.

That has raised fears of a major conflagration between the staunch enemies which could draw in Iran and other powers.

Yesterday morning, sirens blared over northern Israel and the military said it had downed a "suspicious aerial target" and two "hostile aircraft" launched from Lebanon fell in open ground.

The military said earlier it had attacked "a number of Hezbollah terror targets in southern Lebanon" overnight, all near the border.

US officials, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, have voiced hope that a ceasefire in Gaza could also lead to an easing of violence on the Israel-Lebanon border.

8 arrested after murder of Indian politician

AFP, *New Delhi*

Eight people were arrested in India yesterday for the murder of a politician who championed the rights of lower-caste Indians, police said.

K Armstrong, the state boss of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), was hacked to death with machetes and sickles near his home in the southern city of Chennai on Friday night.

Six men travelling on motorbikes attacked Armstrong while he was "chatting with friends and supporters" near his home in the Tamil Nadu state capital, the Indian Express newspaper reported.

The men reportedly escaped before anyone could intervene.

Several of Armstrong's supporters took to the streets later in the evening to protest his assassination and demand justice.

Senior Chennai police officer Asra Garg said eight suspects were being interrogated after a "preliminary investigation".

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin urged police to speedily conclude the investigation.

Biden defiant, but critics are circling

AFP, *Washington DC*

Joe Biden's presidential reelection bid hung in the balance yesterday, after efforts to put a disastrous debate showing behind him failed to silence voices urging that he quit the White House race.

In what had been billed as a make-or-break TV interview on Friday, Biden's strategy was to flatly deny the falling poll numbers and concerns over his mental and physical fitness triggered by his dismal performance against rival Donald Trump.

He blamed a severe cold for the debate debacle and insisted it was just a "bad night" rather than evidence of increasing frailty and cognitive decline.

And the 81-year-old was adamant that he would not be pressured to end his campaign.

Murmurs of dissent within his own Democratic party have, in the case of five individual House representatives, morphed into direct calls to quit, and a number of key donors have threatened to cut off funding if Biden insists on staying the course.

Biden's campaign team is pushing ahead regardless, with an event planned in Pennsylvania today and visits to other battleground states later in the month.

For Biden and his campaign team, the strategy seems to be to ride it out.

Russia says captured village in east Ukraine

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia yesterday said its forces had captured a village in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, as Moscow continues to advance slowly across the battlefield.

The defence ministry said its troops "liberated the village of Sokil", around 30 kilometres northwest of Donetsk city, the capital of the region by the same name that Moscow claimed to have annexed in 2022.

Kyiv says the fiercest fighting across the entire front line is taking place in the Donetsk region, where Russian troops are trying to eject Ukraine's forces.

Elsewhere, Kyiv, EU officials, the United States and NATO hit out at Hungarian leader Viktor Orban, Russia's closest EU ally, on Friday after Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted him in Moscow for talks on the Ukraine conflict.

Speaking to Orban, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday repeated his demand for Ukraine to totally withdraw from the region, along with three others in the south and east of the country, if it wants peace.

Orban has not received any mandate from the EU Council to visit Moscow, officials have said.

Iran reformist wins presidency

FROM PAGE 1

in the runoff, emphasising the importance of the election.

He said the first round turnout was lower than expected, but added that it was not an act "against the system".

The ballot comes against a backdrop of heightened regional tensions over the Gaza war, a dispute with the West over Iran's nuclear programme, and domestic discontent over the state of Iran's sanctions-hit economy.

In last week's first round, Pezeshkian, who was the only reformist allowed to stand, won the largest number of votes, around 42 percent, while Jalili came second with around 39 percent, according to figures from Iran's elections authority.

Only 40 percent of Iran's 61 million eligible voters took part in the first round, the lowest turnout in any presidential election since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The candidacy of Pezeshkian, a relative unknown until recently, has raised the hopes of Iran's reformists after years of dominance by the conservative and ultraconservative camps.

Iran's main reformist coalition supported Pezeshkian, with endorsements by former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, a moderate.

Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon, has called for "constructive relations" with Western countries to revive the nuclear deal in order to "get Iran out of its isolation".

Pezeshkian vowed to ease long-standing internet restrictions and to "fully" oppose police patrols enforcing the mandatory headscarf for women, a high-profile issue since the death in police custody in 2022 of Mahsa Amini which sparked months of nationwide unrest.

Meanwhile, Pezeshkian received congratulations for his victory from around the world, most notably from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Saudi Arabian King Salman, United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait, according to news agencies.

"Looking forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our warm and long-standing bilateral relationship for the benefit of our peoples and the region," Modi wrote on social media platform X.

"I hope that your tenure as president will contribute to a reinforcement of constructive bilateral cooperation between our friendly peoples," Putin said in a message to Pezeshkian.

The two countries, the target of stiff Western sanctions, can "coordinate efforts to resolve international issues in a constructive manner," he said.

"I attach great importance to the development of China-Iran relations and am willing to work with the President to lead the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership towards deeper advancement," state news agency Xinhua reported Xi as saying.

The two countries "have a long history of friendly exchanges, and bilateral relations have maintained healthy and stable development... for over half a century," Xi said, according to Xinhua.

"Faced with complex regional and international situations, China and Iran have always supported each other, worked together and continued to consolidate strategic mutual trust," he added.

"(This) has not only brought benefits to our two countries' peoples, but has also made active contributions to promoting regional and world peace and stability," he said.

In a message published on the Syrian presidency's social media accounts, Assad said: "We are keen to ensure that our relationship remains at its peak".

He added that he wants to work with Pezeshkian "to strengthen the Syrian-Iranian strategic relationship" and that "resistance will remain the common approach we follow."

King Salman, in a message to Pezeshkian, expressed hope for the "continued development of relations which link our two countries and our two brotherly peoples," according to the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

He also expressed his wish for further "coordination and dialogue to strengthen regional and international peace and security," SPA said.

The president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, wished success to Pezeshkian and said he looks "forward to working together to further strengthen ties between the UAE and Iran for the benefit of our two nations and peoples."

The emirs of Qatar and Kuwait sent cables of congratulations to Pezeshkian, official media reported.

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad Al-Sabah wished "more prosperity and development" for the Islamic republic, the official KUNA news agency said.

Top Myanmar general in China for official visit

Says junta

AFP, *Yangon*

The Myanmar junta's second-in-command arrived in China yesterday for an official visit, the junta's information team said, as clashes with ethnic minority fighters raged in the north of the country despite a Beijing-brokered ceasefire.

Vice-senior General Soe Win arrived in Qingdao in Shandong province where he will attend a "Green Development Forum" hosted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the junta's information office said in a statement.

Ties between the junta and Beijing, a major ally and arms supplier, frayed last year over the junta's failure to crack down on online scam compounds in Myanmar's borderlands.

The compounds were staffed by citizens of China and other countries who were often trafficked and forced to work swindling their compatriots in an industry analysts say is worth billions.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing has not visited China since the 2021 coup that plunged the country into turmoil.

The Southeast Asian nation has seen widespread fighting since the military coup ended democratic rule.

Soe Win's visit comes following more than a week of fighting in northern Shan state between the military and an ethnic minority armed group that has shattered a ceasefire brokered by China in January.

Yesterday the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) told AFP its fighters were "surrounding" the town of Lashio, home to a regional military command.

Lashio sits on a major highway that runs from Myanmar's second city of Mandalay to China's Yunnan province.

Sahel junta chiefs divorce from West African bloc

AFP, *Niamey*

The military regimes of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso marked their divorce from the rest of West Africa Yesterday, with Niger's ruling general saying the junta-led countries have "turned their backs on" the regional bloc.

The three country's leaders are taking part in the first summit of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), set up after pulling out of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) earlier this year.

"Our people have irrevocably turned their backs on ECOWAS," Niger's ruling General Abdourahamane Tiani told his fellow Sahel strongmen at the gathering's opening in the Nigerien capital Niamey.

Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger set up the mutual defence pact in September, leaving the wider Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) bloc in January.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A shocking revelation of data inaccuracy

BB's discovery of export data miscalculations is alarming

Bangladesh Bank has unearthed a shocking revelation about our export data—a $14 billion dollar discrepancy in the calculation. This was revealed through a regular update on the balance of payments by the central bank, creating shockwaves for economists and business leaders. Such a mind-boggling understatement of the export data has disturbing implications on the country's economic performance, specifically its growth rate, based on which policies are formulated. The question is, how could such massive miscalculations occur in the first place? Who is responsible? And how long have these been going on?

According to a report in this paper, Bangladesh Bank discovered six ways in which the data miscalculations caused the export figure to become so inflated. The anomalies include errors in customs data, miscalculations of the value of fabrics, samples for buyers being included as final products with export value, double-counting of sales by EPZ-based firms, not adjusting the difference between the LC (Letter of Credit) value and actual export proceeds, and not adjusting losses from stock-lot sales, discounts and commissions. Such mistakes in the dataset are deeply worrying, to say the least.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) should be held accountable for the mistakes. We expect the government to conduct a thorough investigation into why the relevant officials made these errors. Is it because of incompetence? Or, were the miscalculations deliberate? Either way, they must face the consequences of mishandling such important data. We also must ask: how far back do these errors go? The current mismatch is for the July-April period of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, and the correction reveals that exports have fallen by 6.8 percent instead of the stated growth of 3.93 percent. How far back should we go to recalculate the data for previous years' performance? A BB official has said there is nothing wrong with past data. Should we take their optimism at face value?

While the correction will lead to a revaluation of the growth rate, an economist has said it would be down by 1 percent. That said, that Bangladesh Bank has discovered the anomalies through its own recalculations is a positive move. We appreciate the effort to set the records straight, and hope that such diligence and transparency will be applied to other areas of data calculation. Policies are based on the official data available, and can only work if the numbers are correct. We, therefore, expect the government to revisit all the data generated by its bodies in various areas, no matter how tedious the task is. Because, ultimately, correct and regularly updated data is vital not only for the government to make appropriate policies but also for independent experts and citizens to understand the nation's economic realities.

Is it a tree fair, or a commercial one?

Attitude of state officials questions our environmental commitments

Officially, the government remains committed to preserving our natural resources including forests, rivers, and hills. However, the corruption, mismanagement, and questionable policymaking that routinely stymie its efforts—thereby contributing to further environmental degradation—can be understood from a recent example. It involves, as per a report, the organisation of a so-called "tree fair" in Gosairhat, Shariatpur. Despite its name, the 15-day event features a variety of vendors selling snacks, cosmetics, toys, and rides, with only one stall, out of the 39, selling tree saplings. Even though the fair is being organised under the banner of the Gosairhat forest department and upazila administration, the former disclaimed any involvement, while the latter said it is assisting the department, highlighting a lack of coordination and seriousness among them.

One may write this off as trivial but it is not. It symbolises the broader trend of systemic neglect and mismanagement that has long jeopardised our environmental commitments. Much like the ill-distribution of stalls turning the fair into a commercial one, the perfunctory attitude and profit-first mentality of responsible government departments have severely affected various decisions and projects related to our environmental causes. A report published on the same day takes a look into some of those projects where—far from preserving our forests, hills, and rivers—officials prioritised their commercialisation by permitting or engaging in environmental degradation themselves.

A notable example is the planned safari park at the Lathitila reserved forest in Moulvibazar. Despite laws prohibiting construction and even unauthorised entry into protected forests, the forest department is reportedly cutting trees and hills there to build the park, betraying its misplaced priorities. Similarly, various government institutions have been implicated in the destruction of wetlands, forests, and hills. As per a study by the River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), between March 2023 and April 2024, 25 government institutions cut down upwards of 11 lakh trees across the country—over seven lakhs of them within protected forests. Even more shockingly, the forest department alone accounted for over 417,000 of all felled trees. Such large-scale deforestation in the name of development not only degrades the environment but also sets a precedent for private entities to follow suit.

One doesn't need to be reminded of the devastating effects of such activities, public or private. People are paying the price even as we write this. It is, therefore, imperative that the government reassesses its priorities and ensures that state officials, who are at the centre of any drive to uphold its environmental commitments, are properly attuned to them. The authorities also must ensure strict compliance with all environmental laws to prevent the depletion and degradation of natural resources.

Freedom fighters' quota goes against the 1971 spirit

Tanim Ahmed
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

TANIM AHMED

Any argument about the freedom fighters' quota, especially one that opposes it in its current form, has turned so contentious that the discussion tends to revolve around the advocate more than whatever merit the argument itself might have. It would then, perhaps, be appropriate to first establish that I have skin in the game, that this is not merely an exercise in theory. It affects me directly.

Both my parents were freedom fighters. My father was an army doctor and among the founders of Bangladesh Hospital in Tripura under Sector 2. My mother was a nurse at that hospital. My uncle was among the first batch of officers to be inducted into the Bangladesh army. He was among the 61 officers of the First War Course (also called the Murti Commission) during the 1971 Liberation War. Both my father and my uncle were awarded the Bir Protik gallantry award.

They chose to join the war knowing full well they may not return at all. They had close encounters with danger and death. Many of their comrades fell in battle. Many were caught and never returned. But that is the nature of wars. Some return home to glory, some don't. But this was a war for the liberation of a nation, which meant that unless they were victorious, they would go down as seditious rebels and their families would live in ignominy forever. Merely surviving the war was not going to be enough. They had to win it, and win it they did. It is only fitting that we honour the freedom fighters in whatever way we can. Theirs is a debt that we can never repay. Thus, instituting a special quota for freedom fighters, who had risked their life and limb for the country, would be quite justified in an independent Bangladesh.

Furthermore, considering the disparities in Bangladesh, there should be special quotas not just in government service, but also in universities, for certain groups that remain marginalised and disadvantaged—for instance, women, ethnic minorities, people from remote areas, people with disabilities and differences. There should be conditions too—specifying how many children of the same family can avail it or that it will only apply to first generation university aspirants for they have not had the same opportunities as those whose parents did go to university. People from remote districts like Panchagarh or Khagrachhari, those from ethnic minorities, those with differences like transgender people, and women too, should, by all means, be prioritised.

However, extending the special quota of freedom fighters as a privilege to their children, and their grandchildren, would be unfair to deserving candidates. It might have been acceptable if 30 percent quotas were reserved for a group of people who constitute less than one percent of the population if it were the freedom fighters themselves. But we, the children of freedom fighters, or our children, had nothing to do with their choices or their sacrifices and we do not deserve any of the credit due to our parents. Surely, many freedom fighters' families are in distress and have suffered but so have millions of others. Now, more than 50 years after the war, to continue that privilege for the grandchildren of freedom fighters is almost like installing a regime of hereditary entitlement. Freedom fighters' families do not constitute a disadvantaged or marginalised class. Those who still languish in poverty do so because the state has failed them, just as it has failed millions of others. There should be programmes to lift them up, as there are social safety net and other assistance programmes that the government runs. One might point out that those are largely insufficient and ineffective in improving lives meaningfully. After all, cash assistance of a few thousand takas is not going to change lives in this day and age. But that is all the more reason to reinvigorate efforts to make these programmes better so that every citizen of Bangladesh has enough opportunities to live a better life. It does not call for a special provision for a specific group of people.

Yet, there are platforms of freedom fighters' children that claim to "fight" for this quota saying that abolishing it would be an insult to the spirit of the Liberation War, and would belittle the contribution of freedom fighters. It would not. It is embarrassing, to say the least. It shames me that freedom fighters' children would be so callous to their peers and fellow citizens as to not see the injustice in what they advocate. And to brand those demanding annulment of the freedom fighters' quota as collaborators or traitors is a cheap way of stigmatising the people demanding a fair system.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN/STAR**

Students have blocked Shahbagh intersection for much of last week in protest of the quota system.

Surely, the principle of any special provisions of the government should be that the poorest and most marginalised benefit from them. These provisions should seek to help those in most need of assistance to lift themselves out of the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation. These should strive towards a more just and equal society, and for that to happen we need capable officials running the government. The very spirit of the Liberation War was in protest of the unjust, unequal system of erstwhile Pakistan. The freedom fighters' quota that seeks to create a privileged section of people hereditarily is exactly what they had fought against. I don't want it. Not for me. And certainly not for my children.

Mission to China

Is the PM ready to take a bold position on RCEP?

Farid Erkizia Bakht
is a political analyst.

FARID ERKIZIA BAKHT

Bangladesh is not a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Nor is it a member of BRICS+. It is not ensconced within ASEAN either. By extension, Dhaka feels it can remain outside the planet's largest trading area, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). I have lost count of the times I mentioned RCEP in conversations in Dhaka, only to be met with a blank stare. The RCEP does not elicit curiosity.

The fault lies with the strategic community in Dhaka. They have failed (perhaps even wilfully) to argue for a coherent strategy towards China and Southeast Asia. The result of apathy and opaque concepts is that Bangladesh has "Brexited" itself away from the new core of the world economy on our doorstep. Metaphorically, it has plumped for the slow train, drifting around in South Asia, rather than hitch a ride on the high-speed trains of China, Japan, Korea and ASEAN. We could have both. Geography and history demand it.

Are we aiming low, missing RCEP?

So, what can we hope for from the PM's flight to Beijing? I am worried that no one seems to be worried.

Over two days on July 9 and 10, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to have intense talks with Prime Minister Li Qiang, and a broader discussion about a deeper relationship with President Xi Jinping. Are her advisors failing to grasp what is at stake and not feeding talking points for a much more ambitious undertaking?

The current batch of "goodies" look like a string of projects at best, where the parts outweigh the sum. At worst, to cynics, it looks like a shopping trip of cash and projects. Even working on a free trade area with China is insufficient.

Fundamentally, we need to move on from merely pleading for more infrastructure, funded by foreign loans but not by themselves earning foreign currency. The vulnerable economy is crying out for foreign (Chinese) investment into export-producing industrial platforms, to earn the dollars and Yuan to pay back ever higher foreign debt, which is mostly non-Chinese. Instead of acting as a supplicant for aid, we should be negotiating terms of a partnership where both China and Bangladesh gain something (a win-win, as Chinese diplomats like to say).

Contrast this with the trip by the Sri Lankan president in mid-2023 and how, before and after his visit to Beijing, he made joining RCEP the centrepiece of a new strategy towards the East and Southeast Asia. Colombo understands that RCEP offers a priceless opportunity to leapfrog the most industrialised state in India, neighbouring Tamil Nadu, by entering the Chinese-led trading area.

New nodes of supply chains will appear on that island, if admitted. In other words, selected sections of manufacturing processes will decamp from, say, China or Malaysia, and seek low-cost destinations within the trade area. The latter point is important because RCEP is not merely about lowering tariffs but adhering to new technical standards and industrial practices. Diversification, better quality, and higher technology are the prizes.

The oft-stated visions of a Digital Bangladesh and its offspring, Smart Bangladesh, require plugging into the world of Huawei, Xinyi Solar and BYD. That undertaking can quite easily function in parallel to Indian connectivity links through Bangladeshi territory (another win-win).

From strategic ambiguity to strategic clarity

Too often, Dhaka has followed the Indian posture of strategic ambiguity. Others might consider this ever-so-clever "balancing" as strategic dithering, founded on short-term opportunities, laced within an ambience of fear of offending any or all of the Big Three (India, US, and China, in that order).

The PM, with her political instincts, understands the downsides of committing too much to Delhi's demands. Wiser heads know that Delhi has its own fears and interests. They recognise that cooperation, not confrontation, is the *sine qua non* of Delhi-Dhaka ties. Yet, this cannot be to the detriment of Bangladeshi economic imperatives. Dhaka has given much more than would have been possible two decades ago—ending separatist bases for Northeast Indian guerillas forces, allowing transport corridors from Kolkata through Bangladesh to Tripura and Assam, and deferring to Indian pressure to "go slow" on Chinese projects. The last point is now no longer acceptable to the sovereign and economic interests of Bangladesh, nor its restive population.

Delhi has been heavily criticised within opposition quarters in Bangladesh for its support to the Awami League during the one-sided elections in January. Now, Delhi has nowhere else to go. It can hardly try to not back the Awami League since the alternative forces are viscerally against Delhi. Moreover, with Modi electorally weakened, he has other agendas to attend to.

Were Dhaka to take bold steps in its approach to Beijing and the wider region, Delhi would be as passive as Washington was in January.

Acting firmly but fairly by retaining commitments to India alongside pursuing a new, enhanced economic partnership with China would extinguish some domestic fires. This reminds me of the PM's rather strange journey to the Munich Security Conference a few months ago. The PM acquiesced with her foreign policy wonks and Western personages to hobnob with Western military officials, primarily focused with war in Eastern Europe and forthcoming adventures on the South China Sea. Not only did Sheikh Hasina skilfully avoid antagonising Russia as well as her Western hosts by stating the position of neutrality (as per the Global South position), but she also made some brave remarks, strongly condemning the slaughter in Gaza.

The mission to Beijing offers her another opportunity to act on her instincts. She can make her move, telling her Chinese hosts that Bangladesh wants an early entry into RCEP. Missing this boat now will mean facing the music soon enough.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Advertisement: 01711623910
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GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
bangla.thedailystar.net/

The expectations among people from the Labour government will be high and if not delivered, the frustration may set in early.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

UK ELECTION

Labour's challenge after landslide win

Dr Selim Jahan
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SELIM JAHAN

The British election is now over, and the results are in. According to latest reports, the Labour Party has won a landslide victory with 412 seats in the 650-seat House of Commons. The Tories have lost 251 seats, and they are now left with 121 members in the new parliament. But beyond the numbers, there are some trends worth taking into account.

The voter turnout was about 60 percent, the lowest in 20 years. The apathy among the voters about the political process is clear. The theme of "change" of the Labour Party has resonated with the voters, who seemed to be sick and fed up with the Tories and their policies. Smaller parties like the Green Party or Reform UK have remained, as usual, marginal. The expectations among people from the Labour government will be high and if not delivered, the frustration may set in early. Finally, what can be done will depend not only on domestic dynamics, but also on international events. As the Labour government sets to tasks, there are a few formidable challenges they will have to tackle.

To start off, apart from socio-economic divisions, the British society has become highly divisive along ethnic, religious, regional, immigrant, and non-immigrant lines. Britishness, in terms of value and tradition, has decayed a lot. If the new government wants to succeed, it has to restore the social cohesion among various groups. Diversity, if managed well, can be a strength. But mismanaged, it can lead to divisions.

Despite having always boasted about being a welfare state, Britain's social services are decaying. The National Health Services (NHS) is a prime example. There is a dearth of doctors and nurses, hospital beds have become a scarce commodity, patients have been on the waiting list for necessary surgery, and there are shortfalls in resources. But the problem is not only in terms of resource shortage, but also of the abuse of the system. Abuses are prominent in all kinds of social assistance systems. However, privatisation of the social services is not the solution. Rather, the British social service system requires fundamental structural reforms.

There is no doubt that the inflation rate has come down significantly, but that has not solved the economic challenges that common people face in their day-to-day life. Joblessness is a problem, energy prices are still high, the housing market is not friendly to common people. At the macro-level, economic growth is sluggish and with Brexit, Britain has become isolated and deprived of the benefits and the privileges of the European Common Market.

Beyond all of this, immigration remains a hotly debated issue in the British society. It is now recognised that it is not always illegal immigration which is the problem; it is also legal immigration. Through the loopholes in immigration laws and the lenient policies of the British government, it is not only people needed by society who have entered the country, but also people who are dependent on the social assistance system, which has put a heavy burden on it. But the more important problem is the perception that this has opened a door to fundamentalism and terrorism.

The effectiveness and the success of the Labour government will depend, to a large extent, on the international scenario. One of the defining issues in this regard will be the American presidential election later this year. If Donald Trump becomes the US President in November, the US-UK relationship under a Labour government cannot be expected to be warm and cordial and the environment may be tense. In addition, war in Ukraine and the Palestine crisis would have a lingering impact on the British economy. The past UK government had doled out huge amounts of resources to Ukraine, which has put pressure on the British exchequer. On the Palestine issue, the position of the Labour Party is rather hazy and unclear. The Labour government has to bring clarity to it.

Some of the election results indicate certain challenges as well. For example, the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) has got only nine seats in the new parliament, down 38 seats from the last parliament. It raises question on the standing of the Scottish independence. Have the Scottish voters lost appetite for this issue? Or do they think that the British parliament is not the appropriate platform for the concerns of Scotland? Similarly, Liberal Democrats have achieved the best results in 100 years, and have gained 60 new seats to become the third largest party in the Parliament. It is well-known that this party is strongly supported by the younger generation. Even though the Labour Party has absolute majority in the parliament, one challenge the party will have is how it interacts with Liberal Democrats in the broader policy contexts. People have not forgotten as to how in the coalition of Labour and the Liberal Democrats, the latter was marginalised by Labour.

In the coming days, the British people will observe with high expectations how the new government tackles all these challenges and steers the country forward. The honeymoon period will not be long. The theme of "change" is a healer, but if change is not delivered, it could be a "killer" too.

How to reduce dengue and related out-of-pocket costs

Abdur Razzaque Sarker *and* **Md Mohin Uddin Mizan**
are health economist and publication and communications professionals, respectively, at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

ABDUR RAZZAQUE SARKER *and* **MD MOHIN UDDIN MIZAN**

Despite efforts by the two Dhaka city corporations to control dengue over the past few years, the number of cases and deaths has risen significantly. In 2019, there were 101,354 cases and 179 deaths. By 2023, these numbers had surged to 321,179 cases and 1,705 deaths. This increase indicates that the measures taken have been inadequate, and more needs to be done to address the issue effectively.

One study estimates that globally about 96 million dengue cases are clinically manifested per year, mostly found in urban and semi-urban areas in tropical and subtropical climates. Also, the burden of dengue infections has dramatically increased over the past decades, with the number of symptomatic dengue infection reports doubling every 10 years between 1990 and 2013.

Bangladesh is situated in the tropical and subtropical regions, and like other Southeast Asian countries, it has become a suitable habitat for the dengue vector and has experienced increased transmission in recent years. The disease is records. A large number of dengue cases are treated at the community level. Therefore, the actual number of cases and deaths is still unknown and even under-reported in Bangladesh. Experts estimate that about 2.4 million people suffers dengue infections annually, with most cases belonging to major cities like Dhaka and Chattogram.

Dhaka is often recognised as one of the poorest megacities, grappling with many problems such as pollution, horrendous traffic jams, unregulated construction work, brick kilns, and vehicles running on fuel containing higher levels of sulfur and other detrimental substances that pose grave threats to public health. Further, migration to urban megacities may impact individuals' hygiene, working, and living conditions, directly affecting city dwellers' health status. Thus, dengue infection is an emerging public health concern in urban Dhaka, and the cost of dengue infection is higher in metropolitan Dhaka than in other parts of the country due to livelihood costs.

A growing body of literature resources from their regular income (62.3 percent), borrow from others (47.7 percent), use savings (41.7 percent), rely on family donations (18.9 percent), and even sell permanent assets (1 percent).

There is an urgent need for an effective national prevention strategy to achieve considerable cost savings and reduce morbidity from dengue. Policymakers should consider the OOP cost of dengue infections, particularly among low-income people, while balancing the benefits of introducing potentially effective dengue preventive programmes in dengue hotspots like urban Dhaka.

Different preventive measures such as water and waste management strategies and community education campaigns focusing on these risk factors should be taken to tackle dengue infections in metropolitan cities including Dhaka. The measures at household levels may include eliminating mosquito breeding grounds, effective solid waste disposal, using mosquito coils, aerosols, mosquito nets, cleaning larval habitats weekly (overhead tanks, groundwater storage tanks, air coolers, refrigerators, flower vases, earthen jars, cement tanks, plastic drums), applying insecticides, and using window screens, coils, and vapourisers. A joint effort involving public, private, and non-governmental organisations is necessary to tackle the burden of dengue.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Policymakers should consider the OOP cost of dengue infections, particularly among low-income people.

expected to expand its geographical range due to favourable conditions provided by rapidly growing high-density urban areas along with socio-economic changes, increased worldwide travel and trade, and climate change. A risk factor study on dengue infections in urban Dhaka found that nearly 82 percent of identified immature mosquitoes were *Aedes aegypti*, responsible for dengue. Dengue fever is painful and affects people of all ages, including infants, young children, and adults and data indicates that Dhaka city is at most risk and requires urgent preventive intervention measures.

Dengue cases were highly prevalent in Dhaka division in 2023 and more than half of the total cases and most dengue-related deaths occurred in Dhaka city alone, indicating a health hazard for city dwellers. It should be noted that these numbers come from hospital

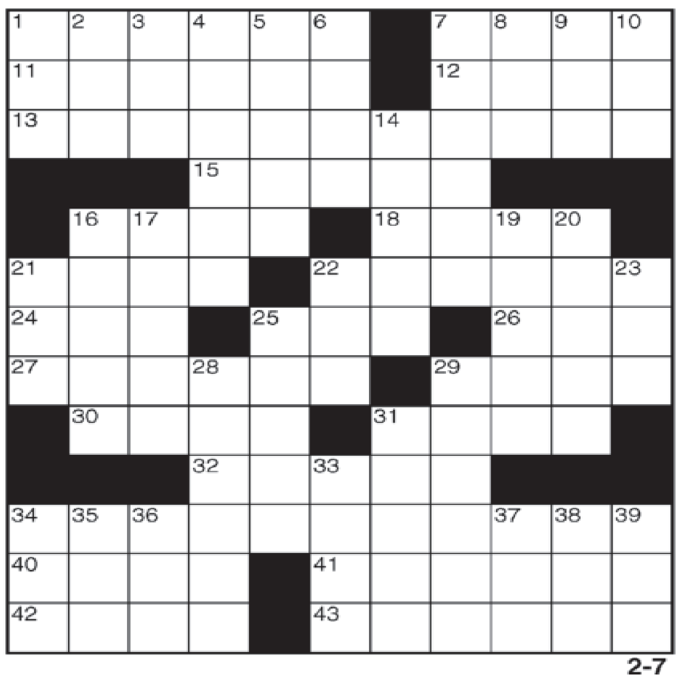
shows that dengue imposes an enormous socio-economic burden on households, healthcare systems, and government health expenditures in endemic countries, particularly during outbreaks. A recent BIDS study titled, "Economic Burden of Dengue in Urban Bangladesh: A Societal Perspective," published in 2023 in the *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, provides a detailed analysis of this economic burden. The average out-of-pocket (OOP) cost of dengue was about $316.51, representing 56 percent of total monthly household income. For the poorest quintile, this cost exceeded 139 percent of their total household income, while the wealthiest quintile spent only 36 percent of their household income, highlighting a severe financial disparity among city dwellers. To mitigate the OOP cost of dengue, urban dwellers need to exhaust

Another potential short-term solution is introducing a vaccine against the dengue virus in dengue hotspots. Vaccines are often considered the "best-buy" as they reduce disease incidence and case fatalities, saves OOP expenditure, avoids productivity losses, mitigates excessive pressure on the health system, and ensures equity. While the dengue vaccination programme is yet to be conducted in Bangladesh, such a preventive programme has proven cost-effective in many countries like Indonesia, Brazil, and Thailand. As dengue is emerging in Bangladesh, various preventive strategies should be considered year-round and not just at the beginning of the monsoon season to halt dengue infections and improve health outcomes.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Phone button
7 Track event
11 Meeting slate
12 Mideast sultanate
13 Flying copycat
15 Foster of film
16 Conks out
18 St. Louis sight
21 Small change
22 Patriotic song
24 Switch setting
25 Drill part
26 Mine yield
27 Beyond what's acceptable
29 Expand
30 Screws up
31 Mires
32 Region of northern India
34 Wee hoverer
40 "Got it"
41 Aviator Earhart
42 Household critters
43 Milk buy

DOWN
1 Flock father
2 Sense of self
3 Winter mo.
4 Printer type
5 "Bye!" in Baja
6 Touch down
7 Poet Frost
8 French friend
9 Sedan or SUV
10 Purpose
14 Ferber novel
16 "Robinson Crusoe" writer
17 Due to get
19 Guitarist's concern
20 Long sandwiches
21 Barracks bed
22 Melody
23 Kitten cry
25 Deep singers
28 Picture holders
29 TV's Bryant
31 Molten rock
33 Unexpected problem
34 Stylish
35 Try out
36 Got together
37 Unwell
38 Carnival city
39 Dapper fellow



2-7

THURSDAY'S ANSWERS

T	A	B	L	E	■	F	O	C	A	L
S	T	O	O	D	■	O	N	I	C	E
A	M	O	N	G	■	R	E	T	R	O
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I	M	P	E	R	I	A	L	■	■	■
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C	L	O	G	S	■	M	A	M	I	E
A	T	P	L	A	Y	■	N	I	L	E
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B	A	T	■	O	O	O	H	■	■	■
A	B	H	O	R	■	S	A	B	L	E
G	L	A	R	E	■	E	R	R	O	R
S	E	W	E	D	■	S	K	A	T	E

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Dengue linked to heightened risk of depression

Research from Taiwan suggests that dengue fever may increase the risk of depression in both the short and long term. Hsin-I Shih and colleagues from the National Cheng Kung University and National Health Research Institutes analysed the medical records of nearly 50,000 people who had dengue fever and compared them with 226,670 people who did not have the disease. Their findings were published in the journal PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases.

Dengue fever is caused by a mosquito-borne virus and can range from mild to severe, with some people experiencing long-term health effects. While previous research has linked dengue fever with psychiatric disorders like depression and anxiety, few studies have looked at the long-term risks.

To fill this gap, Shih and colleagues studied medical records from 2002 to 2015, focusing on whether dengue patients developed anxiety, depression, or sleep disorders after infection. They found that dengue patients were more likely to develop depression at all time points studied: less than three months, three to 12 months, and more than 12 months after infection. Sleep disorders were more common within three to 12 months post-infection, but there was no increased risk of anxiety overall.

For patients whose dengue was severe enough to require hospitalisation, there was a higher risk of anxiety within the first three months and sleep disorders within the first year. This group also had a higher risk of depression across all time frames.

These findings suggest a link between dengue fever and depression. However, more research is needed to understand whether dengue directly causes depression or if other factors are involved. The authors emphasise the importance of studying the mental health impacts of dengue infection further.

DEPRESSION
Sleep disorder
Anxiety

Over 3 million annual deaths due to alcohol and drug use, the majority among men

A new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) underscores the profound impact of alcohol and drug consumption worldwide. In 2019, alcohol alone contributed to 2.6 million deaths annually, representing 4.7% of all deaths, with an additional 0.6 million deaths attributed to psychoactive drug use. Notably, the majority of these deaths—2 million from alcohol and 0.4 million from drugs—affected men.

WHO's Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health highlights that an estimated 400 million people globally live with alcohol use disorders, including 209 million with alcohol dependence. These disorders significantly increase the risk of chronic diseases and mental health conditions and contribute to preventable deaths and societal burdens.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, emphasises the urgent need for comprehensive actions to mitigate these impacts and ensure accessible treatment for substance use disorders. The report calls for global commitment to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.5 by 2030, focusing on reducing substance use and improving treatment accessibility.

Despite a slight decline in alcohol-related death rates since 2010, the overall number remains alarmingly high, particularly in the WHO European and African Regions. The report identifies alcohol's role in various diseases, with 1.6 million deaths linked to noncommunicable diseases, 724,000 to injuries, and 284,000 to communicable diseases like HIV and tuberculosis.

Global per capita alcohol consumption decreased marginally, from 5.7 litres in 2010 to 5.5 litres in 2019. However, heavy episodic drinking—defined as consuming at least 60 g of pure alcohol on one or more occasions—remains prevalent, particularly among men, contributing to associated health risks and disabilities.

The report also highlights disparities in treatment accessibility, with significant gaps in coverage despite effective treatment options. Only a fraction of those in need receive treatment services, ranging from less than 1% to 35% across reporting countries. Stigma, discrimination, and misconceptions about treatment efficacy further hinder access to and prioritisation of substance use disorders in health agendas.

To address these challenges, WHO calls for intensified efforts across eight strategic areas, including advocacy campaigns, strengthening prevention and treatment capacities, and enhancing training for health professionals. The implementation of the Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022–2030, focusing on the SAFER package, is emphasised alongside increased resource mobilisation and innovative funding mechanisms.

In conclusion, the WHO report underscores the global health and social impact of alcohol and drug use, advocating for coordinated international actions to reduce substance use and improve treatment accessibility. By prioritising these efforts, governments and partners can work towards mitigating the devastating consequences of substance use disorders and achieving global health goals by 2030.

Source: *World Health Organisation*

HAVE A NICE DAY

Knowing more about 'moralogy'

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

Since the millennium, global unrest has surged, heightening the risk of social upheaval. Today, corruption remains a critical issue. While good governance and well-functioning institutions are vital in combating corruption, they are insufficient without a moral upliftment among the populace. Achieving a sustainable, corruption-free society hinges on fostering moral values. Moreover, as scholars delve into measuring happiness, they find that kindness—a key pillar of morality—significantly impacts not only individual happiness but also broader societal well-being.

Mental health promotion and wellness activities are gaining traction today, influenced by science and culture, which shape our "social ethos," including morality and lifestyle. Sadly, our education system often neglects moral education, leaving us uninformed about the importance of aiding the hugely impoverished community.

Studies show that unethical behaviour diminishes happiness, highlighting that moral education and health are essential social assets. Schools play a crucial role in nurturing young minds and enhancing their mental well-being. Introducing a science-based approach to morality could significantly boost our internal health and help us live in harmony with nature.

Japan's emphasis on moral education has gained recognition, particularly through the concept of "moralogy," developed by Japanese philosopher Dr Hiroike Chikuro. Founder of Reitaku University and the Moralogy Institute. He aimed to create a method for perfecting individual character by studying and practicing both traditional and contemporary moral values. His work underscores the impact of moral culture on mental health, especially among youth. Kindivists are going to honour the 100th anniversary of 'Moralogy' this year.

By integrating moral values at schools and religious centres, we can transform our society, fostering virtues such as kindness, forgiveness, and generosity.

E-mail: rubaiulmurshed@shomman.org

RETHINKING OBESITY

A new approach to diagnosis and treatment

STAR HEALTH DESK

A groundbreaking framework for diagnosing and managing obesity in adults, launched by the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and published in Nature Medicine, challenges the traditional reliance on the Body Mass Index (BMI) alone. The framework aims to modernise obesity care by integrating the latest scientific insights, including advancements in medications targeting obesity.

Obesity is widely recognised as a complex, chronic condition characterised by abnormal or excessive accumulation of body fat, linked to various health risks. Despite this understanding, many current diagnostic practices primarily use BMI cut-off values, which may overlook individuals who would benefit from treatment due to factors like adipose tissue distribution and function.

The EASO Steering Group, composed of leading experts in the field, emphasises the need for a more nuanced approach. They highlight that BMI alone is inadequate as a diagnostic tool, advocating instead for considering body fat distribution, particularly abdominal fat, which significantly impacts health outcomes. Even individuals with a BMI below the conventional obesity threshold (BMI of 30) may experience health complications due to abdominal fat accumulation.

The new framework broadens the definition of obesity to include individuals with lower BMIs (≥25–30 kg/m²) but elevated abdominal fat and associated medical, functional, or psychological impairments. This shift aims to prevent undertreatment of individuals who may not meet traditional BMI criteria but still face significant health risks.

Treatment recommendations outlined in the framework align with current guidelines, focusing on behavioural modifications such as nutrition therapy, physical activity, stress management, and improved sleep patterns as foundational strategies. Additionally, psychological therapy, obesity medications, and metabolic or bariatric procedures are recommended options, tailored to individual needs and preferences.

However, the committee notes a gap in current clinical guidelines, which often exclude individuals with lower BMIs from accessing medications or procedures intended for obesity management. They propose revising inclusion criteria for clinical trials to better reflect the diverse clinical presentations of obesity, advocating for the consideration of waist-to-height ratio and the presence of associated health complications, regardless of BMI.

In particular, the framework suggests that obesity medications should be considered for individuals with a BMI of 25 kg/m² or higher, coupled with an elevated waist-to-height ratio and associated impairments. This recommendation serves as a call to pharmaceutical companies and regulatory bodies to adopt more inclusive criteria in future research on obesity medications.

Ultimately, the goal of this new approach is to align obesity management with practices for other chronic diseases, focusing on long-term health outcomes rather than short-term weight reduction. It underscores the importance of personalised treatment plans that consider disease severity, therapeutic options, potential risks, patient preferences, and barriers to treatment.

In conclusion, the framework represents a significant step towards a comprehensive, lifelong approach to managing obesity, aiming to improve overall health and quality of life for individuals affected by this complex condition.

Does coffee affect blood pressure?

Caffeine can temporarily raise blood pressure (BP), but the long-term effects of regular coffee drinking are less clear. In a study from Italy, published in the Journal of Hypertension, researchers looked at BP in 1,400 participants based on their daily coffee consumption: none, moderate (1-2 cups), or heavy (3 or more cups). They measured BP in the office, at home, and with a 24-hour monitor at the start of the study and after 10 years. Most participants kept the same coffee habits throughout the study.

The three groups had some differences at the beginning: heavy coffee drinkers were generally younger, more likely to smoke, and less likely to be on blood pressure medications. After adjusting for these differences, the only notable finding was that heavy coffee drinkers had a slightly lower average office systolic BP compared to moderate and non-drinkers, both at the beginning and after 10 years. At either time point, there were no differences in BP readings taken at home or with the 24-hour monitor between the groups. Additionally, there were no differences in BP variability over 24 hours or in the development of new hypertension among the groups.

These results suggest that regular coffee consumption does not lead to clinically meaningful differences in BP or the incidence of hypertension. Patients can be reassured that a daily coffee habit is not likely to affect their BP.

The impact of heatwaves on children

RABEYA FERDOUS

A heatwave is an extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at that time of year, which may be accompanied by high humidity. Children face more vulnerable situations at this time. A few days ago we faced a heatwave. The Bangladesh government took different steps to overcome this situation. That time, the government closed the school and created different types of awareness among people.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said about 460 million children are exposed to extreme heat in South Asia, or 76 percent of children, compared to a third of children globally. The UN warns children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Pakistan are at "extremely high risk" of the impacts of climate change, defining extreme high temperatures as 83 or more days in a year over 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). Children cannot adapt as quickly to temperature changes and are not able to remove excess heat from their bodies.

According to UNICEF, 1 in 3 children in Bangladesh, or about 20 million children, are affected by climate change every day. Children are also exposed to adverse weather conditions such as heat waves, floods, river erosion, sea level rise, and other environmental shocks caused by climate change.

Heat waves have a bad impact on anyone's health, especially newborns, infants, young children, and adult children's health. Children cannot share their feelings with others like adults, and that's why they feel irritated over time.

A heat wave is simply a period of unusually hot weather that typically lasts two or more days. The temperatures have to be outside the historical averages for a given area.

According to UNICEF's 2021 Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI), children in Bangladesh are at extremely high risk of the impact of climate change.

Symptoms of a heatwave include:
- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Increased thirst
- Dizziness or fainting
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Irritability
- Headache

What steps should be taken?

- When a child faces heatstroke, you need to take the child to a cool place, give fluid with salt, and take out heavy clothing. Prevention is most necessary to avoid this situation.
- *Stay hydrated:* Give the child plenty of water, juice, or fruits.
- *Block direct sunlight:* Use curtains to reduce direct sunlight in your home.
- *Stay covered:* When children go outside, put on a light-colored dress; use sunglasses, a cap, a fanand an umbrella. breastfeeding babies more. Lactating mothers should drink plenty of water.
- *Remain indoors:* During 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m., stay inside the home.
- Indoor games like carrum and ludu are more suitable than outdoor games like football or cricket.

What steps should not be taken?

- Avoid vigorous activities in the sun.
- Avoid a journey in a local, crowded vehicle.
- Avoid tea, coffee, high-sugar drinks, and fizzy drinks.
- Avoid cooking between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. It may increase the temperature at home. Don't walk barefoot.
- Avoid excessive energy loss.
- Avoid long-distance travel with the child.

The writer is an occupational therapist at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospitals (NINS & H). Email: rabeya1988@gmail.com

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Uruguay v Brazil
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Wimbledon
Live from 4.00pm

Teary-eyed Nagelsmann lauds returned belief

AFP, *Herzogenaurach*

An emotional Germany manager Julian Nagelsmann said Saturday the team's "belief in ourselves has returned" despite a 2-1 extra-time elimination by Spain in the Euro 2024 quarter-finals.

Germany pushed Spain all the way in Stuttgart on Friday, coming from a goal down to send the game into extra time when Florian Wirtz scored an 89th-minute equaliser.

The host nation had a penalty claim denied late before conceding a Mikel Merino goal in the 119th minute.

The tearful coach praised the team after almost a decade of failures at major tournaments and said the performances, built on passionate home support, had bridged gaps between fans and the national team.

"The faith has grown, (the fans) believe in us again," Nagelsmann told reporters at Germany's base camp in the Bavarian village of Herzogenaurach.

"A few months ago it would have been unthinkable for us to come back from a goal down.

"You can tell I'm fighting back tears because it was very emotional. I've always said we need the fans behind us across the country.

"From March onwards, it was clear that the fans felt something. When we see the videos of fans, it's emotional. We would have liked to have given the supporters even more."

Nagelsmann took over in September after Hansi Flick became the first coach in Germany history to be sacked.

After two successive World Cup group stage eliminations and a last 16 loss to England at the Euros in 2021, Germany won just three of 11 games in 2023, giving rise to fears of a disastrous showing on home soil.

The 36-year-old coach however steadied the ship, bringing in a host of new players and dropping several big names from the squad.

Friday's loss was Germany's first defeat in 2024 after an eight-game run which included wins over France, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Asked if he had successfully reset the nation's hopes, Nagelsmann said: "I think we all saw that the hard drive has been cleaned.

"I don't know if it has definitely been completely erased, but it definitely has been cleaned.

"We are much more solid and our belief in ourselves has grown."

PHOTO: AFP

A tournament too far for Ronaldo!

NABID YEASIN

Portugal will remember the Euro 2024 as another golden opportunity squandered to get silverware with arguably one of the most talented bunch of footballers, but for their captain, Cristiano Ronaldo, the tournament will remain as a case of whether the 39-year-old forward has stretched his international career one tournament too long.

Portugal -- boasting an enviable midfield of Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, Vitinha, and Joao Palinha -- exited Euro 2024 in a lacklustre way, playing out a largely dull 120 minutes in the quarterfinal in Hamburg on Friday night against France, only to lose 5-3 on penalties.

Ronaldo did step up and convert the first spot-kick during the shootout, but the five-time Ballon d'Or winner was largely amiss throughout the game -- like he had been the entire tournament.

Ronaldo skying a Francisco Conceicao cut-back from close range in extra-time -- Portugal's best chance from open play on the night -- or his failure in sprinting past France's William Saliba in the right flank showed that he is neither a threatening presence inside the box nor is he the one to pose threats with his blistering pace like he once used to.

In fact, if anything, Ronaldo looked like he was the one holding a talented Portugal side back -- hogging the free-kicks despite his abysmal record of converting only once from 61 free-kicks in major tournaments -- and shunting the likes of far more pacy Diogo Jota and Goncalo Ramos in the sidelines.

Did Ronaldo push it one tournament too far this time? If this question was a point to ponder at the beginning of the tournament for which Portugal qualified as the only unbeaten side with Ronaldo top-scoring for his side with 10 in the qualifiers, the Al-Nassr forward has only validated those doubts with his underwhelming performances in Germany.

The former Real Madrid forward is still the record goalscorer in Euros, with 14 goals in 30 matches, but he failed to become the oldest player to score in the tournament. Apart from scoring in shootouts, he has failed to net a single goal in five matches.

It seemed like Ronaldo was about to pip his former Real Madrid teammate Luka Modric, whose goal against Italy in the group stage this tournament saw him become the oldest goalscorer in the history of the Euros at 38 years and 294 days, to the milestone when he stepped up to take a penalty in extra time in their Round of 16 game against Slovenia.

However, Jan Oblak denied Ronaldo with a brilliant save, reducing the mighty footballing figure into tears -- a sight for which the legions of fans of the ever-so-proud Ronaldo and even the entire world were not ready.

While Ronaldo somewhat redeemed himself when he converted the first penalty from shootout in the Slovenia game before Diogo Costa heroics -- the Portuguese goalkeeper thwarted three successive penalties -- propelled Portugal to the quarters, that moment of weakness might just have shown that even Ronaldo started doubting himself.

If Ronaldo had made himself known for anything in his illustrious career spanning over two decades is that he always backs himself to get back up and shut the critics with goals and more. But that moment of him breaking down in tears and later apologising to fans for his mistake showed the world a different Ronaldo, who perhaps knows that age has eventually caught up to him but is yet not fully ready to accept the fact.

Ronaldo mentioned that this was his last dance in the Euros, but has not said anything about drawing curtains on his international career yet. "It's too soon and raw after the match to talk about that and there have been no individual decisions made," Portugal coach Roberto Martinez, who has been his biggest supporter in this tumultuous time, said when asked if it was Ronaldo's last game in a Portugal jersey.

Ronaldo's dedication and fitness will most likely allow him to go on for at least a few more years outside of Europe, a route that he had already chosen as he now plies his trade for Saudi Pro League team Al-Nassr. But maybe the time has come for the all-time top international goalscorer to realise that he is only tarnishing the grand reputation that holds him alongside the best footballers in history by overstaying his welcome at the international level.

Raducanu rediscovers Wimbledon 'fun' factor

AFP, *London*

Emma Raducanu is finally all smiles again at Wimbledon after the former US Open champion rediscovered the fun factor that made her the golden girl of British tennis before a stunning fall from grace.

Raducanu routed ninth seed Maria Sakkari 6-2, 6-3 in the Wimbledon third round on Friday to reach the last 16 at a Grand slam for the first time in three years.

The 21-year-old admitted she is in love with tennis again after struggling to deal with the aftermath of her incredible rise to fame.

She went from an unknown schoolgirl to the talk of tennis in two transformative weeks in New York in 2021.

Aged just 18 at the time, Raducanu's fairytale US Open triumph made her the first British woman to lift a Grand Slam singles trophy since Virginia Wade at Wimbledon in 1977.

She was also the first qualifier in the Open Era to win a major singles title.

She left Manhattan with the world at her feet, but the problems that have dogged her since provide a cautionary tale about the pitfalls of sudden celebrity.

She has matched her best run at Wimbledon from three years ago and tellingly described the victory against Sakkari as "up there with the most fun I've had on a tennis court"

"Winning that match, it's a beautiful feeling and one that I really want to savour."

Djokovic eyes sweet 16

AFP, *London*

Novak Djokovic will target the Wimbledon fourth round for the 16th time on Saturday as old rival Andy Murray's All England Club career ended on a low note when Emma Raducanu pulled the plug on their mixed doubles plans.

Djokovic is looking to equal Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon triumphs and claim a 25th Grand Slam title in total.

He barely broke sweat in his opening match but was pushed to four sets in his second encounter by British rookie Jacob Fearnley, who was still playing college tennis in the United States last month.

Just weeks after a right knee operation, Djokovic feels he is not yet fully up to speed.

"It's not where I want it to be," he said. "The longer I stay in the tournament, I think the better the chances that my movement will improve."

On Saturday, he tackles Alexei Popyrin, whom he beat in four sets at the Australian Open earlier this year.

With defending champion Carlos Alcaraz and top-ranked Jannik Sinner on the other side of the draw, and safely into the fourth round, Djokovic can see a clear path to a sixth straight final at the All England Club.

Popyrin, the world number 47, has never made the second week of a Slam.

Jessy's moment to shine

SPORTS REPORTER

It's a dream come true moment for Bangladesh's Shathira Jakir Jessy as she is all set to officiate in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka from July 18-28.

Jessy had previously officiated matches in the ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Hong Kong last year. Apart from conducting regular domestic and international matches, Jessy also conducted a high-stake match between Mohammedan SC and Prime Bank during the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League (DPL) 2023-24.

However, the upcoming Women's Asia Cup will be the biggest international break for the former national cricketer as she will be the first Bangladeshi women's umpire to officiate at any senior level of a regional or global tournament.

"It's obviously a great feeling," Shathira told The Daily Star yesterday.

"After conducting matches during the last Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Hong Kong, I set myself a target to officiate in the Asia Cup. In between, I also officiated matches during the Premier Cup in Malaysia this year along with other international matches and DPL. But the Asia Cup will be the biggest tournament so far in my career.

"Actually, this is the biggest tournament after the World Cup. I have really worked hard in the last two years for this and finally, my target has been fulfilled," she added.

Shathira feels that the door of opportunities has been opened in this women's umpiring profession after she got exposure, both at the domestic and international level, on a regular basis. Jessy has already conducted 13 WT20Is -- 10 as on-field umpire and three as TV umpire -- and the 33-year-old former cricketer targets to officiate matches in tournaments like the World Cup.

"People all over the world now know about Bangladesh's women's umpiring. I think the acceptance level has increased globally.

"As a women's cricketer, I couldn't go to such a level but after starting umpiring, I think I have achieved something in this profession.

"Now many girls have started taking this profession seriously. The World Cup is knocking at the door and I really hope to officiate matches in that tournament as well," said Jessy, adding that umpires from Bangladesh have the calibre to be among the world's best in the coming days.

'These Canadians' set for rematch with Messi & Co

AGENCIES

Canada reached the semifinals of the Copa America after beating Venezuela 4-3 on penalties after the 90-minute game finished 1-1 yesterday.

Canada will face defending champions Argentina in the semifinal in New Jersey on Wednesday at 6am, Bangladesh Time.

Jacob Shaffelburg fired Canada into the lead in the 13th minute but Salomon Rondon equalised in the 64th, before Canada triumphed in the shoot-out to set up a last-four meeting with world champions Argentina.

The Canadians, under American coach Jesse Marsch, who only took over the team in mid-May, are playing in the Copa America for the first time and produced a relentless display of pressing in what was a frantic game.

Both teams failed to score from the spot twice in the shoot-out, leaving it at 3-3 after five penalties each and sending the contest into sudden death.

Canada keeper Max Crepeau, who had made a major error for Venezuela's equaliser, made amends as he saved Wilker Angel's kick.

"Everybody needs to realize the respect this country deserves and these footballers deserve," Crepeau told Fox Sports.

"Everybody says 'these Canadians', well these Canadians are in the semi-finals of Copa America".

Canada face a stern test in the semifinals, coming up against World Champions Argentina side.

But after a performance of remarkable energy and determination against a Venezuela team that won all three of their group stage games, Marsch will believe his team could pull off another upset and reach the final in Miami on July 14.

Canada played Argentina in the opening game of the group stage, losing 2-0 to the defending champions and will start as huge underdogs again in the semi-final.

"It's going to take everything. We played them in the group stage, we played well but didn't get the win we wanted," Canada captain Alphonso Davies said.

"Going into this game, we know what's on the line. We win and go forward, we lose and go home. They're going to come out with everything. We're hungrier than ever, we expect a battle as they should."

Canada captain Alphonso Davies banished memories of his penalty miss at the 2022 World Cup by confidently converting a spot-kick in a shootout victory over Venezuela. In Canada's 1-0 group stage defeat to Belgium at the World Cup in Qatar, Davies had a tame penalty saved by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, and the North American side eventually exited the tournament with three losses.

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A TRIBUTE TO GRANDMASTER

Zia was devoted to chess till his last day

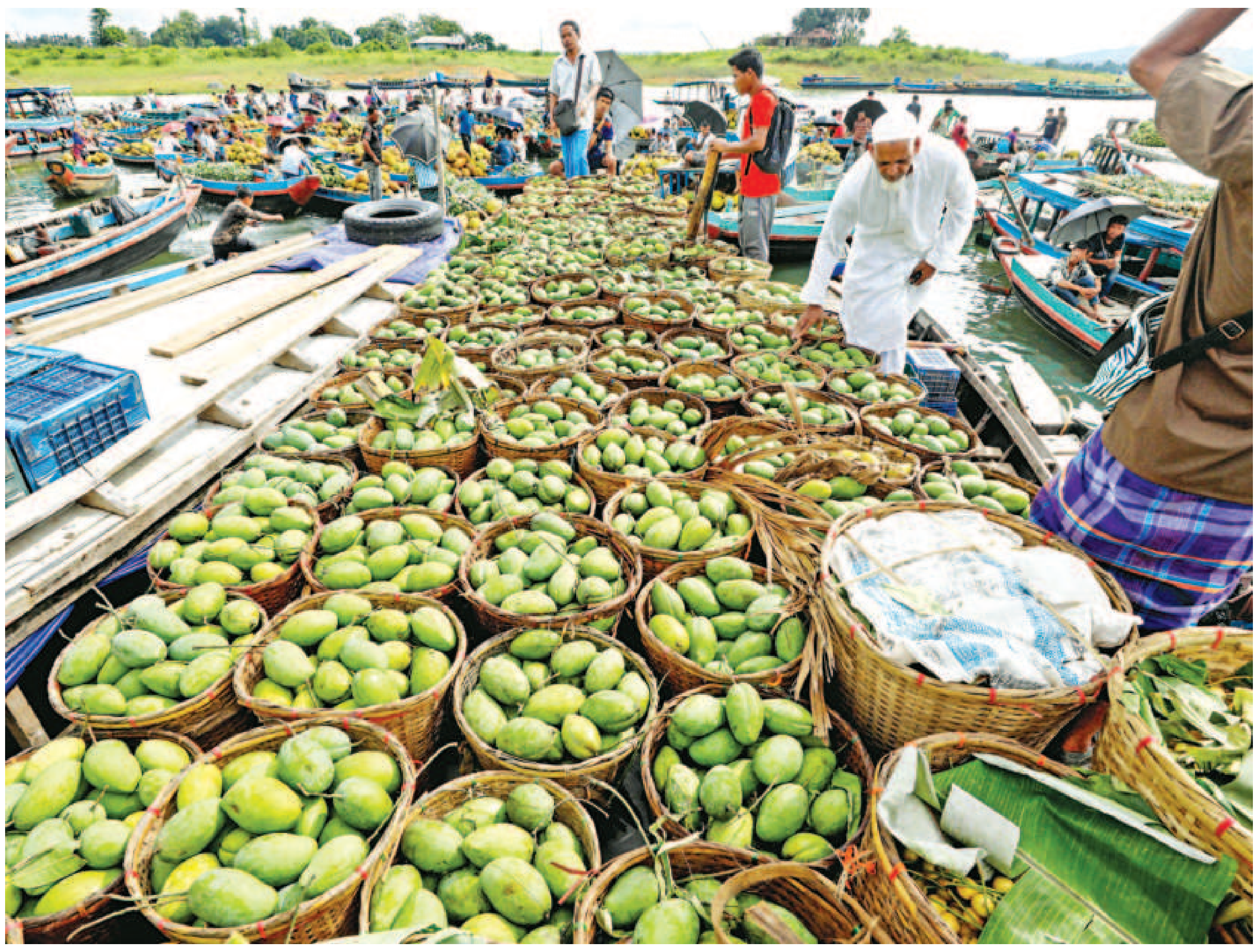
NIAZ MURSHED

Ziaur Rahman was my first real competitor in chess in Bangladesh. From 1979 to 1996, I was at the top. In 1996, Zia overtook me in the ratings and became the country's best chess player, a position he held longer than anyone else.

Personally, I used to struggle a lot whenever I played against him, he was excellent. I took a sabbatical from the game in 1996 and after my return, he always gave me a really tough time and I admired him for it.

His dedication towards the game was unparalleled in Bangladesh. No one has played in more chess World Cups than him or won more national championships. He also represented Bangladesh in 17 Chess Olympiads, more than anyone else. His devotion towards chess was

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Seasonal fruits, mostly mangoes, grown on the hills are being sold on boats in Banarupa area of Rangamati. In several districts in the region, there is a niche market for fruits and vegetables that indigenous communities of the hills grow. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

UP chairman shot dead in Dumuria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Armed criminals shot and killed the chairman of Shorafpur union parishad in Khulna's Dumuria upazila last night.

Sheikh Rabiul Islam Rabi, 45, the union's three-time chairman, was also a member of the Khulna district unit Awami League.

This incident took place in the Gutudia area of the upazila around 10:00pm, said his brother-in-law Badruzzaman Bablu.

Armed criminals shot Rabiul from the back near the Brac Hatchary in Gutudia as he was returning to his Khulna residence on a motorcycle after attending a meeting at Zobaid Ali Auditorium.

He was declared dead after being taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Dumuria police OC Sukant Kumar, said, "I've heard about the incident. But, I don't know the details."

Starmer 'restless for change' after win

AFP, *London*

Newly elected UK prime minister Keir Starmer yesterday began his first full day in charge declaring himself "restless for change" and pledging that growth would be his Labour government's "number one mission".

Starmer also confirmed his previously declared intention to end the outgoing Conservative government's flagship scheme to deport migrants to Rwanda.

"The Rwanda scheme was dead and buried before it started... I'm not prepared to continue with gimmicks that don't act as a deterrent," he told reporters following his first cabinet meeting.

> **"We have a huge amount of work to do, so now we get on with our work."**
>
> **KEIR STARMER**
> UK prime minister

The party on Friday won a landslide election victory, bringing to a close 14 years of Conservative rule.

The Labour leader told his top team, including Britain's first woman finance minister Rachel Reeves and new foreign minister David Lammy, it had been "the honour and the privilege of my life" to be invited by King Charles III to form the government.

"We have a huge amount of work to do, so now we get on with our work," he said to applause and smiles around the cabinet table.

Starmer spent his first hours in Downing Street on Friday appointing his ministerial team, hours after securing his centre-left party's return to power with a whopping 174-seat majority in the UK parliament.

Notable lower-ranking appointments included Patrick Vallance, chief scientific government adviser during the Covid-19 pandemic, who has been made a science minister.

James Timpson, whose shoe repair company employs ex-offenders, was also made a prisons minister.

PROMISED CHINESE LOANS

Transport sector projects fare poorly

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

China promised to provide loans for eight transport sector projects eight years ago, but only one of those has been completed so far.

Two other projects are currently underway, but those are running behind schedule, documents show.

Two more projects have been taken off the list while the implementation of the three others has not started due to multiple reasons.

The delay in implementation means Bangladesh will struggle to enhance the capacity of its rail lines, highways and sea ports with a view to serve the steadily growing economy, officials said.

Amid such a situation, Bangladesh is expected to seek more Chinese loans for several transport projects during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's China visit from July 8 to 10. The projects may include construction of Bhanga-Payra rail line and Mass Rapid Transit Line-2.

During his visit to Bangladesh in October 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to provide about $20 billion loan -- the largest amount committed by a bilateral partner of Bangladesh -- over the following four years to implement 27 projects.

But as of January this year, the two sides managed to sign agreements on only nine projects involving $8.08 billion, figures from the Economic Relations Division (ERD) show.

Of the $8.08 billion, Bangladesh could utilise only $4.91 billion, less than a quarter of the amount promised by China. Red tapism on both sides is largely to blame for the slow disbursement of loans, said officials.

Of the 27 projects, eight were for the transport sector, including four under the railways ministry, three under the road transport and bridges ministry, and one under the shipping ministry.

> **The delay in implementation of projects means Bangladesh will struggle to enhance the capacity of its rail lines, highways and sea ports.**

RAIL PROJECTS

Four railway projects were supposed to be implemented with the Chinese loans to build new a rail line and expand three existing ones.

The Padma Bridge Rail Link Project is the only railway project being implemented now with the Chinese loan.

The Ecnec in May 2016 approved the project to connect the capital with Jashore with a 169km line via the Padma Bridge at a cost of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

France kicks off 2nd round of polls

AFP, *Paris*

France yesterday prepared for its most consequential legislative election of recent times, with residents of overseas territories opening voting for a poll expected to give the far right its biggest ever presence in parliament.

A traditional final day pause was observed yesterday ahead of today's second round runoff after a frenetic campaign that saw tensions rise across the country and dozens of attacks on candidates.

Underlining France's global footprint that spans the oceans of the world, the first French region to vote was Saint Pierre and Miquelon, a small French archipelago off the coast of Canada where citizens began voting from 1000 GMT.

They were to be followed yesterday by residents of French Caribbean territories including Martinique and Guadeloupe as well as Guiana in South America.

French Pacific territories come next before people in mainland France cast their ballots from 0600 GMT today.

Polls will close by 1800 GMT today when projections of seat numbers, regarded in France as a firm indicator of the final outcome, are published.

Final opinion polls on Friday suggested that far-right leader Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) would fall short of winning an outright 289 seat majority in the 577-member National Assembly while being the largest party ahead of the New Popular Front (NFP) left-wing coalition.

England into Euro semis after shootout win over Switzerland

AFP, *Duesseldorf*

England's quest for a first major tournament win in 58 years remained alive after another late fightback before beating Switzerland 5-3 on penalties to book their place in the Euro 2024 semi-finals.

After the 120 minutes finished level at 1-1, goalkeeper Jordan Pickford was the Three Lions' hero in the shoot-out as he saved Switzerland's first spot-kick from Manuel Akanji.

Cole Palmer, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, Ivan Toney and Trent Alexander-Arnold converted their penalties to send England into a semi-final meeting with Turkey or the Netherlands in Dortmund on Wednesday.

After needing Bellingham's 95th-minute equaliser before going on to beat Slovakia in extra time in the last 16, England were again staring at defeat with 10 minutes to go.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

England players celebrate after beating Switzerland 5-3 on penalties to book their place in the semifinals of the Euro 2024 at the Duesseldorf Arena yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Earth's core so slow, it is now backwards!

Scientists confirm

CNN ONLINE

Deep inside Earth is a solid metal ball that rotates independently of our spinning planet, like a top whirling around inside a bigger top, shrouded in mystery.

This inner core has intrigued researchers since its discovery by Danish seismologist Inge Lehmann in 1936, and how it moves — its rotation speed and direction — has been at the center of a decades-long debate. A growing body of evidence suggests the core's spin has changed dramatically in recent years, but scientists have remained divided over what exactly is happening — and what it means.

Part of the trouble is that Earth's deep interior is impossible to observe or sample directly. Seismologists have gleaned information about the inner core's motion by examining how waves from large earthquakes that ping this area behave. Variations between waves of similar strengths that passed through the core at different times enabled scientists to measure changes in the inner core's position and calculate its spin.

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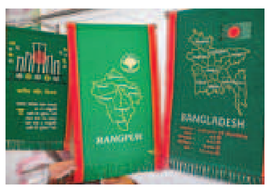
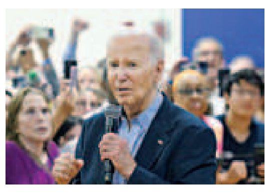


Govt draws up list of 494 products for GI status

B1

Saifuddin paints Bangladesh cricket's sorry picture

P11



Biden back on campaign trail as pressure mounts

P6

People suffer amid 'Bangla Blockade'

P3

Dhaka, Beijing to ink 20 MoUs but loan deal unlikely

Says foreign minister; PM leaves for China today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Beijing will sign around 20 MoUs, including some on trade and economic cooperations, during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to China that begins today.

However, the two countries may not sign any loan agreement on reserve or budget support.

"There is no loan agreement on the list. An MoU will be signed on economic cooperation. If parameters are met under this MoU, we may go for a loan in future," Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said at a press briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

He said different countries make different proposals for loans, but Bangladesh does not accept all. For example, the World Bank had offered a loan after refusing fund for the Padma Bridge project, but Dhaka did not accept it.

"The reserve situation is improving in Bangladesh and the trend will continue," he said.

Dhaka and Beijing were discussing a loan of $5 billion in Yuan for trade facilitation amid foreign currency shortage. However, the countries were yet to agree on the terms and conditions of the loan. Besides, there were also discussions on budget support from China, according to diplomatic sources.

Hasan Mahmud said the two countries will announce the inauguration of some development projects.

The MoUs expected to be signed will be on economic and banking sectors; trade and investment; digital economy; infrastructure development; assistance in disaster management; construction of the 6th and 9th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge; export of agricultural products from Bangladesh; and people-to-people connectivity.

"Bangladesh will seek China's assistance in the areas of investment and trade; and financial assistance and repatriation of Rohingyas to their homeland. At the same time, Bangladesh will continue to provide support to China as its friend in the global context," he said.

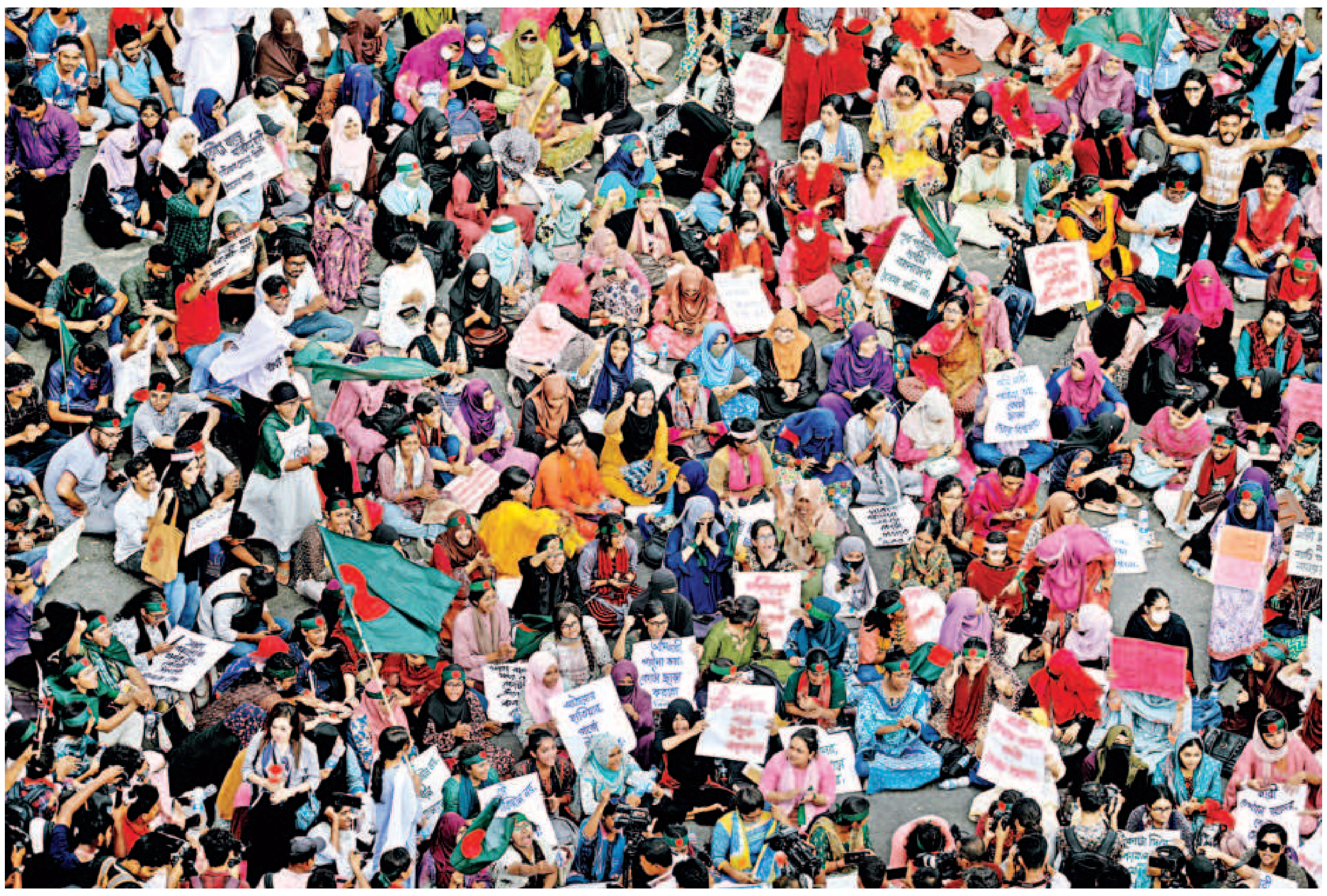
Hasina is going to China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang. The visit from July 8 to July 11 comes two weeks after her visit to India. This will be Hasina's first visit to China since her new term began in January and five years after her last visit in 2019.

Analysts believe the back-to-back India and China

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

> **"There is no loan agreement on the list. An MoU will be signed on economic cooperation. If parameters are met under this MoU, we may go for a loan in future."**
>
> FOREIGN MINISTER
> **HASAN MAHMUD**

- Hasina to meet Chinese president, premier on July 10
- Development, economic cooperation to get priority



Thousands of anti-quota protesters took over and blocked the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday afternoon as part of the "Bangla Blockade" programme

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BUSINESS

Annual inflation hits 12-year high

The annual average price spike in Bangladesh surged to its highest level in 12 years in the just-concluded fiscal year despite easing in June, reflecting the persistent erosion of real income and the deterioration of living standards of low-income groups.

Annual inflation rose to 9.73 percent in 2023-24, the highest since 2011-12 when it was 10.62 percent, overshooting the government's target of containing it to 7.5 percent, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This is the second year the Consumer Prices Index, a measure of the increase in the prices of a basket of products and services, stood at more than 9 percent.

STORY ON B1

Quota protests bring city to a standstill

Agitating students to hold fresh programme today

STAR REPORT

Dhaka was virtually paralysed yesterday as students ramped up their protests against the quota system for government jobs on the sixth day, blocking as many as six busy intersections in the capital.

The demonstrators announced a fresh programme for blocking important intersections in the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country from 3:30pm today.

"We have been staging protests with a four-point demand, but now we have only one demand," said Hasnat Abdullah, a student of Dhaka University and an organiser of the protests that began on July 4.

He said their lone demand now is that all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service are scrapped through the passage of a law in parliament, keeping a minimum quota for backward citizens in line with the constitution.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina termed the protests irrational and said the issue should be settled at the apex court.

The protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 upheld a High Court verdict that declared a 2018 government circular abolishing the quota system in public service illegal.

The students are demanding the reinstatement of the circular that abolished the 30 percent quota system for children of freedom fighters.

In the wake of massive student protests for reforms, the government in 2018 issued a circular abolishing the quota system.

Until then, about 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas. Of this, 30 percent were for the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters; 10 percent for women; 10 percent for people

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4
MORE STORIES ON PAGE 3

> **Our lone demand now is that all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service are scrapped through the passage of a law in parliament, keeping a minimum quota for backward citizens in line with the constitution.**
>
> **Hasnat Abdullah,** DU student and organiser of the protests

'It's for the apex court to settle'

PM says there's no logic behind ongoing anti-quota demo

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said quota issue for government jobs should be settled in the apex court.

"The High Court gave a verdict regarding the quota system and the movement is being conducted on a sub-judice issue. We can't say anything ... . Since the High Court gave the verdict, solutions should come from the court," she said.

The prime minister said this while Jubo Mohila League leaders met her at the Gono Bhaban marking the organisation's 22nd founding anniversary.

She said there is no logic for such a movement against the apex court verdict regarding restoration of the quota system in the public services.

"What is now going on in the name of movement [against quota] is a waste of study time. I don't think it has any logic," she said.

Hasina reminded all that her government earlier rescinded the quota system in public services.

Questioning what benefit had come from the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

A woman walks through waist-deep water to return home after collecting drinking water from a tubewell some miles away on a higher land in Uria Char of Gaibandha's Phulchhari upazila recently. Around 65,000 families have been marooned due to floods caused by the swelling of the Brahmaputra, which is currently flowing 70cm above the danger level. Stories on page 5.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHOBUJ

The state has been captured by a select few

Says noted economist Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A class of people have evolved in Bangladesh who have not just captured the state but have become the state itself, said noted economist Rehman Sobhan.

"It is going to be very difficult to do anything about it because this class has now joined hands with the bureaucracy," he said at a seminar yesterday on "Political Economy of Banking Sector of Bangladesh".

The virtual event was organised by Samaj Gabeshana Kendra.

"What we classified at the time of Bangladesh's creation as an intermediate regime has become a fully-fledged capitalist regime fully captured by not just by the capitalists in general but by a segment of that particular class."

Sobhan, also the chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, also touched upon the issue of effective interest rates.

If a loan is not repaid in 10 or 15 years, then the actual interest rate becomes much lower.

"The interest rate is widely unequal depending on whether you are actually repaying your loans."

The default culture has created a distortion in the setting of interest rates.

"Political patronage became the main criteria for lending. If you were lending to a politically patronised class that patronage would then become a political resource. And that political resource would then be used to ensure that your loans were not effectively collected. Once that happened, that class then became more empowered."

They then acquired political capabilities and political strength.

"And you then evolved from a fabricated capitalist class into a perfectly strong and well-established capitalist class that would

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

> **"What we classified at the time of Bangladesh's creation as an intermediate regime has become a fully-fledged capitalist regime fully captured by not just by the capitalists in general but by a segment of that particular class."**

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SHILPAKALA ACADEMY

A cultural oasis in the city

RBR

Situated in the old neighbourhood of Segunbagicha, near the lush Ramna Park, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has always been the go-to place for theatre, exhibitions, and cultural programmes. It is the National Institute of Fine and Performing Arts and a cultural hub in Dhaka.

I still remember my first visit to this premises in the late seventies when Chinese cultural groups came to perform in Dhaka and how in their soft, low tone voice sang Bangla songs. And then there were acrobats doing impossible feats and Russian performers that enthralled the audience with their songs and acts. Today, after so many decades, the place still invokes nothing but fond experiences for me.

The academy promotes the arts and culture and the creation of necessary facilities for their development. The activities of the academy also include organising workshops, seminars, discussion meetings, short-term specialised training, providing scholarships and financial grants for talented artists, and organising competitions in the various fields of fine and performing arts.

The place has now expanded into a maze of galleries, theatres, and seminar halls and people are always in queue to avail the tickets for whichever play is being performed. Come rain or shine the place is buzzing with activities and enthusiastic art shows.

What made me happy was that the place attracted a young, trendy crowd. There is always more than one play, exhibition or workshop going on within the premises. Art appreciation course, recitations, dance dramas —almost everything that is art — Shilpakala Academy is your trusted choice.

"Big halls allow the performer's charisma to come across as larger than life. The current crop of young directors who love riotous experimental work all opt for these halls. Experienced directors with their classy sophisticated plays prefer Shilpakala Academy at one go for their show dates. It is a perfect place to go on dates, for ladies' evening out, or friends' day out — I even took my mother to enjoy a play on Mother's Day," says Aziza Ahmed, who regularly goes to the place with her family.

Having done praising, academy regulars like Meher Nigar feel the Experimental Hall should be renovated and modernised and particular emphasis must be given to the seating arrangements.

NB Mansoor on the other hand loves the arty ambience with like-minded people who seem very interested in drama, film, music, poetry, or painting.

"But in the middle of a performance, you hear the creaking sound of the old wooden platforms, it is kind of off-putting. I think some government funds should be allocated to modernise the old halls of the Academy, where performing art is played. However, the exhibition halls are state-of-the-art as it is comparatively a new infrastructure," she adds.

The waiting lounge has a sad look of the eighties with litter and cobwebs making it more lacklustre; an interior consultant can be hired to give the place a contemporary edgy look.

"There should be proper toilet facilities and a good food court inside the premises besides the old canteen serving tea and shingara, and attention must be given to cleanliness," Ahmed feels.

The area surrounding the premises is lively with pop-up eateries, selling quintessential Bengali favourites like puri, hot tea, piyaju, lentil fritters and so much more. With puris, you can choose assorted sides like duck curry, fried tripe, and chicken jalfrezi. There is a fried noodle or chow mein option. You can gulp it all down with fresh coconut water or hot tea.

So, the next time you have nothing fun to do, visit Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Dhaka is thriving with entertaining activities. You just need to know where to go and when.

Power cut knocks out metro service for 30 minutes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail service faced nearly half an hour of disruption yesterday due to power cuts.

"Metro rail has started regular operation as power supply is now normal," said a post on the official Facebook page of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited.

In an earlier post, it said, "Since 2:27pm, metro rail operation has been suspended due to power outage."

From around 3:00pm, the train service became normal.

A Farmgate-bound passenger, Pinaki Roy, told The Daily Star, "The train stopped slowly at Shewrapara Station and stayed there for eight-10 minutes."

"After that, the metro rail authorities announced over the loudspeaker, asking passengers to get off the train. All passengers waited on the platform for around 30 minutes."

He added that the metro rail service resumed at 2:58pm.

Two sisters drown in Bogura

BSS, *Bogura*

Two minor girls drowned in a pond in Baropur Modhdhopara Barobari area of Bogura's Sadar upazila yesterday.

They are Himu, 5, and her sister Jannat, 3, daughters of Md Habib of the area, said police.

Sub-Inspector Aminul Islam, in-charge of Phulbari police outpost, said the two drowned in a pond next to their house while playing beside it around 12:00pm.

When the girls went missing, family members started searching for them.

They were declared dead after being taken to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura.

Iran's president-elect to be sworn in next month

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran's Masoud Pezeshkian will be sworn in before parliament in early August as the Islamic republic's ninth president, state media reported yesterday.

"The swearing-in ceremony of the president will be held on August 4 or 5," said the official IRNA news agency, quoting Mojtaba Yosefi, a member of parliament's presiding board.

11 killed in Nepal floods, landslides

Eight missing

REUTERS, *Kathmandu*

Heavy rains triggered landslides and flash floods killing at least 11 people in the last 36 hours in Nepal and blocking key highways and roads, officials said yesterday.

Eight people were missing, either washed away by floods or buried in landslides, while 12 others were injured and being treated in hospitals, police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki said.

"Rescue workers are trying to clear the landslides and open the roads," Karki told Reuters, adding heavy equipment was being used to clear debris.

In southeastern Nepal, the Koshi River, which causes deadly floods in the eastern Indian state of Bihar almost every year, was flowing above the danger level, a district official said.

"The flow of Koshi is rising and we have asked residents to remain alert about possible floods," Bed Raj Phuyal, a senior official of Sunsari district where the river flows, told Reuters.

He said at 0900 hours (0315 hours GMT) water flow in Koshi River was 369,000 cusecs per second, more than double its normal flow of 150,000 cusecs.

Authorities said all 56 sluice gates of the Koshi Barrage had been opened to drain out water compared with about 10-12 during a normal situation.

Authorities said the flows of Narayani, Rapti and Mahakali rivers in the west were also rising.

In hill-ringed Kathmandu, several rivers have overflown their banks, flooded roads and inundated many houses.

Local media showed people wading through waist-deep water or residents using buckets to empty their houses.

At least 50 people across Nepal have died in landslides, floods and lightning strikes since mid-June when annual monsoon rains started.

Hundreds of people die every year in landslides and flash floods that are common in mostly mountainous Nepal during the monsoon season which normally starts in mid-June and continues through mid-September.

The state has been captured by a select few

FROM PAGE 1

move into exercising political power. Here, cronyism became a very important factor because whilst all capitalist classes are created dominant, some amongst them are more dominant than others and that was the nature of the problem," Sobhan added.

Bangladesh's banking sector is bearing the brunt of the political bias towards the wealthy and the influential, said Biru Paksha Paul, professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland.

"The banking sector is paying the price of political favouritism toward the superrich."

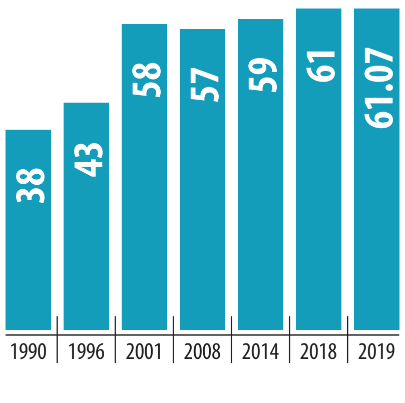
This started with the interest rate cap imposed in April 2020.

"The interest rate cap came into effect during the pandemic although it had no connection with Covid. The businessmen's hidden agenda was to get loans at effectively zero real interest rate and they made it happen."

The finance ministry tried to justify the cap in the name of private investment, which arguably did not show any sign of improvement following the adoption of the lending rate cap, as reflected in the private investment-GDP ratio, he said.

"It facilitated the tycoons to siphon off funds from banks at near-zero real interest rates," he said while presenting a paper on 'Bangladesh's Banking Sector: the interest rate cap, and govt's borrowing from the banking sector'.

BUSINESSMEN IN PARLIAMENT (IN %)



The 9 percent interest rate cap made the real interest rate negative, and that outcome finally induced the partial dehydration of the financial account of the balance of payment.

The dehydration of the financial account aggravated the reserve crisis, contributed to the taka's free fall, enforced import controls and finally brought down GDP growth.

The depreciation of the taka made imports expensive, which fuelled the fire of inflation further, said Paul, also the former chief economist of the Bangladesh Bank.

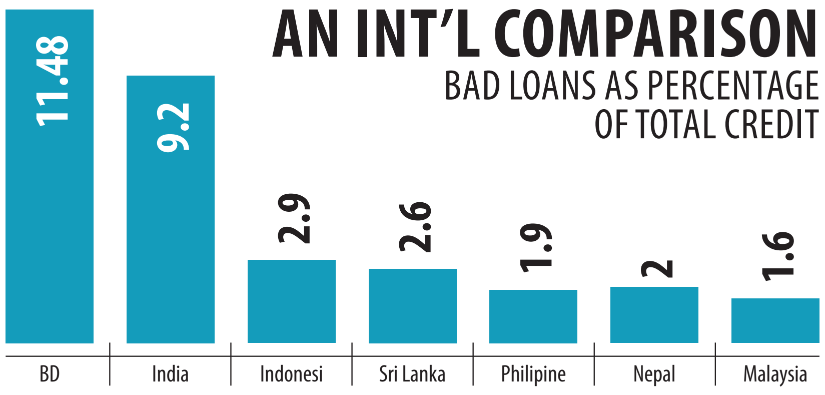
The dwindling tax-GDP ratio and the ambitious development expenditure narrowed the government's capacity to finance the budget deficit.

As a result, the government resorted to desperately using banks' money, limiting the capacity of banks to lend as per the growing demand for credit.

However, the government's borrowing from banks kept rising due to growing fiscal incapacity and the political philosophy of not creating pressure on the wealthy elites for direct taxes, he said.

In fiscal 2022-23, the government borrowed Tk 1.25 lakh crore from the banking sector. Of the amount, 79 percent was borrowed directly from the BB.

AN INT'L COMPARISON
BAD LOANS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CREDIT



As much as Tk 1 lakh crore of high-powered money was injected and that is to blame for the stubbornly high inflation, Paul said. The high-powered money saw a multiplier of 4.93 last fiscal year.

Since it was not taken from commercial banks, it fuelled monetary expansion instead of soaking up banks' liquidity.

"The country never saw such irresponsible borrowing before this."

Overall, the lack of timely monetary tightening by raising policy rates and the utter absence of fiscal tightening via raising taxes on the wealthy and curtailing public spending jointly fuelled the flames of inflation, Paul added.

The volume of defaulted loans amounts to a staggering 11.48 percent of total credit, said MM Akash, professor of economics at the University of Dhaka. This does not include the written-off loans.

As of March, total defaulted loans stood at Tk 182,000 crore.

"However, the real situation is far graver. If we include rescheduled and written-off loans to this, the de facto aggregate default loan amounts to more than Tk 400,000 crore."

However, hiding the true defaulted loan figure is politically convenient.

"The nexus of dishonest businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians have captured the state bodies and all institutions that could make the bad loan issue transparent and accountable."

Some shariah-based banks are ailing due to their owners but the central bank wanted to save those banks by providing liquidity support.

"This is not wise. Why did the government want to bail out the banks? Their owners are liable for their ailing financial health."

Akash suggested making the post of the central bank governor a constitutional post. At present, the finance ministry appoints the governor.

"There is a dual regulator for the banking sector -- the finance ministry's control on banks will have to be stopped."

The top 100 loans defaulters' list must be published to build public awareness against defaulters, said Akash, also the chairman of Dhaka University's Bureau of Economic Research.

The independence of the central bank is needed, said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM).

"But the question is are the political elites willing to give the freedom? The political elites don't want to."

When talking about the interest rate cap, he said that not everyone benefited from the single-digit lending rate; only a certain segment benefited from it and a portion of the loan was laundered, he added.

Dhaka, Beijing

FROM PAGE 1

visits are Bangladesh's way of balancing relations between the two Asian powers.

Hasan Mahmud said Dhaka is discussing Chinese cooperation on the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI), which will include the development of Mongla Port.

On Teesta project, he said, "As it is a common river of Bangladesh and India, India has made a proposal, and we have to consider it first. It is also good that China made a proposal. As India has made a proposal, we think it is good. If they [China] want, it will be discussed during the visit."

Asked about Dhaka's position on Beijing's interest in upgrading the strategic partnership with Bangladesh to Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the foreign minister said, "Our relationship with China is deep, it is a strategic relationship. This will get stronger."

During a briefing on July 4, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the leaders of the two countries will have an in-depth exchange of views on how to deepen the friendship; on expanding beneficial cooperation; and on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The PM will reach Beijing around 6:00pm today. Tomorrow morning, she will make a courtesy call on Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank President Jin Liqun.

She will then attend the "Summit on Trade Business and Investment opportunities between Bangladesh and China". Hasina will then hold a bilateral meeting with Wang Huning, chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference.

On July 10, she will meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People and will attend a reception. The meeting will be followed by a banquet in her honour.

That afternoon, Hasina will hold a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali; Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud; Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman; State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu; State Minister for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid; State Minister fort Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed; Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and other high officials of the ministries concerned will accompany Hasina.

'It's for the apex court to settle'

FROM PAGE 1

cancellation of the quota system, she said it was seen that the women were not getting chances as much as they were during the period of quota system.

She added that many people from remote areas and districts had been deprived of government jobs.

The premier said the deprived went to the High Court that declared the verdict (against the government decision to cancel the quota system). "We always honour the High Court verdict."

The premier asked the demonstrators to prove that they had passed PSC examinations.

On June 5, the HC declared illegal the October 4, 2018, circular of the public administration ministry regarding the abolishment of quotas, including those for freedom fighters, in first and second-class government jobs.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Thursday last upheld the HC judgment.

About the pension scheme, Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said they have introduced the universal pension scheme for all in accordance with the party's election manifesto of 2008.

"Only the government officials get pension and others are being deprived. So, several pension schemes were announced as nobody can be deprived."

The PM said those involved in politics, including leaders of Jubo Mohila League, should join the pension scheme for their future.

Recalling the contribution of the organisation to different movements, she said the organisation was always on the streets during every movement and its leaders and activists were subjected to inhuman torture by police and armed cadres of the BNP.

"I have no word to denounce the inhuman torture carried out on the Jubo Mohila League leaders and activists. The attackers even did not show any mercy considering them women."

Hasina recalled the role of Jubo Mohila League in collecting the signature demanding release of her from jail during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

"We did not bow down to torture. We wanted one thing that is to establish democracy," she said.

The PM briefly described her government measures for the overall development of the country, including women empowerment.

Hasina also inaugurated the website of Jubo Mohila League, established on July 6, 2002.

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PUBALI BANK PLC.
Open your Account from anywhere
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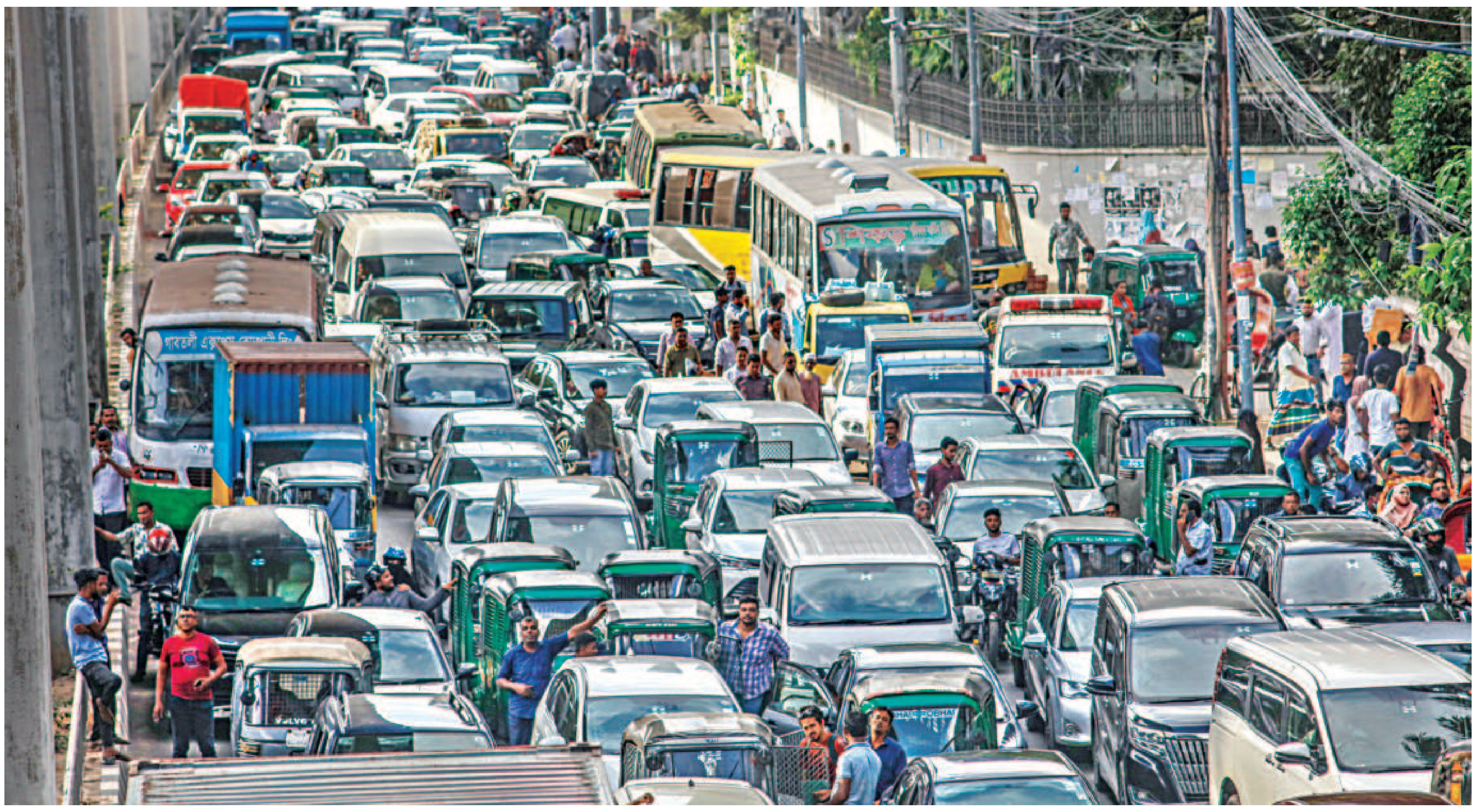
Pubali Bank achieved highest credit rating 'AAA' which indicates the highest credit quality with lowest expectation of credit risk



It was a rough day for Dhaka commuters yesterday. The capital experienced severe traffic disruptions as students protesting quota system in government jobs blocked key intersections from morning to evening, causing immense suffering for commuters. Due to a scarcity of public transportation, many had to walk to reach their destinations. The situation became normal after 8:00pm. Students also declared to continue their anti-quota movement today. The photos were taken in Paribagh, Farmgate, Science Lab and Motijheel areas.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN

WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT QUOTA PROTEST

We gained an independent state through the Liberation War, only to escape discrimination. The constitution emphasises that. The quota system in employment is unconstitutional.

GM QUADER
Jatiyo Party Chairman

We must respect the rule of law and since the issue is still pending with the High Court, and a definite verdict will be given by our Supreme Court.

MOHIBUL HASAN CHOWDHURY
Education Minister

We are observing the movements closely. I believe the issues will be resolved. The issue for which the students are protesting is not a decision of the government; it is a court ruling.

OBAIDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary

People suffer amid 'Bangla Blockade'

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Dhaka descended into a chaos yesterday as student protests demanding reforms in the government quota system for jobs brought traffic to a standstill. Long lines of vehicles, including private cars, buses, CNG-run auto rickshaws, remained stranded for hours, unable to move an inch.

The impact on commuters was immediate and widespread. Job holders and students found themselves running late, their schedules thrown into disarray. Rickshaw-pullers, CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers, and ride-sharing app drivers all saw their earnings plummet as the gridlock brought the city to a standstill.

The ordeal began early in the day with Dhaka College students taking over the Science Lab intersection, triggering traffic jams that spread across major roads like Azimpur-New Market to Mirpur and Gabtoli.

By 4:00pm, the gridlock intensified as students blocked more intersections, including Shahbagh, Hotel Intercontinental turning, Banglamotor, Karwan Bazar, and Chankharpul.

This brought vehicular movement to a near halt, with reports of severe congestion in Tantibazar, Ray Saheb Bazar, Bangshal, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Shahbagh, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Agargaon, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Mirpur-10, New Market, and Science Lab.

Private job holder Mahmudul Hasan described his ordeal traveling from Khilgaon to Farmgate.

"I got stuck in a gridlock near Hotel Intercontinental," he said. "The journey typically takes 30-40 minutes, but due to the traffic, it took over an hour as I had to reroute through Moghbazar."

College student Raid Hasan shared his frustration after being stuck in the Bijoy Sarani area for over 30 minutes. Similarly, Adnan Sejan, a commuter, said he was stuck in front of Square Hospitals in Panthapath for 40 minutes.

The situation worsened during the evening rush hour, leading to further congestion.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

PROTEST OVER PENSION

Univ teachers carry on strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academic and administrative activities at public universities across the country remain halted due to the indefinite strike by teachers, demanding the reinstatement of the teachers' pension scheme.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) and president of Dhaka University Teachers Association, said they will continue their movement until their demands are met.

Teachers of 35 public universities have been refraining from work since Monday, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

Besides, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, while talking to reporters at the secretariat yesterday, said the government is closely monitoring the ongoing movements of the university teachers against a new pension scheme.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said he has been in touch with the teachers but couldn't specify when a meeting would be held.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Teachers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

11.4pc in Bangladesh thalassemia carriers

Says BBS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 11.4 percent of people in the country are thalassemia carriers, according to a new study by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

According to BBS data, 11.9 percent of men are thalassemia carriers, while the percentage is 11.2 among women.

However, there is no government data on the number of thalassemia patients in the country or how many children have thalassemia.

Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that results in abnormal haemoglobin, leading to anaemia. A carrier of thalassaemia is someone who carries at least one of the faulty genes that causes thalassaemia, but does not have it themselves.

The findings of "National Thalassemia Survey 2024," for which the blood of 8,680 people was tested across the country, were presented at BBS auditorium in the capital yesterday.

According to the survey, the highest number of thalassemia carriers are found in Rangpur division (27.70 percent), followed by Rajshahi (11.30 percent) and Chattogram (11.20 percent). Dhaka division has 8.60 percent of the carriers.

Of the carriers, 11.9 percent are 14 to 19-year-olds, 12 percent are 20 to 24-year-olds, 10.3 percent are 25 to 29, and 11.3 percent are 30 to 35, the study result showed.

According to the survey, the highest number of thalassemia carriers are found

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan being adorned with the rank badge of Air Chief Marshal by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Armed forces, a symbol of our sovereignty

PM tells event marking 49th anniversary of PGR

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has taken measures to make the armed forces more developed as they are the symbol of Bangladesh's sovereignty.

The premier said this while addressing a programme arranged at PGR Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment on the occasion of the 49th founding anniversary of President Guard Regiment (PGR), reports BSS.

She greeted the PGR members on the occasion of its founding anniversary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Shrimp fry collection goes on despite ban

Experts, locals blame lax monitoring of authorities

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Despite a ban in place on collecting shrimp fries, the illegal activity has been going on unabated in Sangu and Karnaphuli rivers as well as the Bay of Bengal in Chattogram in broad daylight.

This illegal activity is a big threat to marine ecology as it endangers fries of other fish species as well since those are largely discarded after being caught, according to experts.

Locals alleged that the authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to the menace.

The government imposed a ban on collection of shrimp fries from the coastal areas in September 2000.

Visiting different points on the Sangu river and the Bay in Banshkhali upazila, this correspondent saw collectors catching shrimp fries using "pata jal", a type of net that is also banned.

Abul Kalam, 55, a collector from Chanua union, said catching shrimp fries is more profitable than fishing in the sea.

He claimed to have no other option to earn a livelihood for his six-member family.

Collectors sell 100 fries of Galda and Bagda varieties at Tk 35-50 to brokers after catching those from the sea and river between April and August, during the full moon and new moon.

Most collectors admitted that fries of other species get damaged while catching shrimp fries using finely-meshed "pata jal".

The fisheries department has no data regarding the ecological damage of these illegal activities.

However, a March 2024 study by Md Abdulla Monzer, a researcher from Institute of Marine Sciences at Chittagong University, showed that existing shrimp fry catching methods have led to accidental capture and death of fish fries of other varieties.

Due to illegal shrimp fry catching, the Sangu river can incur a loss of fisheries resources worth over Tk 87 lakh annually, the study also found.

Monzer called for immediate action to tackle the dual concern of ecological degradation and economic loss due to unabated shrimp fry catching.

The upazila administration, river police, and fisheries department conduct occasional drives and seize small quantities of illegally caught fries, but the perpetrators are never brought to the book, alleged businessmen from fisheries sector.

Sribas Chandra Chanda, district fisheries officer, claimed they are seizing fries and banned nets regularly even amid a manpower shortage.

'These are just rumours'

Say police on sudden rise in 'missing children' cases

STAR REPORT

"Breaking news! In the last 48 hours, 35 children have gone missing in Dhaka and Chattogram. Be vigilant."

Since Saturday morning, such social media posts have gone viral on different Facebook groups. It has spread panic among the people.

Police, however, dismissed the claims as rumours. They said filing missing diaries is a regular phenomenon, and many children return home after a short while.

In a statement, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) said some recent social media posts related to "missing children" have come to their notice. Such posts are mere rumours.

The PHQ is requesting all not to be confused or panicked by such rumours. If people spread such rumours, legal action will be taken against them.

MISSING DIARIES FILED REGULARLY

According to the database, at least 76 missing diaries were filed in the first seven days of this month in all 50 police stations of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The figure was 260 in June, 199 in May, 221 in April, 213 in March, 217 in February, and 210 in January.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of the DMP, said reports of 35 children going missing within 48 hours is incorrect.

Mahid said 33 GDs were filed with different police stations in connection with missing children in 72 hours from May 4 to May 6.

Between June 4 and 6, at least 36 GDs were filed in 72 hours. Similarly, 32 GDs were filed in 72 hours from July 4 to 6.

In most cases, the children came back to their families within a short time, he added.

For instance, Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station of DMP, in a social media post mentioned a boy left home to avoid studies.

The mother sought police help to trace the missing child and police found him shortly afterwards, he added.

POLICE PREPARING LISTS

In Chattogram, police are compiling lists of missing individuals, particularly children, in response to viral social media posts, said Niskriti Chakma, deputy commissioner (DC-Crime) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Authorities are verifying reports to distinguish genuine cases from instances where children have temporarily left home due to familial pressures or personal reasons, said Abu Tyeb Md Arif Hossein, additional superintendent of police of the Chattogram Special Branch.

People suffer

FROM PAGE 3

Delwar Hossain, a pickup driver transporting ceramic goods, found himself stuck at Karwan Bazar for more than an hour.

"It took me three and a half hours to reach here from Dhamrai," he said. "The students' blockades have brought everything to a halt. Will causing us such distress help them achieve their demands?" he asked.

Private sector employee Hasan Uddin said, "Everyone is walking back home. I walked for 40 minutes from Kakrail intersection to Karwan Bazar."

Salam Hossain, who drives for a ride-sharing app, was stuck at Shahbagh intersection from 3:00pm to 7:30pm. "There was a teacher in my car who was forced to leave the vehicle and walk at 4:00pm due to a lack of alternatives," he said.

The protests, dubbed the "Bangla Blockade" programme, also caused hardship for rickshaw pullers like Soheb Miah. "I couldn't get a single trip all day," he said.

"I pleaded with the students to let me pass, but they refused. If my rickshaw doesn't run, I don't earn a living. I've been stuck here in Shahbagh since 3:00pm," he said.

Meanwhile, agitating students declared to block important intersections of the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country today.

Univ teachers carry on strike

FROM PAGE 3

Association, those at Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology and Comilla University, among many others, continued movement to press home their demand.

Teachers at these universities abstained from work, leading to a standstill situation.

Jagannath University teachers held a programme on the campus at 12:00pm.

Sheikh Mashrik Hasan, general secretary of the JnU Teachers' Association, said, "We want to return to our students. To protect the dignity and honour of teachers and save higher education from destruction, we demand withdrawal of the discriminatory pension notification."

At Chittagong University, teachers also held a sit-in on the university premises.

Prof ABM Abu Noman, secretary of the CU Teachers' Association, said, "This scheme is harmful to university teachers. With this scheme, meritorious students won't be attracted to this profession. Eventually, the nation will suffer. If there is no positive decision for us, our agitation will intensify."

At Rajshahi University, Omor Faruq, general secretary of RUTA, said, "This pension scheme will place our next generation in a difficult situation. Our movement is not only for us but also for the next generation, who want to enter the teaching profession."

Teachers of 35 public universities have been refraining from work since Monday, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

11.4pc in Bangladesh thalassemia

FROM PAGE 3

in Rangpur division (27.70 percent), followed by Rajshahi (11.30 percent) and Chattogram (11.20 percent). Dhaka division has 8.60 percent of the carriers.

Moderating the event, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, director general of BBS, said the findings of this research will play an important role in policymaking on thalassemia.

Muhammad Wahiduzzaman, secretary for Statistics and Informatics Division, said, "Being a thalassemia carrier does not mean an individual is a thalassemia patient. Rather, when one carrier marries another, the disease can occur in their children."

Thalassemia leads to a condition called anaemia, characterised by weakness, fatigue, feeling faint, shortness of breath, and stunted growth, he added.

Md Shahiduzzaman Sarker, state minister for planning, and Dr Shahnaz Arefin, additional secretary of Health Services Division, also spoke at the event.

A flood the north

FROM PAGE 5

"The dyke will be repaired in the dry season," said Rakibul.

In Lalmonirhat, floodwaters from the Dharla River have affected three unions in the shoal areas under Sadar upazila, leaving more than 5,000 people waterlogged. The Dharla was flowing 18cm above danger level at Shishulbari Point yesterday morning, according to BWDB officials.

In Sirajganj, at least 83,000 people from around 18,000 families have been marooned due to the Jamuna River's flooding.

A total of 34 unions in the district have become inundated, and 6,497 hectares of croplands are submerged.

Additionally, 57 primary schools have become waterlogged.

The Jamuna was flowing 54cm and 61cm above danger level at Kazipur Point and Sirajganj Hard Point, respectively.

In Thakurgaon, low-lying areas have been inundated as the Tangon River swelled over the past two days due to downpours and upstream water. At least 800 families in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila are marooned, with around 200 families taking shelter in educational institutions.

Floodwaters have damaged embankments and roads in the upazila, with the most affected areas from DC slum, Monshipara, Khalpara, Senua, Chanmaripara, Rajagaon, Akcha, Mohammadpur, and Nargoon unions.

Local administration has started distributing food materials among flood victims at temporary shelters. "Measures have been taken to address the damage to the river embankment at Kharibari and Collegepara," said Golam Zakaria, executive engineer of BWDB in Thakurgaon.

Officials from the Local Government Engineering Department and Thakurgaon municipality are working to repair the damaged roads. The floodwater is expected to recede if there is no further rain in the coming days.

Sisters die

FROM PAGE 5

also lost our two daughters on the same day. My wife has become sick. We are in dire straits, but it seems the authorities concerned have abandoned us," said Shahadat.

Kaliganj Union Parishad member Mohammad Ali, who visited the family, confirmed that no relief has reached the 500 affected families in his ward.

Kaliganj UP Chairman Riazul Islam Pradhan said he has discussed the matter with the upazila nirbahi officer.

Sibbir Ahmed, UNO of Nageshwari upazila, assured that the affected families will receive government assistance soon.

Armed forces, a symbol

FROM PAGE 3

saying that they've been performing their duty sincerely, risking their lives defying all adversities.

Noting that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman founded the PGR on July 5, 1975, she said the PGR has emerged as a smart force now.

The PGR has been providing security to the VVIPs including the head of state, the head of the government and the family members of the Father of the Nation, adds UNB.

"Besides, their role in case of different state programmes is very commendable," she said.

WE'RE BESIDE PALESTINE

The prime minister said she continues to protest in international forums against the genocide being carried out in Gaza by Israel.

"We're always on the side of Palestine," she said. "We always protest against injustice and stand for justice," she added.

EXERCISE AUSTERITY, BOOST PRODUCTION

The premier asked all to practice austerity and work sincerely to boost production to take the country forward.

"Everyone will have to practise austerity to some extent in all cases. If we can move forward by showing austerity and increasing production, we'll be able to reach our desired destination," she said.

In the event, the prime minister handed over the donation and gifts to the families of martyred PGR members who lost lives while performing duty.

PGR Commander Brig Gen Mohammad Khaled Kamal delivered the welcome speech at the function.

PM's Security Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and the chiefs of three services were present at the event.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 8

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People`s Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bagerhat
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

e-Tender Notice (OTM) : 01/2024-2025

Memo No: 46.02.0100.000.07.038.24-3134 Date: 07-07-2024.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of stated below:

Tender IDs	Package Description & No.	Last Date & Time of Depositing Document fees
1002125	(a) Improvement of Haldibunia - Deshekhando Road By BC from Ch: 00m - 1000m [Road ID: 201584050] [Salvage Cost: 29,05,038] (b) Improvement of Mongla Chatterhat GCCR at Moukhali - Tatibunia - Dattermate By BC from Ch: 00m - 1270m [Road ID: 201584013] [Salvage Cost: 11,31,880 tk.] **[Mongla] [Bagerhat] [3rd Call] & Bag/VR-74/FY 2023-24.**	24.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM
1002126	(a) Improvement of Mongla - Chatterhat GC Road at Tatibunia - Burburia School Road By BC from Ch: 00m - 1500m [Road ID: 201584017] [Salvage Cost: 39,73,242 tk.] (b) Improvement of Mongla - Chatterhat GCCR Road at Tatibunia - Mithakhali Bazar Road By BC from Ch: 1000m - 2000m [Road ID: 201584019] [Salvage Cost: 10,22,315 tk.] **[Mongla] [Bagerhat] [3rd Call] & Bag/VR-73/FY 2023-24.**	24.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM
1002127	Improvement of Kaligonj Bazar - Mollikarbare UP Road By BC from Ch.2650m-3546m [Road ID 201733010] [Salvage Value: 13,78,707.00 Tk.] **[Rampal] [Bagerhat] [5th Call] & Bag/UNR-05/FY 2023-24.**	21.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender shall be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies shall be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

07.07.24
(Md. Sharifuzzaman)
Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-479942042
e-mail: xen.bagerhat@lged.gov.bd

GD- 18

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
গুলশানে EyRiE প্রজেক্টে শান্তা প্রপার্টিজের তৈরি ৪৪৫০ বর্গফুটের দক্ষিণমুখী লাক্সারিয়াস সদ্য তৈরি ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়। কারপার্কিং ২টি, রোড-৫০, গুলশান-২, লেভেল-৫, ফোন: ০১৭৯৯০০০০০৭

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 578 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994.
AND IN THE MATTER OF:
Md. Shofiqul Islam ....Petitioner
Vs
The RJSC and others ....Respondents

Notice is hereby given that a petition under section 233 of the Companies Act 1994 for cancellation of all resolutions passed at any time without serving notice upon the petitioner in any meeting of the Board of Directors and/or in general meetings of Aman Feed PLC and for other reliefs was presented to the Hon'ble High Court Division by the above petitioner and that on 27.06.2024 the Hon'ble Court presided over by Mr. Justice K. M. Kamrul Kader was pleased to admit the said petition and the said petition is directed to be heard before the Hon'ble Court; and any one else interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court on the date fixed for hearing either personally or through duly appointed Advocate. Copy of the petition may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.

Morshed Ahmed Khan, Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Tropical Park View, Flat # C-3, 9/1-9/4 Free School Street, Kathalbagan, Dhaka.

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy
East Palenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: commerce@cddl.gov.bd, contact@cddl.gov.bd,
Website: www.cddl.gov.bd

23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.56 Dated: 07 July 2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1.	Procuring Entity	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd
2.	Invitation for	Tender Documents For MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE Q235B) (Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned in Tender Document)
3.	Reference No	23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.57 Date: 07 July 2024
4.	Tender Closing	23 July 2024 at 12.15 PM
5.	Tender Opening	23 July 2024 at 12.30 PM

N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website (www.cddl.gov.bd)

Head of Commerce & Purchase Department

TANVIR AHAMMAD TALUKDAR
Commander BN
For Managing Director

GD- 20

বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
মেলান্দহ, জামালপুর-২০১২
ই-মেইল : registrar@bsfmstu.ac.bd, ওয়েবসাইট: www.bsfmstu.ac.bd

Ref: 37.01.0044.526.02.024.23 Date: 07.07.2024

e- Tender Notice

e-Tenders are hereby invited in the National e-gp portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the works stated as below:

Tender ID	Package No	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
996102	37.01.0044.526.02.024.23	Supply, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Power System Lab at BSFMSTU	22-Jul-2024 17:00	23-Jul-2024 14:15

This is an online tender notice, where only e-Tender will be accepted through the National e-GP portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal is required. Tender security will be deposited online at any branch of registered banks. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Rasidul
Dr. Md. Rasidul Islam
Chairman, Dept. of EEE
BSFMSTU, Jamalpur.
Phone: 02223-377525
e-mail: eee@bsfmstu.ac.bd

GD-21

A flood the north will remember

STAR REPORT

This year, the flood in the north has been the worst in recent memory. And it continues to worsen.

New areas in Kurigram, Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat and Thakurgaon, Gaibandha and more are being inundated every day.

In Kurigram, over two lakh people are affected by flooding as the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers are flowing above danger levels.

The Brahmaputra was 67cm above danger level at Chilmari Point, the Dudhkumar 51cm above danger level at Pateshwari Point, and the Dharla 31cm above danger level at Bridge Point as of yesterday morning, according to the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

"Despite a slight decrease in the Brahmaputra's water level, the overall flood situation is worsening due to rising water levels in the Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers," said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of BWDB in Kurigram.

Floodwaters from the Dudhkumar caused a 120-metre dyke collapse in Nageshwari upazila, inundating 17 villages and affecting at least 3,000 families. Many residents have taken refuge on higher ground with their belongings and cattle.

The floodwaters have also damaged vast areas of croplands and Aman paddy seedbeds.

Temporary shelters have been opened for flood victims, and efforts are underway to check water flow through the collapsed dyke by dumping sand-filled geo-bags.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'We could only save our lives'

Jamuna erosion leaves 100 families homeless

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *back from Sirajganj*

It was the night of June 28. Suddenly, Ajuba Begum felt a tremor in the ground that sent shivers down her spine.

It could only mean one thing -- the Jamuna, which was at least half a kilometre away from her home in Haat Pachil village under Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj, has reached dangerously close.

Ajuba took a glance outside to only confirm the inevitable.

Panicked villagers scrambled for safety, as the water devoured the land beside her home.

Inside, her family tried to salvage whatever they could from the approaching Jamuna. But it was too late.

Within minutes, water started breaching their residence. That is when Ajuba knew it was time. She took a deep breath, looked back at her home for one last time, and then ran for her life along with family members.

Within half an hour, the house went beneath the cold embrace of the river.

"Only a week ago, I was living happily with my family in our house. Now we are homeless," Ajuba said as she shared her story.

"We could only save our lives, nothing else," she said.

Ajuba is not alone. Jamuna devoured around 100 homesteads in the village as its erosion has turned severe, leaving around 200 people homeless.

The ongoing floods are only worsening the situation.

Both river erosion and floods are interconnected processes, and they can influence each other in various ways.

River erosion can change the shape and course of a river, reducing its capacity to carry water and leading to floods. Conversely, floods increase water flow and speed, intensifying erosion of riverbanks and riverbeds.

"The river has reached my house and eroded away a portion of it. Soon it will engulf the remaining as the erosion is only worsening over time," said Omar Ali of Haat Pachil village.

The victims blamed the Bangladesh Water Development Board for the situation.

"Jamuna's erosion isn't anything new, it has been continuing for years, but what did the authority do about it? Nothing," alleged Abed Ali of the village.

Md Najmul Hossain, BWDB's sub-divisional engineer, said a Tk 650 crore project to protect a six-kilometre stretch is underway and expected to be completed by next year.

The erosion and flooding have also affected Koijuri and Jalalpur union under Shahzadpur upazila.

Md Kamruzzaman, the upazila's UNO, said they have listed 78 victims and planned to rehabilitate them soon.

Over 1,000 schools closed in Sylhet, Rangpur

STAR REPORT

Over 1,000 educational institutions remain closed in the Sylhet and Rangpur regions due to the ongoing flood.

In Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts, over 800 educational institutions remain closed. According to district primary education offices, 594 primary schools have been affected by the floods, with 356 in Sylhet, 102 in Sunamganj, and 136 in Moulvibazar. Many of these schools are either flooded or being used as shelters.

In addition, 211 higher secondary schools, colleges, and madrasas are also closed in these districts. This includes 73 in Sylhet, 80 in Sunamganj, and 58 in Moulvibazar.

The overall flood situation in the region has not improved significantly, with the Kushiyara river still overflowing at several points in Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Habiganj.

The Surma is below the danger level at most points except Sylhet's Kanaighat Point, where it remains 48cm above the danger level.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre of Bangladesh Water Development Board has reported that the water level in the northeastern region is gradually reducing, with a downtrend expected to continue for the next 72 hours.

Meanwhile, in Rangpur division, education for hundreds of primary school students has been severely disrupted due to recent floods.

In Gangachhara upazila, five primary schools have been closed for the past seven days as flash floods inundated low-lying areas due to rising water levels in the Teesta River. Additionally, 39 schools in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur, and Lalmonirhat districts have suffered structural damage from floods and river erosion.

According to the Rangpur Division Department of Primary Education, around 411 primary schools in 15 upazilas, including Kurigram, Gaibandha, and Lalmonirhat, have been affected by the floods. Fifty-one schools are currently serving as shelters.

Md Muzahidul Islam, acting divisional deputy director of the Rangpur Department of Primary Education, said education services in 376 schools in these three districts have been suspended for the past seven days due to flooding. Seven schools, three in Kurigram and four in Gaibandha, have been washed away by river erosion.

Efforts are underway to relocate vulnerable schools to prevent further erosion damage.

As floodwaters recede, preparations are being made to resume education in the affected schools, although the majority remain closed. Teachers have been instructed to cover their syllabuses quickly once schools reopen, he added.

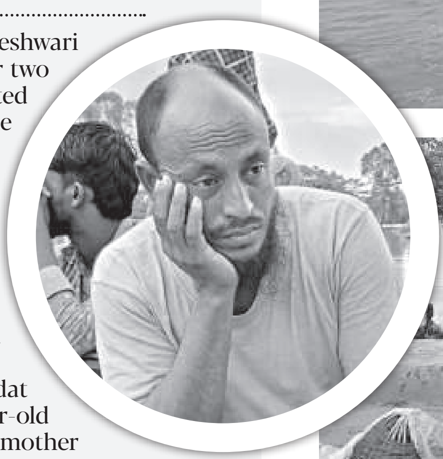
In Pirgachha upazila, Char Gabura Primary School suspended classes after floodwaters washed away the connecting bank.

Headteacher Akram Hossain expressed concerns about the school's ongoing vulnerability to erosion.

Meanwhile, locals have noted repeated damage to schools near the Teesta, Dharla, Brahmaputra, and Dudhkumar rivers, with some schools being relocated multiple times due to erosion.

Sisters die from electrocution in flood-hit village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*



A family in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila is devastated after two sisters were electrocuted by a submerged live cable during the recent floods.

The victims, Sumaiya Akhter, 12, and Masuma Akhter, 7, died instantly when they came into contact with a live electric cable while crossing floodwaters on a raft.

Their father, Shahadat Hossain, a 50-year-old sharecropper, and mother Amiran Begum, 45, are still in shock since the incident took place on Friday.

Their father, Shahadat Hossain, a 50-year-old sharecropper, and mother Amiran Begum, 45, are still in shock since the incident took place on Friday.

The family resides in Begunbari village, a remote area heavily affected by the swelling Dudhkumar river.

According to locals, the tragedy occurred as the sisters were on their way to their aunt's house, 400 metres away, when Sumaiya got entangled in the live cable from an irrigation pump. Masuma tried to save her, but got electrocuted herself.

Despite the family's plight, local authorities have yet to provide any support.

"We were already suffering, and then we

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room -919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

"e-Tender Notice" (Corrigendum-03)

e-tender are invited in e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl	Tender ID, Ref No	Description of items	Start Date & Time	Last Selling Date and Time		Tender Closing Date & Time	
				Previous	Amended	Previous	Amended
01	**Tender ID: 986468,** Ref. No. 46.207.014.09.10.282 2024, Date: 24.04.2024	**Works:** Improvement and Construction works of Mayor Sheikh Taposh Bridge (Loharpool)-Contract Package No. DCNUP/W-03/KAC	27-May-2024 15:00 BST	07-July-2024 16:00 BST	14-July-2024 16:00 BST	08-July-2024 13:00 BST	15-July-2024 13:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

07.7.2024
(Rajib Khadem)
Project Director, PIU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-223350461
e-mail: pddcnupdscc24@gmail.com

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১২/২০২৪-২০২৫

Memo no. 46.207.014.09.10.282.2024/552

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, রংপুর
email:eeran@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৮৫৪৯.৪৬৭.০০.০০০.২৪-২০৭০ তারিখঃ-০৭-০৭-২০২৪

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিম্নবর্ণিত সময়সূচি মোতাবেক রংপুর সড়ক বিভাগের ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করা হবে। আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভূক্তি করার জন্য নিম্নে বর্ণিত শর্তানুসারে আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

ছক-১ (নবায়ন)

বিবরণ	নবায়ন ফি (টাকা)	ভ্যাট (১৫%) (টাকা)	বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	১০০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন	২০০০/-	৩০০/-	০৭-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ০৬-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত	১১-০৮-২০২৪ হতে ২৯-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত	০১-০৯-২০২৪ হতে ৩০-০৯-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত

ছক-২ (নতুন তালিকাভূক্তি)

বিবরণ	তালিকাভূক্তি ফরমের মূল্য (টাকা)	তালিকাভূক্তি ফি (টাকা)	ভ্যাট ১৫% (টাকা)	তালিকাভূক্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা প্রদানের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভূক্তি	১০০০/-	৫০০০/-	৭৫০/-	০৭-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ০৬-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত

শর্তাবলীঃ

১। ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়নের জন্য অত্র দপ্তরের হিসাব শাখায় লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি ও ভ্যাট জমা পূর্বক মানি রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
২। নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্তির জন্য ১০০০/- টাকা মূল্যের তালিকাভূক্তি ফরম অত্র অফিস হতে সংগ্রহ পূর্বক ফরমে উল্লেখিত সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণ করে দাখিল করতে হবে। তালিকাভূক্তি কমিটি কর্তৃক যাচাই-বাছাই অন্তে উত্তীর্ণ ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভূক্তি ফি গ্রহণ পূর্বক ঠিকাদার তালিকাভূক্ত করা হবে।
৩। নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে কোনক্রমে ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভূক্তি ফি গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
৪। ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভূক্তির ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
৫। লাইসেন্স নবায়নের ক্ষেত্রে শুধুমাত্র ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরে নবায়নকৃত লাইসেন্স বহি ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে নবায়ন করা হবে।
৬। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভূক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহ্বান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

০৭-০৭-২৪
মোঃ সাজেদুর রহমান
পরিচিতি নং ৬০২১৬৭
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, রংপুর

GD- 19

Make a 'plan to control immigration'

Ex-PM Blair lays out 'advice' to Britain's new leader

AFP, *London*

Former Labour prime minister Tony Blair made an early intervention in British politics yesterday after Keir Starmer's landslide election victory, urging him to have a "plan to control immigration".

Blair warned Starmer, who will visit Scotland on his second full day as prime minister, that the anti-immigration Reform UK Party also posed a challenge to Labour, not just the Conservative Party.

The Reform UK party, led by Brexit firebrand Nigel Farage, maximised the damage to the Conservatives at the election by splitting the right-wing vote.

It won five seats in the Westminster parliament and 14 percent of the vote, prompting Farage to warn that it will target Labour voters next.

In a piece headlined "My advice to Keir Starmer", Blair wrote in the Sunday Times that "all over the western world, traditional political parties are suffering disruption".

"Where the system allows new entrants to emerge, they are running riot everywhere. Look at France or Italy.

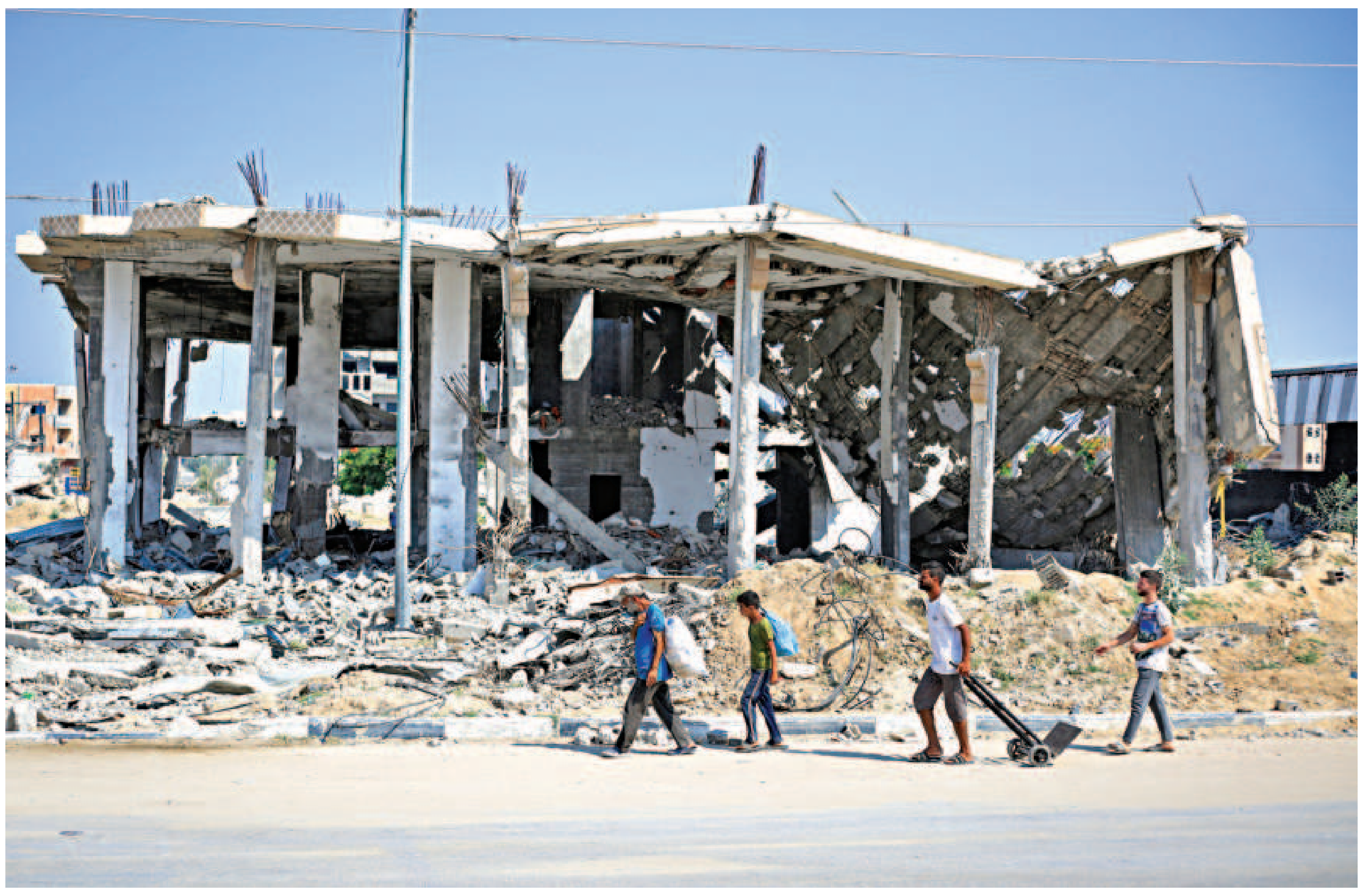
"We need a plan to control immigration. If we don't have rules, we get prejudices," he added.

Blair, the only Labour leader to lead his party to three consecutive election victories starting with his own landslide win in 1997, couched his "advice" in an article about harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

He said he believed digital ID technology offered the best solution to controlling irregular immigration, a key issue on the doorstep during the election campaign.

"We should move as the world is moving to digital ID. If not, new border controls will have to be highly effective," he wrote.

Other suggestions included "a tough new approach to law and order" due to the fact that "at present criminal elements are modernising faster than law enforcement".



Displaced Palestinians carry belongings as they walk in front of a destroyed building in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. An Israeli air strike on a house in the town of Zawayda, in central Gaza, killed at least six people and wounded several others.

PHOTO: AFP

'Bulldozed and shelled'

Gaza farming sector ravaged by Israeli offensive now in its 10th month

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Tank tracks still fresh on his field in southern Gaza's coastal area of Al-Mawasi, Nedal Abu Jazar lamented the damage offensive has wrought on his trees and crops.

"Look at the destruction," the 39-year-old farmer told AFP, holding an uprooted tomato plant. He pointed to his greenhouse's metal frame and its white plastic sheeting strewn across the plot, inside an area designated a humanitarian zone by the Israeli army.

"People were sitting peacefully on their farmland ... and suddenly tanks arrived and fired at us, and then there were (air) strikes."

Abu Jazar said the Israeli operation in late June destroyed about 40 dunams (10 acres) of land and killed five labourers.

His is not an isolated case. Across Gaza, 57 percent of agricultural land has been damaged since the offensive began, according to a joint assessment published in June by the UN's agriculture and satellite imagery agencies, FAO and UNOSAT.

The damage threatens Gaza's food sovereignty, Matieu Henry of the Food and Agriculture Organization told AFP, because 30 percent of the Palestinian territory's food consumption comes from agricultural land.

"If almost 60 percent of the agricultural land has been damaged, this may have a significant impact in terms of food security and food supply."

The Gaza Strip exported $44.6 million worth of produce in 2022, mainly to the West Bank and Israel, with strawberries and tomatoes representing 60 percent of the total, according to FAO data.

Across Gaza, 57 pc of agricultural land has been damaged since the offensive began: FAO

The damage assessment on the agricultural land comes as the UN's hunger monitoring system estimated in June that 96 percent of Gaza faces high levels of acute food insecurity.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli army said it "does not intentionally harm agricultural land".

In a statement, it said Hamas "often operates from within orchards, fields and agricultural land".

The impact is worse in the Palestinian territory's north, where 68 percent of agricultural land is damaged, although the southern area encompassing parts of Al-Mawasi has seen the most significant increase in recent months due to operations.

UNOSAT's Lars Bromley told AFP the damage is generally "due to the impact of activities such as heavy vehicle activity, bombing, shelling, and other conflict-related dynamics, which would be things like areas burning".

Near the southern city of Rafah, 34-year-old farmer Ibrahim Dheir feels helpless after the destruction of 20 dunams (five acres) of land he used to lease, and all his farming equipment with it.

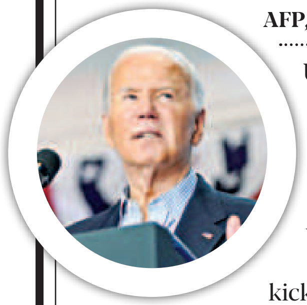
"As soon as the Israeli bulldozers and tanks entered the area, they began bulldozing cultivated lands with various trees, including fruits, citrus, guava, as well as crops like spinach, molokhia (jute mallow), eggplant, squash, pumpkin and sunflower seedlings," he said, before listing more damage in a testimony of the area's past agricultural abundance.

Dheir, whose family exported its produce to the West Bank and Israel, now feels destitute. "We used to depend on agriculture for our livelihood day by day, but now there's no work or income."

Farmer Abu Mahmoud Za'arab also finds himself with "no source of income". The 60-year-old owns 15 dunams (3.7 acres) of land on which crops and fruit trees used to grow.

Biden back on campaign trail as pressure mounts

AFP, *Washington*



US President Joe Biden headed back out on the campaign trail yesterday, desperate to salvage his re-election bid as senior Democrats meet to discuss growing calls that he quit the White House race.

The 81-year-old Democrat kicked off a grueling week with two campaign rallies in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, before hosting the Nato leaders' summit in Washington. He will do so under an increasingly unforgiving spotlight, as pressure mounts for him to drop out after his disastrous debate against Donald Trump last month ignited panic over his age and fitness to serve another four years.

Biden has remained defiant, unequivocally declaring -- at a rally, to reporters and on social media -- that he is fit to serve, the only one who can defeat Trump, and staying in the race.

"I beat Trump in 2020. I'm going to beat him again in 2024," his campaign social media account posted later on Saturday.

But a televised interview with ABC News on Friday has failed to quell concerns. His next major test in the public eye will be a press conference scheduled for Thursday, during the Nato summit.

Eight killed in gun battles in India's Jammu & Kashmir

Two soldiers among dead

AFP, *New Delhi*

Two soldiers and six suspected militants were killed in two separate gun battles in Indian's Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), police said yesterday.

Kashmir police inspector general Vidhi Kumar Birdi told AFP that authorities in the disputed territory had "carried out two different operations" in villages in the Kulgam district.

Birdi said two members of the security forces had been killed, with clashes continuing in Modergram and Frisal Chinnigam villages.

"We have retrieved the bodies of two terrorists from Modergram, and four others from Frisal Chinnigam," said Birdi.

This is the latest incident in an uptick of attacks in the disputed territory.

India and Pakistan both claim Muslim-majority Kashmir in full and have fought three wars for control of the Himalayan region.

Rebel groups have waged an insurgency since 1989, demanding independence for the territory or its merger with Pakistan.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels.

In June, nine Indian Hindu pilgrims were killed and dozens wounded when a gunman opened fire on a bus carrying them from a shrine in the southern Reasi area.

Dorival takes responsibility

FROM PAGE 12

card given to Uruguay's Nahitan Nandez in the 74th minute, Brazil failed to break the deadlock as the feisty encounter featuring a tournament-high 41 fouls finished 0-0 after 90 minutes to go to penalties.

In the shootout, Eder Militao and Douglas Luiz failed to find the net for Brazil, while Alisson Becker denied Uruguay defender Jose Maria Gimenez. However, Manuel Ugarte converted the winning spot kick to send Uruguay into the last four and Brazil to an early exit.

Brazil head home after earning just one win in the group stage before being defeated by Uruguay in the first knockout round.

The result also represents a downward turn for the Brazilians, who were finalists (2021) and champions (2019) in the two previous editions of the Copa.

"This is a process; in general, you come across difficulties when you're creating a team," said Dorival, whose team was without the suspended Vinícius Júnior in the quarterfinal.

"This was our first official tournament, and the result was far from what was expected ... our main objective now is to qualify for the World Cup."

Dorival, who has just eight games under his belt, defended his players after they only recently wrapped up their club campaigns before the competition.

"Many of them joined us after long seasons," Dorival said. "Considering what we saw at the training sessions and every day, I think we can still grow as a team ... many people might not understand, things are like this when you're creating a team from scratch. There are ups and downs in football."

Voter turnout high

FROM PAGE 12

through the European Union at a time when populist parties are strengthening support across the continent.

Voting was due to close at 6:00 pm in towns and small cities and 8:00 pm in bigger cities. Pollsters was due to deliver initial projections based on early counts from a sample of voting stations at 8:00 pm.

Macron called the snap election after his ticket was trounced by the RN in European Parliament elections last month, a move apparently aimed at wrong-footing his rivals in a legislative election. The vote is pitting a centrist government against opposition movements from the left and far right.

"The country is facing three radically opposed views of society," said Olivier Grisal, a retiree, as he walked towards his polling site in the middle-class town of Conflans Sainte-Honorine, west of Paris, with his wife.

Opinion polls forecast Marine Le Pen's RN will emerge the dominant force as voters punish Macron over a cost of living crisis and being out of touch with the hardships people face.

However, the RN is seen failing to reach the 289-seat target that would outright hand Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella the prime minister's job with a working majority.

The far right's projected margin of victory has narrowed since Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) pulled scores of candidates from three-way races in the second round in a bid to unify the anti-RN vote.

"France is on the cliff-edge and we don't know if we're going to jump," Raphael Glucksmann, a member of the European Parliament who led France's leftist ticket in last month's European vote, told France Inter radio last week.

Political violence surged during the three-week campaign. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin has said authorities recorded more than 50 physical assaults on candidates and campaigners.

Some luxury boutiques along the Champs Elysees boulevard, including the Louis Vuitton store, barricaded windows and Darmanin said he was deploying 30,000 police amid concerns of violent protests should the far right win.

A longtime pariah for many due to its history of racism and antisemitism, the RN has broadened its support beyond its traditional base along the Mediterranean coast and the de-industrialised north, tapping into voter anger at Macron over straitened household budgets, security, and immigration worries.

Hamas waiting for Israeli response

FROM PAGE 12

person was seriously wounded, police said. Hezbollah said it had fired rockets at an army base.

In Gaza, Palestinian health officials said at least 15 people were killed in separate Israeli military strikes yesterday. An Israeli airstrike in Gaza City killed the Hamas-appointed deputy minister of labour in the Palestinian enclave, Hamas media reported.

Another air strike on a house in the town of Zawayda, in central Gaza, killed at least six people and wounded several others, while six others were killed in an air strike on a house in western Gaza.

Tanks deepened their raids in central and northern areas of Rafah on the southern border with Egypt. Health officials there said they had recovered three bodies of Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in the eastern part of the city.

Electrocution kills five

FROM PAGE 12

Those who were in the chariot jumped from it to save themselves," he said.

"We rescued 20 injured people from the spot and hospitalised them. Four of them died at the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital and one at the Mohammed Ali Hospital," Arup told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Khorajita Krishna Das, principal of ISKON's Bogura chapter, said, "We tried to move the procession very carefully. When the chariot came near the electric wire, we warned the devotees so that they lower the dome. But they could not hear us due to noise."

Abdul Wadud, deputy director of the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star that four died at the hospital as of filing of this report around 11:00pm and 38 others were undergoing treatment there. Two of the injured were in the ICU, he said.

Shafiq Amin Kajal, resident medical officer of the Mohammed Ali Hospital, said four people were admitted there, of them Joly Rani, 35, died.

In a statement last night, Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad expressed deep shock and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family members.

Its leaders called upon the government to take effective measures for treatment of the wounded.

The local administration formed a five-member committee to investigate the incident and asked it to submit the report within 10 working days.

Quota protests bring capital to a standstill

FROM PAGE 1

from underdeveloped districts; 5 percent for members of indigenous communities and 1 percent for persons with physical disabilities.

"With due respect to the prime minister, we want to say that the students have provided the logic for the quota reform movement in 2018," said DU student Nahid Islam, one of the protest organisers under the banner of "student movement against discrimination".

The country's constitution speaks of equality for all and that goes against the quota system, he said.

"There is no point in showing us court -- we are fighting in favour of the constitution. The prime minister herself gave the verdict in favour of the quota cancellation in parliament," he said, adding that the protests will continue indefinitely.

Yesterday, several thousands college and university students gathered in front of the Dhaka University Central Library around 3:00pm in line with their earlier announcement of holding "Bangla Blockade".

They blocked the Shahbagh intersection at about 3:50pm and lifted the blockade around 8:00pm. Many protesters moved towards the Banglamotor and Sonargaon intersections at 6:00pm. They left Sonargaon intersection at about 6:50pm and Banglamotor around 7:00pm and returned to Shahbagh.

A section of DU students first blocked the Chankharpul intersection near Mayor Hanif Flyover around 3:30pm. The blocked the on and off ramp of the flyover for about four hours.

Another group of protestors also blocked the Science Lab intersection.

Meanwhile, students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked a street near their university in the capital's Agargaon around 3:45pm, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Police Station.

Student also blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram, Dhaka-Aricha, Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Barishal-Kuakata and Dinajpur-Dhaka highways.

Hundreds of students of Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway near the campus for around two hours from 11:00am.

The protest caused a six-kilometre tailback on the highway, said AFM Sayeed, the officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station.

Many passengers were stuck for hours in a six-kilometre-long tailback in Kotbari crossing area of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway as the protestors from Cumilla University kept the highway blocked for four hours from 4:00pm.

Thousands of students of the University of Chittagong blocked the Chattogram-Khagrachhari highway for about two hours from around 4:00pm.

"If the talented people are not evaluated properly, then there will be a brain drain," said Mubarak Hossain, a student at the University of Chittagong's department of economics.

Hundreds of students from Barishal University kept the Barishal-Kuakata highway blocked for more than three-and-a-half hours from 11:30am, creating tailbacks on both sides of the highway.

Local and long-distance buses could not depart Nathullabad due to the protest, said Arichul Haque, the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Students from Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) in Dinajpur blocked the Dinajpur-Dhaka highway for an hour from 11:00am, leaving hundreds of vehicles stuck.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury yesterday said it would not be appropriate for him to comment on the protest against the quota system as it is a sub-judice matter.

"Commenting on the matter will be tantamount to contempt of court. Any citizen of Bangladesh can comment on the street. But it is not possible to comment from a responsible place in government," he said.

The government is closely monitoring the ongoing movements of the university teachers and the students against a new pension scheme and quota in government jobs, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, while talking to reporters at the secretariat.

BTI THE DAILY STAR STELLAR WOMEN-2023

Glimpses of Brilliance

bti The Daily Star
STELLAR WOMEN
Spark Your Inner Power

In Bangladesh, women are forging paths of success by harnessing their inner strength to confront and overcome societal challenges. These women exemplify resilience and determination, breaking traditional roles and excelling in various sectors. Their stories of triumph not only inspire but also redefine societal norms, paving the way for broader empowerment and equality. The Daily Star and building technology and ideas ltd (bti) joined forces to launch the initiative 'Stellar Women – Spark Your Inner Power' to recognize these inspiring women. After successful completion of season 1, "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023" Gala was held on June 8, 2024, at the banquet hall of Kurmitola Golf Club in the capital. At the event, twelve outstanding women from 12 different sectors in Bangladesh were honored for their exceptional accomplishments in fields ranging from development sector and technology to architecture, education, culture, corporate, agriculture, sports, writing, start-up & entrepreneurship, social welfare, and journalism. The Honorable Minister of Housing and Public Works, R.A.M. Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, graced the event as the chief guest.

bti The Daily Star
STELLAR
WOMEN
2023

Winners of "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023" posed for a photo at the Banquet Hall of the Kurmitola Golf Club.

PHOTO COURTESY: STAR

"Now, we see that 60 percent of attendees in village high schools and colleges are women. This didn't happen overnight. The government provided various facilities to women, offered incentives and implemented numerous measures that led to their enormous empowerment."

R.A.M. OBAIDUL MUKTADIR CHOWDHURY,
Minister of Housing and Public Works

"The main theme of this whole effort is to highlight the brilliant roles that women are playing in the country. The leadership emerging at practical, enterprise, company, and small business levels is setting a trend and contributing significantly to the nation's progress."

MAHFUZ ANAM,
Editor and Publisher of
The Daily Star

"Through this initiative, we're honouring those women who've been working for the society and having a profound impact in building the nation, despite facing enormous challenges. The stories of these stellar women and their determination will inspire and empower other women in the society."

FR KHAN,
Managing Director of bti

"bti has unwavering commitment towards women empowerment and with this aim bti has initiated 'bti The Daily Star Stellar Women' for those who have enormous contribution to the society in different sectors, including education, development sector, architecture, agriculture and technology."

NALAKA HETTIARACHCHI,
CEO of bti

SHAMSIN AHMED

Shamsin Ahmed, the visionary founder of Identity Inclusion, was inspired by a loved one's struggle with psychosocial issues, and the subsequent bias they faced. Identity Inclusion focuses on training youth to provide psychosocial support and advocate for more inclusivity in all spheres. Over the past years, Shamsin has successfully assembled a team of social workers to assist people with severe mental illnesses and disabilities. The organization promotes the integration of individuals with special needs into mainstream society. Additionally, Shamsin offers consultancy services for disability inclusion. Through her dedicated efforts, she strives to reshape societal systems and policies, paving the way for a more inclusive world.

TASFIA TASBIN

Tasfia Tasbin co-founded markopolo.ai with her friend Rubaiyat during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide digital marketing solutions for entrepreneurs. During the early stages, they partnered with some digital marketing agencies to establish their business. Their innovative product gained global recognition after being showcased at one of the world's largest product exhibitions.

Currently, markopolo.ai operates in 31 countries, offering data-driven and automated digital marketing solutions that empower small businesses. Tasfia notes that many of her customers are unaware that the product is entirely developed in Bangladesh. Her contributions to the industry have earned her a spot on Forbes' 30 Under 30 list and a BIG win in 2023.

NAZLI HUSSAIN

Nazli Hussain completed her education at BUET and honed her skills as a Project Manager at the British Council. With over five years of experience in architectural projects for banks, Nazli gained invaluable insights into Bangladesh's construction sector. She attributes her practical experience to her studies as pivotal in mastering the intricacies of architecture.

Nazli's passion for sustainability led her to earn LEED accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council while pursuing studies in sustainability. She proudly holds the distinction of being the country's first LEED Accredited Professional and serves as the Founder and architect at Praxis Architects.

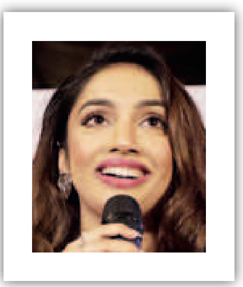
Her journey underscores a commitment to integrating sustainability into architectural practices, setting a profound example in the field.

SADIA JAFRIN

Sadia Jafrin, a pharmacy graduate, embarked on a transformative journey in 2019 when she founded the 'Grow Your Reader' Foundation. Driven by a desire to make a more significant impact on society beyond her career in pharmaceuticals, Sadia's foundation has become a beacon of educational empowerment.

Recognized as an Acumen fellow in 2022 and a Top 100 Leader in Education, Sadia also serves as a Young Leader of the Queen's Commonwealth Trust, advocating for improved education for underprivileged children. The 'Grow Your Reader' Foundation has pioneered initiatives such as a mobile library (Wheels of Wisdom), Book Garage, reading circles (online book library) , and a dedicated school called 'School er Baire Shikkha', in Jessore.

RIDY SHEIKH



Ridy Sheikh, born and brought up in Moscow, has maintained a strong bond with her Bangladeshi heritage due to her mother. Her passion for dance ignited at the tender age of 5 with Bangladeshi folk dance, marking the beginning of a lifelong journey in the arts. By 15, she was already serving as a junior choreographer at her school, eventually gaining recognition through her participation in 'So You Think You Can Dance', Ukraine edition. Today, Ridy stands as the founder and choreographer of Starbase Dance Studio and has also ventured into the world of fashion with her brand, Gemini. She is among Bangladesh's eight content creators selected by UNDP Bangladesh to promote Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing clean energy and environmental conservation.

SHAMIMA AKHTER

Shamima Akhter's journey is a testament to her unwavering passion for mountaineering and her bold decision to transition from a successful 8-year NGO career to corporate leadership.

Starting her career as a Communication Officer at the UN, Shamima swiftly progressed to managing USAID projects before transitioning to corporate roles at Qubee and Coca-Cola. Her ascent culminated in becoming the first Bangladeshi female director at Coca-Cola and she now holds the prestigious position of Director of Corporate Affairs, Partnerships, and Communications at Unilever Bangladesh Limited. Shamima's tenure at Unilever highlights her dedication to overcoming gender biases and fostering a gender-equitable workplace. Her story inspires others to challenge norms and forge paths to success in male-dominated industries.

DR. SAKINA KHANAM

Dr. Sakina Khanam, Principal Scientific Officer at BINA (Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture), became the Stellar Woman 2023 in Agriculture for being the leader of the team that spearheaded the development of the BINA-25 rice variety. Her keen awareness of climate related threats to agriculture motivates her quest for sustainable crop cultivation methods, crucial for regions grappling with saline soils and land scarcity. Currently, Dr. Sakina focuses on combating food insecurity in remote Bangladesh by cultivating climate resilient strains of rice, peanuts, jute, and mung beans with her team. Her pioneering efforts not only aim to boost crop yields but also reduce the nation's reliance on imports. Dr. Sakina's dedication and groundbreaking achievements in agriculture positioned her as an inspiring figure for aspiring Bangladeshi women.

SALMA AKTER MONE

Salma Akter Mone's passion for football, her favorite sport, led her to practice late at night on the streets of Netrokona, where facilities for women's sports were scarce and limited. Her breakthrough came in grade 9 when her coach recognized her talent, paving the way for her to finally play on the fields and enroll in referee courses. In 2021, Salma achieved her dream of becoming a FIFA assistant referee. By 2023, she became the first Bangladeshi female AFC Elite Assistant Referee. Salma's journey exemplifies her resilience, illustrating how perseverance and familial support can help someone overcome barriers and achieve success in professional sports.

LUTFUNNAHAR PIKI

Lutfunnahar Piki embarked on a remarkable journey from becoming an Assistant Commissioner of Taxes to achieving her PhD. Her creative spirit, rekindled by her husband's encouragement, culminated in the publication of her debut novel "Otopor" in 2019, marking a significant milestone in her literary career. Piki's story is an evidence to the timeless nature of creativity, demonstrating that it can flourish at any stage of life. Her pursuits in literature began during her HSC level, when she wrote columns for 'Torun Kontho' in 'The Daily Ittefaq'. Currently serving as Additional Commissioner of Taxes at the National Board of Revenue, Piki continues to inspire with her scholarly achievements and professional dedication.

MONOSHITA AYRUANI

Monoshita Ayruani boldly challenged societal taboos surrounding women's undergarments by fostering open conversations about diversity and consulting on undergarment sizes. Recognizing Bangladesh's prowess in exporting lingerie abroad but the absence of quality options for local women, she founded SHAPE Industries Limited to provide affordable and diverse innerwear for all body types. What began with a team of 5 has grown to employ 12 individuals, driven by Monoshita's vision to empower women through inclusive fashion. SHAPE Industries not only meets a market need but also champions body positivity and dismantles stereotypes associated with lingerie, marking a transformative shift in Bangladesh's apparel sector towards inclusivity and empowering choices in women's innerwear.

TAWHIDA SHIROPA

Starting with personal funds, Tawhida Shiropa founded 'Moner Bondhu' to address mental health needs, a cause close to her heart. Overcoming initial hurdles, including securing grants, Tawhida's journey is a testament to her dedication. Her initiative initially targeted the RMG sector and its workers, organizing 5 to 7 successful programs before the pandemic.

Despite challenges posed by COVID-19, Moner Bondhu continued its work, contributing to Tawhida earning international acclaim. The Tommy Hilfiger Fashion Frontier Award further bolstered her motivation, recognizing her year-long efforts and commitment to improving mental health access in Bangladesh. Tawhida Shiropa's transformation from journalist to mental health entrepreneur underscores her impact in reshaping mental healthcare accessibility nationwide.

ROZINA ISLAM

Rozina Islam, now a Senior Reporter at Prothom Alo, started working with BRAC after her HSC exams. Even after taking a gap, she persisted in her career path, eventually contributing to 'Ajker Kagoj,' where she wrote for the business page. Her scholarship in Delhi in 2005 played a pivotal role in shaping her journalism career. Rozina's steadfast dedication to exposing corruption earned her the prestigious 'Anti- Corruption Champions' Award from the US Department of State in 2022. The previous year, she was honored with the 'Free Press Award' in Amsterdam, recognizing her complete dedication to journalism amidst challenging circumstances.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Govt should reform the quota system

Public service recruitment should be based primarily on merit

The revival of the student movement for reformation of the quota system in public service was wholly predictable, given the way the government had reacted to the previous movement in 2018. Since, in totality, 55 percent of government jobs used to be reserved under the quota system—including 30 percent for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren—the protesters had legitimate grounds to demand a revaluation of the system. The glaring lack of good jobs in the country and the need to ensure that the majority of public-sector recruits enter the service on merit warrant such a demand.

During the initial stages of the 2018 movement, the government refused to have an open dialogue with the protesters, labelling them as being involved with vague conspiracies. Once the students refused to budge from their position, we saw how Chhatra League cadres unleashed severe beatings upon protesters, with law enforcers often acting as bystanders. When the protesters still refused to back down, the government decided to do away with all quotas altogether—which the protesters had never asked for. The decision was regressive in nature given that it failed to reserve any seats for marginalised groups that are necessary for their upliftment.

On June 5, 2024, the High Court declared the circular that cancelled the quota system as illegal. After the government appealed the ruling and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld the HC directive, students once again were forced to launch a movement. While we cannot condone the blockades being implemented by protesters, we do find their demands rooted in logic. Reserving 30 percent of government jobs for the children and even grandchildren of freedom fighters goes against the spirit of our independence. Our valiant freedom fighters laid down their lives for equality; and although we honour their memory and hold the deepest respect for them, continuing to provide such a huge number of seats for their grandchildren makes little sense at present.

But that's not all. The government needs to reevaluate—as it should have the last time around—the whole quota system. We have heard previously that many of the seats reserved for marginalised groups used to remain vacant, another fault line in the erstwhile quota system. So, the government should involve all stakeholders in dialogue to find a solution that suits the needs of our time. Neither doing away with all quotas, nor simply continuing with the previous quota numbers, are appropriate solutions. The government needs to figure out suitable quota figures for marginalised groups, while reserving the majority of seats for meritorious students. We cannot steer the nation towards greater heights without having efficient and committed public servants at the helm.

Another public project gone awry

Abysmal pace of progress in hi-tech parks project raises questions

It is totally unacceptable that a project that was slated for completion in three years has achieved only 14.34 percent of physical progress after seven years. This glacial and, frankly, ridiculous pace of work has been noticed in an undertaking meant to build 12 hi-tech parks in various districts. Considering its nature, you would have thought a government so intent on bringing about the country's digital transformation would take it more seriously, especially when most of the budget is being borrowed from outside the country, indicating its significance. But this is how the project has ended up, like so many others before it, according to a report citing findings of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The government initiated the project in April 2017, with the strategically placed hi-tech parks envisioned to prepare the nation for the future by fostering a skilled workforce in the information technology sector. It was originally scheduled to be complete by June 2020, but has since seen its deadline extended multiple times. The latest proposal is asking for a 2027 deadline, and an increase from the original budget of Tk 1,796 crore to Tk 2,000 crore. Even though project authorities claim more progress than shown by the IMED, current physical progress still varies widely among the parks, with some barely even started.

How will the authorities justify this abysmal pace of work? As per our report, it has been attributed to various financial and logistical issues, including insufficient allocations, COVID-19 pandemic, land acquisition issues, etc. But this is hardly convincing. Those behind the project should have accounted for potential challenges and have contingency strategies in place to deal with them. A proper feasibility study would have resolved many of the issues that arose. Clearly, what has really slowed the progress is systemic neglect and mismanagement which, combined with a lack of accountability for public officials, have undone so many projects before. The economic implications of such cost and time overruns cannot be stressed enough.

The hi-tech parks project was meant to be a cornerstone of Bangladesh's vision for a digital future. Instead, it has become a cautionary tale of how ambitious plans can falter without effective execution. We urge the authorities to put their foot on the accelerator and resolve all issues preventing the timely execution of this project.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India

On this day in 1497, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon with a fleet of four vessels, and he ultimately opened a sea route from western Europe to Asia by way of the Cape of Good Hope, ushering in a new era in world history.

What options are left for us to fight unbridled corruption?

THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal
is deputy head of editorial at The Daily Star. His X handle is @EreshOmarJamal.

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

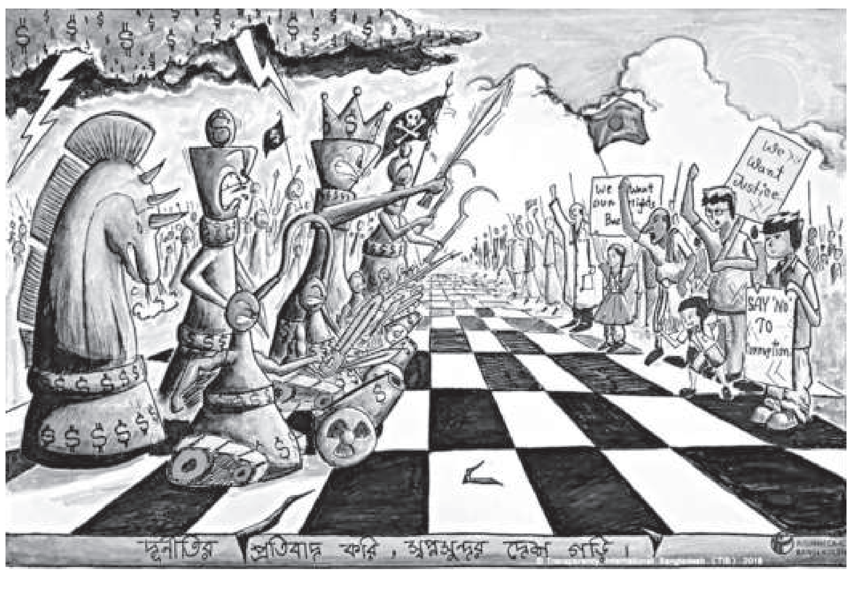
In recent times, allegations of serious corruption against a number of government officials have come to light. From former army chief Aziz Ahmed, former IGP and Rab chief Benazir Ahmed, and former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia and his family members, to public servants working in much lower positions in the government, corruption seems to have spread its tentacles across the country's public service sector.

During the Covid pandemic, we learnt how a driver of the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS) named Abdul Malek acquired crores of taka through corruption. At the same time, graft allegations emerged against former DGHS chief Abul Kalam Azad as well. These two stories illustrate how corruption has become institutionalised from the very top to the very bottom echelons of our government.

Another recent case of sensational corruption involves a National Board of Revenue (NBR) official named Md Matiur Rahman, and his wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura Upazila Parishad. What's interesting about their case is how they came to light. Matiur's corruption was revealed only after a video of Matiur's son buying a goat at Tk 15 lakh for Eid-ul-Azha went viral. Ironically, even the sellers of the goat were allegedly involved in corruption in the selling process as well as in other operations. Matiur's wife Lucky even submitted her tax files to the Election Commission (EC) before the upazila parishad polls earlier this year. But the commission failed to unearth the corruption of Lucky and her family at that time.

This brings into question how well our public institutions are doing in terms of identifying and addressing corruption. How is it that the EC failed to notice that Lucky had understated her wealth? In fact, prior to the last national election, this newspaper had reported how this election witnessed the highest number of candidates with movable or liquid assets of Tk 1 crore or more. A number of ministers saw their wealth increase by more than a few thousand percent. And the EC showed no curiosity as to how these ministers managed to multiply their wealth by such absurd amounts. Are they just that good at business and investment? If they are such financial geniuses, why isn't our economy doing as well under their leadership?

And the same absurd wealth increase was seen among candidates during the upazila parishad polls. Again, the EC showed the least bit of interest to find out how these candidates managed to acquire such massive wealth, similar to the national election candidates.



What can ordinary citizens do to put a stop to the rampant corruption taking place in our government institutions? SOURCE: TIB

Far from addressing corruption, our public institutions seem to be doing the opposite. For example, right after the reports of alleged corruption concerning former law enforcement high-ups came out, the Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) released a statement which seemingly threatened the media against reporting on corruption by law enforcers. Without being able to identify a single victim who was maligned by the media reports, the BPSA labelled the reports as "partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading."

The BPSA also claimed that the reports were "tarnishing the police's image," while ignoring the damage done by the alleged corruption of its former members. Such claims have become the go-to tactic whenever allegations of corruption are raised. For example, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader recently alleged—as many of his party members had previously done—that corruption accusations were being brought forth to portray AL as a corrupt party. Making such claims, without verifying the authenticity of the allegations, can often be seen as the most commonly used tactic in kleptocracies around the world.

And this is what the Opposition Leader and Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader recently pointed out in parliament: that corruption, at the scale that it is happening, has become the biggest threat to our economy. Quader rightly said that a wealthy circle has emerged comprising corrupt individuals, loan defaulters, and money launderers; in other words, we are being ruled by a kleptocratic and corrupt elite. And this has come about as a result of lack of accountability and governance failures.

Awami League MP AFM Bahauddin Nasim also rightly spoke about the fact that government bodies are doing the nation a huge disservice by coming to the defence of the corrupt. But the fact remains that it is his party that has weakened the law when it comes to identifying and preventing corruption by public servants—through the Government Services Act, 2018, for example, which even AL leader and lawmaker Mahbubul Alam Hanif said could be "considered a law to protect criminals."

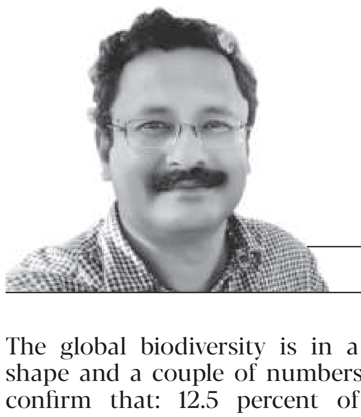
Through an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1985, the authorities in 2018 included "reprimand" as a penalty for corruption that has been proven through investigations. Before this amendment, the punishment was either "compulsory retirement," "removal from service" or "dismissal from service." To simply "reprimand" a public servant who has been found to be involved in corruption, while allowing them to remain in "service," is a slap in the public's face. And since 2018, numerous public servants proven to be involved in corruption have continued to remain in service due to this amendment, with only a slap on the wrist.

And it's not only the AL, but the BNP too, which through the 2002 amendment to the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979 relaxed the anti-graft rules for public servants. This only demonstrates the mindset of our political class in general: their primary motivation is to curry favour from public servants, rather than ensure transparency and accountability in public service for the sake of the public.

The only way to change this mindset is to get honest politicians into positions of power and hold to account those who are not truly serving the people. Unfortunately, all the mechanisms meant to do so seem to have been weakened, if not completely destroyed, one after another in recent decades. That's why the AL managed to make such an amendment to the public service rules, which can easily be argued to have breached Article 20 (2) of the constitution, while no other branch of government stepped in to prevent it.

So, ordinary citizens have only two options now: 1) allow corruption to run rampant and cost them in every sphere of life as a result; or 2) form mass movements that are strong enough to force politicians, public servants and other government authorities to not only rectify the legal issues that they have created, but enforce them to the letter, which will automatically deter government employees from getting involved in corruption.

Bangladesh's way forward to biodiversity conservation



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HASEEB MD IRFANULLAH

The global biodiversity is in a bad shape and a couple of numbers can confirm that: 12.5 percent of the world's eight million species will be lost forever in the next few decades; and between 1970 and 2020, big animals' numbers reduced by 68 percent. For Bangladesh, the numbers are not any better. Two studies led by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bangladesh and the Forest Department, and supported by the World Bank, showed that 24 percent animal species (data of 2015) and 39.4 percent of plant species (data of 2023) of the country will be extinct soon, if no measures are taken to save them.

Although these numbers are relatively recent, biodiversity loss was recognised as a problem much earlier. That's why the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted by the world in 1992, the 2010 Biodiversity Targets were set in 2002, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and Aichi Biodiversity Targets were adopted in 2010, and in 2015, the world agreed upon the 14th and the 15th Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming at biodiversity conservation.

In the same vein, in December 2022 in a meeting in Montreal, Canada, the countries adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to save the world's remaining biodiversity by 2050. This most ambitious-ever global plan to conserve biodiversity is also known as the "Biodiversity Plan" and has two main parts. The first part has four global goals to be achieved by 2050—protection and restoration of biodiversity, prosperity with nature, fair sharing of the benefits from biodiversity, and enhanced investment and collaboration. The second part includes 23 global targets to be achieved by 2030. The first eight targets refer to reducing threats to biodiversity, the next five talk about sustainable use and benefit-sharing to meet people's needs and the final 10 outline different tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation.

While many of these targets are qualitative in nature, some have ambitious numbers to fulfil. For example, Targets 2 and 3 talk about restoring 30 percent degraded ecosystems and conserving another 30 percent of diverse ecosystems, respectively. Target 18 wants to reduce harmful incentives every year by at least $500 billion, while every year $200 billion should be allocated for biodiversity from a wide range of sources as envisaged by Target 19.

I believe Bangladesh is already a part of this new global plan. Our recent legal instruments, for example, Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) Management Rule, 2016, Protected Area (PA) Management Rule, 2017, and Bangladesh Biodiversity, Act 2017, are in line with the Biodiversity Plan, and these also have provisions to create new funds for conservation actions. Species conservation action plans, such as those on vultures (2016-2025), gharials (2016-2015), tigers (2018-2027), elephants (2018-2027), dolphins (2021-2030), and sharks and rays (2023-2033), also indicate our progress in conservation planning. Numerous projects implemented since late 1990s underscore Bangladesh's participatory and co-management experience—one of the oldest and latest examples are Management of Aquatic Ecosystem through Community Husbandry (1998-2003) and Protibesh (2021-2026) projects, respectively.

I also think, in some cases, Bangladesh exceeds the Biodiversity Plan's expectations. In 2011, the 15th Amendment of the Bangladesh Constitution confirmed that preservation of biodiversity is the state's responsibility. In 2019, Bangladesh Parliament unanimously adopted a motion on "Planetary Emergency" bringing biodiversity loss and climate emergency together. In the same line, the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (2022-2041) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP2050, 2023-2050) have integrated biodiversity conservation and climate change actions for dual benefits.

To take the Biodiversity Plan forward over the next decade or so, Bangladesh could take three specific actions. First, we need to contextualise it in our own way. The Department of Environment and environment ministry are currently updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which should align with country's recently adopted Green and Climate Resilient Development Policy. It should mainstream our 30 years' experience of co-management of ecosystems by strongly adopting the ECA and PA Rules in all projects in and around biodiversity-rich areas. To maximise our financial resource utilisation, we should blend our climate and conservation actions. As the NAP2050 has strongly adopted Nature-based Solutions (NbS), the updated NBSAP should appreciate the climate emergency.

Second, Bangladesh should adopt evidence-guided policy making. To do that, it can establish a conservation portal for Bangladesh managed by the Forest Department to map out the portfolios of all recent-past and on-going conservation projects. In this way, we will know what to fund, where to fund, and how to fund, in real time. Finally, we need sustainable financing for conservation. By using the experience of climate budget and gender budget, the government should prepare a conservation budget through a collaboration between finance and environment ministries. Similar to Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework, (2020), they should also prepare Bangladesh Conservation Fiscal Framework to guide the country's conservation funding. After all, national finance will be crucial for implementing the updated NBSAP.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781
EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net
Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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The pension debate

Teachers of 35 public universities across the country have launched a simultaneous strike since July 1, protesting their mandatory inclusion in the universal pension scheme and putting forth their own set of demands. What are those demands, and what do others think of the protest? Four stakeholders share their views with The Daily Star.

The new pension scheme creates further discrimination

Dr Zeenat Huda
is chairman at the Department of Sociology in the University of Dhaka.

When a teacher goes to retirement at the age of 65, it is important that they get a one-time allowance to secure their future and that of their children. The new universal pension scheme does not have any provision for the teachers to receive this amount upon retirement. Another huge issue is the age of retirement. Up until now, the retirement age was 65. The new pension scheme aims to make it 59, creating a gap of six long years. Since we started protesting, there have been government press releases saying that it would remain 65 for university teachers, even though the government-mandated retirement age would be 59. Does this not create discrimination, the very thing they wanted to remove with the universal pension scheme?

Moreover, the University of Dhaka is an autonomous institution, like many other universities and institutes in the country. The government cannot force an autonomous institution to participate in a universal pension scheme without dialogue or any sort of consultation.

The scheme also requires us to participate in a contributory fund, where we have to deposit Tk 5,000 out of our monthly salaries. Does it make sense for a newly appointed lecturer in a university, who gets Tk 22,000-30,000 per month in remuneration, to deposit Tk 5,000 each month out of their salaries? What are they left with? How will they cover their living expenses?

In the existing system, the nominee of a university teacher is also eligible for a life-long pension. In the new scheme, if a university teacher passes away at the age of 75, their nominees will not be eligible for pension benefits. They are left with little to nothing. The new scheme will only make teachers and their dependents more financially vulnerable. This cannot be the characteristic of a universal pension scheme, where one group is left off worse to supposedly benefit another group. This is discriminatory, to say the least.

We never wanted things to get this far where we had to stop taking classes. Students are our first and foremost priority. We have been protesting this move ever since the universal pension scheme was announced. We organised teachers from other universities and submitted a compiled, written document of our displeasure with this new scheme to the education ministry. We also prepared an evaluation report comparing the existing scheme to the new one, with the help of expert economists and business school teachers. As the general secretary of the teachers' association, I submitted the report to the ministry on behalf of all my colleagues. There have been no follow-ups on those reports.

When nothing worked, we started with two-hour strikes, eventually moving to half-day and full-day strikes. We did not start protesting all of a sudden, whereas the finance ministry issued the notice for the new pension scheme on March 13 without any consultation with the stakeholders. We only scaled up our protests after we were left with no other options.

We have not held our students hostage in this situation; rather, we have been held hostage by the finance ministry. Our students will take on the roles of teachers in the future. The new scheme will not affect the existing teachers as much as it will affect the future generation of faculty members. So this is a battle we are fighting to protect our successors, our students who will take on our responsibilities in the near future.

Teachers of 35 public universities under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) have been refraining from work since July 1, 2024 protesting their inclusion in the new universal pension scheme. This photo was taken on July 3, 2024. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Universal pension scheme aimed at helping people

Md Golam Mostofa
is a member of the National Pension Authority under the Finance Division.

Firstly, the goal of the universal pension scheme is to bring all the citizens of Bangladesh under its coverage. Currently, government and independent bodies provide pensions, but there is no specific funds allocated for them. Instead, every year, a specific amount is reserved in the budget for paying pension. As the number of employees and related expenses increase, the budget allocation for pension also increases. This is why the government has decided to transition to a funded pension scheme.

With a funded scheme, the government won't need to create a new budget for pension every year. Currently, it operates as an unfunded defined benefit pension system, but it will become a funded contributors' pension system under the new universal pension scheme. This scheme will provide pension to people who previously had none. Additionally, the Prottoy scheme, targeting autonomous government bodies, has been announced. Bangladesh has 403 autonomous government bodies, of which around 90 had a pension system, while 313 did not. The goal is to bring all these organisations under the same pension scheme.

As this will be a funded scheme, the benefits are clear: all citizens can be covered, and it will ensure the sustainability of the pension system. Another reason for the universal pension scheme is to address the demographic changes in Bangladesh. The country is currently experiencing a demographic dividend, but after 2040, the working-age population will start to decrease. The prime minister's vision of a smart Bangladesh by 2041 will not be achievable if a large portion of the population is elderly without a pension support system. Therefore, this scheme shows foresight in protecting the future.

Regarding the current state of the Prottoy scheme, it's important to note that pension systems in many countries undergo reforms as needed. Similarly, Bangladesh is reforming its existing pension system. The government aims to introduce the universal pension scheme with the flexibility to make adjustments, additions or removals as necessary.

When the Prottoy scheme was announced, university teachers had some questions, which the pension authority addressed through the Finance Division and a press briefing. The teachers were still not satisfied. If we could clearly understand which specific parts are still dissatisfying for them after our press briefing, we could work on further addressing these issues. For example, the retirement age is set at 65, and while it cannot be decreased, it can be increased if needed. Many developed countries have raised their retirement age to manage demographic shifts, as seen recently in France where they raised their retirement age by two years. Recently we visited South Korea, and they also plan on increasing it.

When the demographic dividend decreases and the working-age population declines, increasing the retirement age becomes necessary to maintain a sufficient workforce.

So it is clear that just because a pension system has been announced, it doesn't mean that it is going to be the same forever. The reason for the pension system is to help people. Whenever there is a need to reform or change the pension system for the sake of the people, of course necessary changes will be made.

Decisions about teachers made without consulting them

Nasir Uddin Ahmed
is associate professor of english at Jagannath University.

We have been protesting the new universal pension scheme from the very beginning. The strike is a step we are being compelled to take. So far, no officials have spoken to us, nor have there been discussions on how we would proceed to have a dialogue. The teacher's demands thus far have been for a separate pay scale, the creation of an environment for students where necessary skills can be developed, exclusion of teachers from the Prottoy scheme and a separate pension system for them, and assurance that under no circumstances will teachers be deprived of the existing benefits.

The scheme is not "universal" as it does not encompass government officials. My question is, why should teachers be deprived of the existing benefits? We did not ask for this new scheme, so why is this being forced upon us? In the previous scheme, public university teachers would receive a lump sum amount of around Tk 80 lakh after retiring. What a teacher earns while working is spent trying to pay for basic necessities, and hence the amount left at the end of a teacher's career is not significant. Even this amount is not going to be available under the new Prottoy scheme.

There is also a lack of clarity regarding the pension being given at 60, whereas the retirement age for a teacher is 65. This confusion extends to festival bonuses and other such benefits, all of which were mentioned in the previous scheme. Why would the teachers, especially those who are new, willingly agree to a new scheme that is less beneficial for them?

Decisions regarding teachers are being made without any consultation with teachers. All stakeholders must be engaged in a discussion if it has an impact on their lives. If you won't consider teachers of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels as worthy of engaging in a conversation, who will be spoken to regarding a decision that will significantly affect teachers? It displays a blatant disrespect toward teachers from the government.

The government is completely dependent on the bureaucrats who are not qualified to make decisions impacting teachers.Teachers have been speaking of a separate pay scale for so long, with the issue being raised even in 2015-2016, yet no action has been taken in that regard. Not only are they not thinking of teachers, but they are not thinking of students either. What is the government doing to help students gain the necessary skills for employment?

In the realm of politics, there has been a severe issue of nepotism, with relatives of MPs getting appointed to positions of authority in various educational institutions. But it's the qualified people who must be the ones in the position to make decisions.

If you can't take into consideration the fate of the students, then for whom is all this development? How can I allow someone younger joining my profession to be in a worse condition than me? It is completely unacceptable and inhumane. If you destroy the education system by putting teachers at a disadvantage, the intelligent will leave the teaching profession. This will spell trouble for the nation.

Constructing buildings alone is not development. There are lakhs of Benazirs today because the government is unable to control its corrupt officials. Teachers will never want to take actions that harm students. Over the past three months, we have been protesting while keeping students safe. We need to think about the nation and respect teachers. Teachers need to be paid the appropriate amount to have a decent life.

Are students sympathetic to the teachers' protest?

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Returning to the classroom after nearly 18 months in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic was a daunting prospect. The thought of lost time weighed heavily on my mind. Session jams are a common issue at public universities, as everyone says, and seeing my peers at private universities make up for the lost time only added to my worries. The ongoing strike of teachers at 35 public universities demanding exclusion from the contentious Prottoy pension scheme adds to the worries of the students.

The finance ministry announced a pension scheme titled "Prottoy" on March 13 this year. Since then, many peaceful protests have been staged, including the distribution of memoranda, sit-in programmes, human chains, issuance of statements, and gathering signatures from the public. However, a full-scale strike started on July 1. Teachers at public universities across the nation, including Dhaka University (DU), have been abstaining from holding classes and exams in protest against the government's decision to force them to enrol in the Prottoy pension system.

As the teachers push for their demands, it is the students who face the harshest consequences. University classes and departmental offices remain closed, putting their education on hold. The suspension of official activity in the DU administrative building causes disruptions in critical academic support services. The closing of Dhaka University's Central Library deprives students and job seekers of critical study tools. This extended disruption not only postpones the students' schooling and future ambitions, but it also increases stress and worry about their academic and professional prospects.

The ongoing strike has caused tremendous frustration among students, making them increasingly unsympathetic to the teachers' protests, because with classes and departmental offices closed, students are experiencing a significant academic disruption. As students bear the brunt of these effects, their initial understanding of the teachers' demands is being gradually obscured by their immediate struggles, resulting in a growing lack of solidarity.

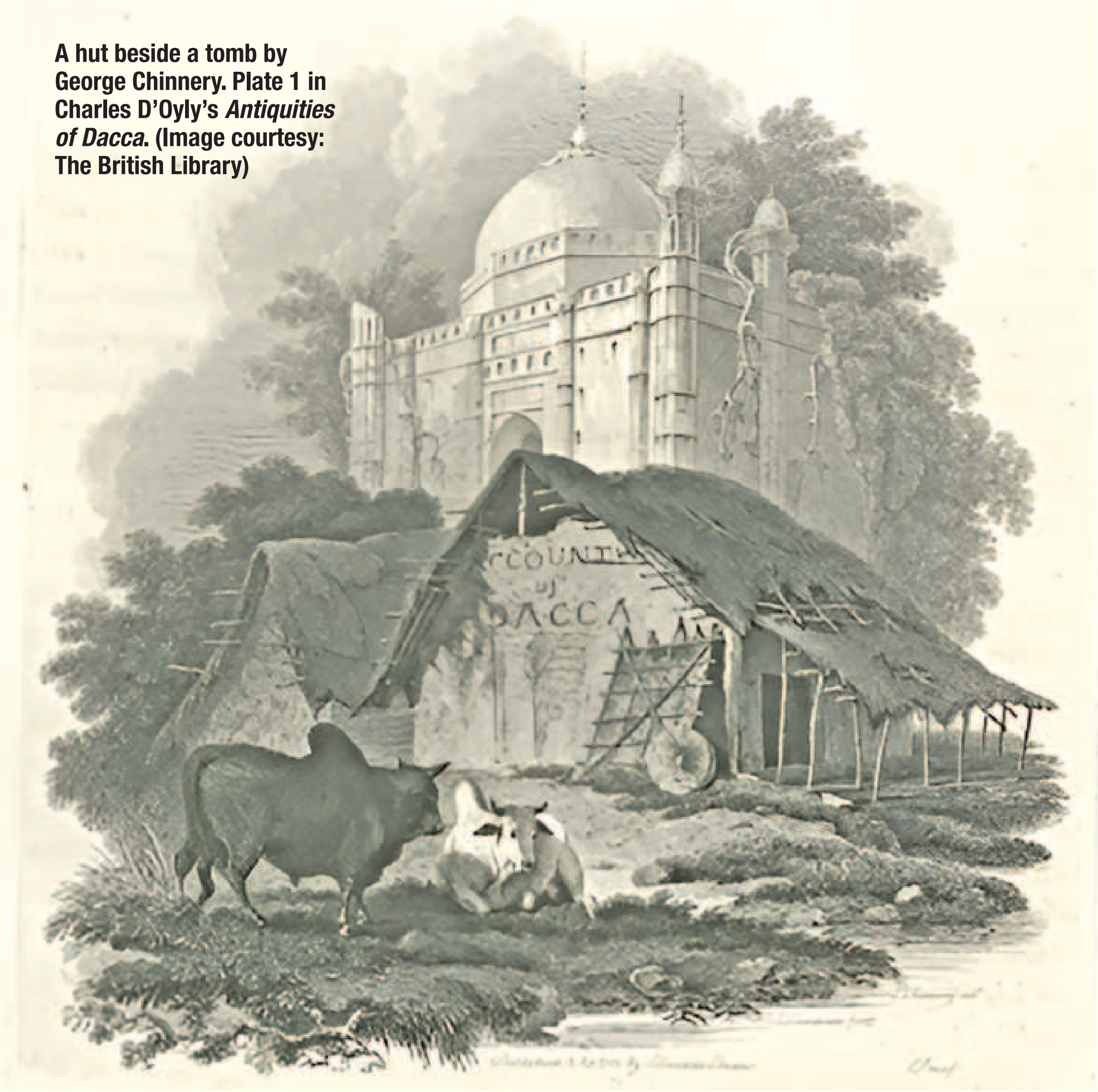
Another reason behind the growing lack of sympathy is the teachers' poor communication with the students about the situation. Without a clear explanation of the reasons behind the strike and its goals, students feel blindsided by the sudden disruption. This lack of transparency makes students feel that the strike has been imposed on them without considering their future, further eroding their sympathy for the teachers' cause. Students, including myself, have been informed about the situation primarily through the media. There has been no direct communication from the respective departments to update students on the current circumstances.

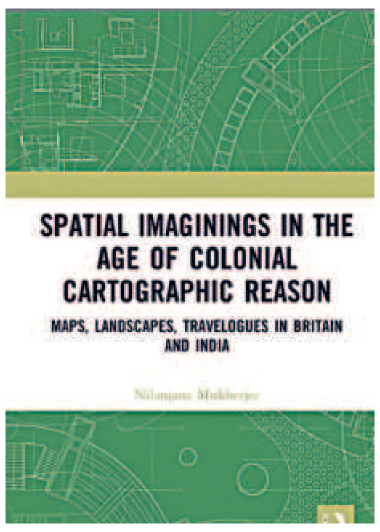
Protests are a big part of our student identity. However, teachers rarely show solidarity with our protests, regardless of their cause or goal. This recurrent lack of support from teachers during student demonstrations undermines students' sympathy for teachers' own protests, such as the current strike demanding exclusion from the universal pension scheme. The observed disparity in cooperation between students and teachers indicates a lack of solidarity in the educational environment.

There are various critical concerns at public universities that require joint efforts from students and teachers, for instance hall seat allotment, quota reformation, etc. Students' issues frequently overlap with those of teachers, showing a shared stake in overcoming institutional shortcomings. However, the prevalent culture frequently encourages a sense of detachment, in which student difficulties are considered only as related to students while teachers' concerns are viewed solely as their own. Genuine empathy and mutual support require both parties to recognise and comprehend each other's contexts and concerns. To solve structural difficulties, we need to transition to a more inclusive conversation and cooperative approach. Public universities can better align their efforts to improve educational settings and promote the welfare of all stakeholders by cultivating a culture of shared responsibility, open communication, and solidarity.

CARTOGRAPHIC IMAGINATION AND COLONIAL LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS in and around Bengal

When the British began their mapping project in India, they were hardly equipped with enough information lying outside their immediate foothold. In fact, mapping was itself a way to gather, assimilate and document knowledge acquired on the ground to triumph over uncertainties. The colonial capital of Calcutta located on the Bengal delta was the only convenient location to begin this operation. Mapping activities began soon after the Battle of Plassey (1757) as the East India Company steadily took control over Bengal and expanded from there. The cartographer appointed to carry on the project was James Rennell (1742-1830), but he was only a hydrographer, who specialised in charting water and waterways. This proficiency was ideal to test out and chart regional connections through rivers tracing the Hooghly upstream.


A hut beside a tomb by George Chinnery. Plate 1 in Charles D'Oyly's *Antiquities of Dacca*. (Image courtesy: The British Library)


SPATIAL IMAGININGS IN THE AGE OF COLONIAL CARTOGRAPHIC REASON

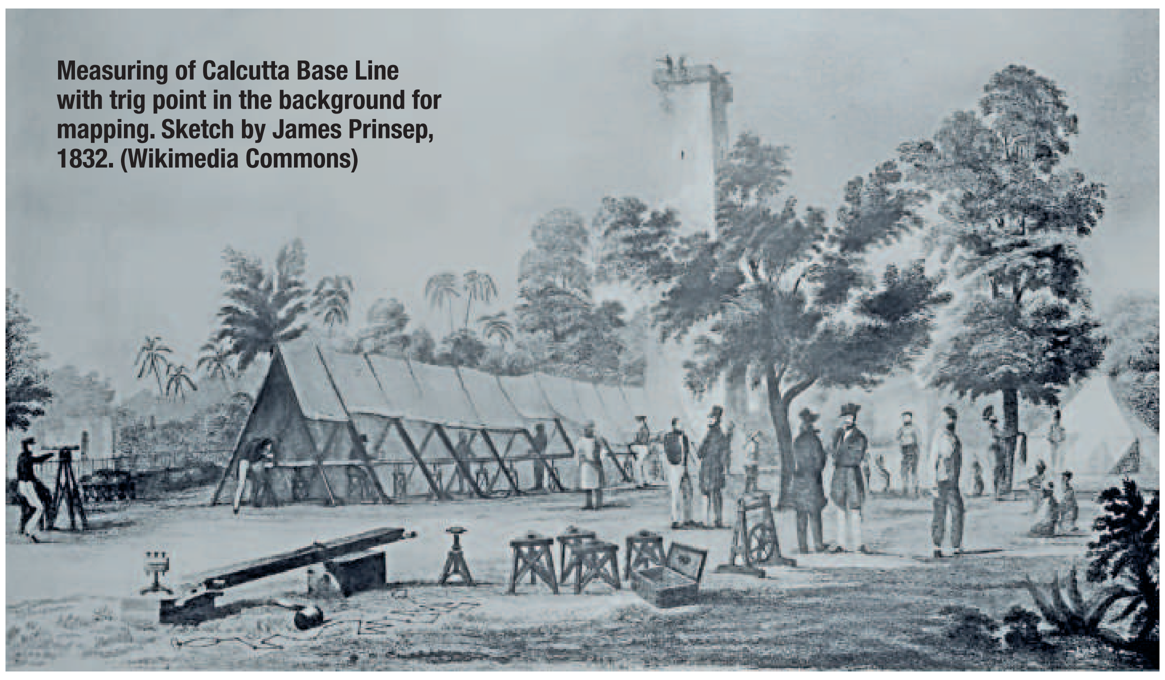
MAPS, LANDSCAPES, TRAVELOGUES IN BRITAIN AND INDIA

Cover of the author's book, published by Routledge in 2021.

NILANJANA MUKHERJEE

Cartography in India might have had its roots in this expansionist ambition but went on to achieve much more than this. Rennell's *Map of Hindostan*, published by an act of Parliament in 1782, inaugurated the cartographic identity of modern India for the first time on the world stage. It geographically integrated the eastern entrepot all the way to the Himalayan hinterlands and the north western Punjab-Sind, reorienting existing land into a fresh geo territorial unit heavily dependent on its eastern delta for overseas commerce. This is not to say that this outlying terrain was unexplored for exactly these reasons. Earlier regimes and powers, both local and foreign, had their stakes all over the Bengal littoral region, making it one of the most coveted and strategic locations in the world for a very long time. However, it was the British East India Company which was responsible for the territorial transformation of the region as the fulcrum of power.

With James Rennell's surveying operations surging outwards across India while being focalized in Calcutta, large parts of India which were thus far outside the scope of the colonial information grid were fast brought under detailed observation. The utility of a panoptic knowledge of routes that was sought from the administrative class was stressed by Rennell in his book, *A Description of the Roads in Bengal and Bahar* (1788). Rennell lists four major centers, Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna, and Dacca: "the first being the seat of government, and the others either the capital military stations, or factories or both." Since the grant of the Dewani to the English East India Company by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II in 1765, the seat of power shifted from Murshidabad to Calcutta, which now needed to be connected with all major stations throughout the region. The British colonial regime, with its growth of mercantile capital, commercial manufacture, and a drive towards the monetization of social relations, transformed the existing circulatory practices. The decline in commerce and attrition of urban centers in the early phase of British colonization of India was therefore generally seen as a breakdown of an earlier circulatory regime. Many of the arguments foregrounding the importance of transport infrastructure, roadways, navigation, and later on the railways in British India, were based on this foresight of bringing products and capital into a disciplined and efficient system of circulation.


Measuring of Calcutta Base Line with trig point in the background for mapping. Sketch by James Prinsep, 1832. (Wikimedia Commons)

The Dacca paintings share a similar format with the Calcutta paintings and capture mofussil life in its plebeian detail. Most depict Mughal architecture then in ruins, hovering atop dense oppressive vegetation taking root in it, exuding a sense of decadence and a passing away of an old order. Also depicted are roads, rivers, and nullahs (streams) fallen into disuse.

Cartographic practices were not limited to academic mapping alone. Pictorial representations flourished in abundance as riverine landscape paintings became a popular medium to portray journeys into the subcontinent. William Hodges and the Daniells were major forerunners in initiating the genre, making landscape paintings popular and lucrative for later European traveling artists to participate. From the late eighteenth century onwards, many amateur artists in the East India Company's service explored innumerable opportunities to record the sights of India. Among the most productive of amateur artists in India was probably Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781-1845). Son of a senior Company official, John Hadley D'Oyly, the Company's Resident to the Nawab Babar 'Ali at Murshidabad, Charles was educated in England from where he returned to India in 1797. He held minor posts in the Company at the beginning of his career but gradually rose to higher and more responsible positions in the service. His first major appointment was as Collector of Dacca from 1808 to 1812. Following this, he returned to Calcutta, first as Deputy Collector and then Collector of Government Customs and Town Duties, a post he held until 1821 when he was appointed Opium Agent in Patna. D'Oyly's specific aesthetics are infused with geographical knowledge. In his movement away from riverine landscapes into the mofussils and hinterlands, his art can be seen as depicting 'spatial stories,' which link together, draw itineraries, and hence organize places as though in a map. Be it his paintings of Calcutta, Dacca, or Gyah or his monumental work titled *Sketches of the New Road in a Journey from Calcutta to Gyah* (1830), a project undertaken on the occasion of the inauguration of a new military road linking the Grand Trunk Road to Calcutta, his drawings contextualise the new colonial circulation evolving from existing routes. His topographic drawings are a kind of spatial practice which narrativise the fresh emergence of space, supplanting the space and network of the ancien regime. D'Oyly's *The Sketches of the New Road* celebrated the initiation of the idea of geographical improvement and mobility as the signpost of British triumph. The areas surveyed by the artist's eye were brought under cartographic surveillance and military order. The *Sketches* simulated an ideal tour through a coherent visual experience. In this series, D'Oyly adopted the European style of the 'prospect,' by then a widely accepted format, for his panoramic views. A bird's eye view of an entire terrain, the style could include with fields, forests, roads and rivers, sometimes towns and cities, travelers on the road, tiny as against the scenic landscape. The road interlaced with semaphore towers, as it were, paved the way to India's modern future.

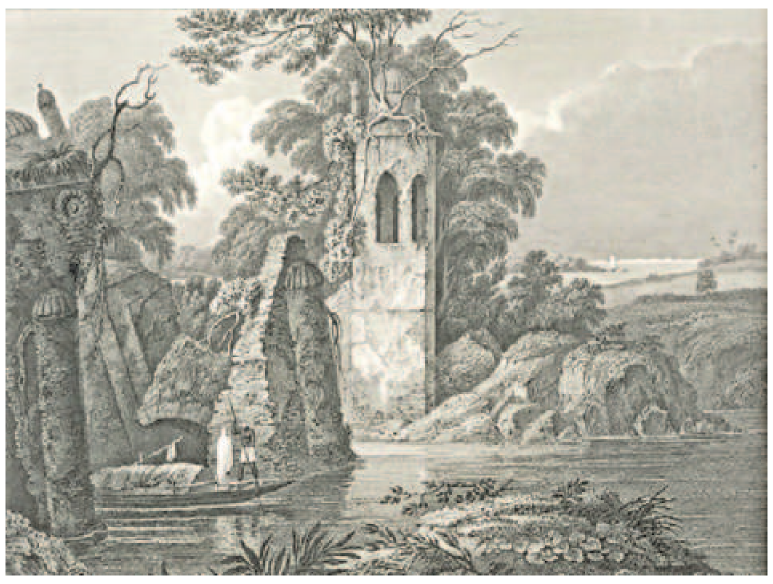
In *Views of Calcutta and its Environs*, D'Oyly ventured away from the banks of the Ganges into the black town in search of local experiences: the streets, bazaars, huts, rituals, fairs, and festivals of the locals. In 1808, when he was appointed Collector of Dacca, he promised Warren Hastings that he would offer "as companions a few of the ruins of the city of Dacca which [...] are exquisite for their magnificence and elegance and are calculated to tempt the pencil of an artist." The result was the drawings for *Antiquities of Dacca* (1830), planned as a joint venture with another professional artist, George Chinnery (1774-1852). His sketches and paintings dealing with Dacca were brought out from 1823 onwards in the form of folios from London. Each of these folios had about four to five sketches or paintings in it together with topical and historical descriptions of them. These brief explanatory notes were submitted by an acclaimed historian, Persian scholar, and artist, Military Surgeon James Atkinson (1780-1852). The roping together of image and accompanying explanatory letterpress was a relatively established convention at the time. D'Oyly granted greater significance to the vernacular and public architecture of an erstwhile important port township. He insisted on replacing the established hierarchical distinction between places, largely through preceding artistic ventures of Hodges and the Daniells, with a more fundamental equivalence. The *Dacca* paintings share a similar format with the Calcutta paintings and capture mofussil life in its plebeian detail. Most depict Mughal architecture then in ruins, hovering atop dense oppressive vegetation taking root in it, exuding a sense of decadence and a passing away of an old order. Also depicted are roads, rivers, and nullahs (streams) fallen into disuse.

D'Oyly starts off by recalling the strategic location of Dacca not only because it had once been the capital of Bengal, which rose to pre-eminence during the time of Aurangzeb, but also because of the presence of other European powers prior to the coming of the British and the East India Company:

> Long before the English settled at Dacca, the Dutch had established a factory there, and transacted their business through native agents; [...] The English factory at Dacca, having been preceded by that which Tavernier terms "a tolerably good one", was rebuilt about a century ago by Mr. Stark, with the permission of Iltizam Khan, [...] previous to which native agents had been employed to purchase cloths, and convey them for sale to Calcutta. It was not till the year 1742 that the French succeeded in getting permission to rebuild a factory here, which is now, as well as that erected by the Dutch, a heap of ruins.

In both his Dacca and Behar paintings, D'Oyly reinforces his identity as an administrative officer in the colonial service by commenting on the state of decay and administrative lapse the regions had suffered in the recent past. *The Antiquities* deal with descriptions and depictions mainly of the architectural past and present, and there is inevitably an attempt to draw comparisons between past elegance and the poverty-stricken present.

> Thus Ducca for more than half a century was the capital of Bengal, and continued to be enriched by the multitudes which crowded to the courts of its governors. The stupendous remains of gateways, roads, bridges, and other public works, which present themselves on every side, sufficiently prove the former grandeur and magnificence of the city.


Paugla Pool by Charles D'Oyly. Part of his *Antiquities of Dacca*. (Image courtesy: The British Library)

While correcting earlier records such as that by the French traveller, Tavernier, D'Oyly takes credit for his own 'discovery', his detailed research and production of original knowledge:

> It would appear from this account by Tavernier, that almost the whole of Dacca at that time consisted of habitations built of mud, straw, wood, matting, and bamboo, such as are constructed by the common people at present. He mentions no public buildings excepting those of the Europeans; although the Great Kuttra, a most magnificent edifice, as well as the Mosque of Syuff Khan, had been erected many years before, and the small Kuttra more recently; but still several years before the celebrated French traveller visited Ducca. These splendid buildings, as well as several others, seem to have eluded the observation, or escaped the memory of Tavernier.

While D'Oyly takes pride in exhibiting his discoveries through his drawings, he does not miss an opportunity to point out existing flaws in the survey of a representative of a rival European power, namely the French. In a move that marked the age, he disentangles what he sees from what is already known. When he mentions the Daniells and their inability to identify the picturesque significance of the location, he simply flaunts his artistic vision to complete an unfinished agenda – to reveal in sight an entire terrain which had been left out for so long.

From Chinnery's drawings, he finally chose only three that contrasted "present poverty with Mohammedan importance, and rusticity with architectural elegance" and explicitly commented on the decline of Dacca. The work ends with a high romanticist note contemplating on the passage of time, the fall of empires, and the vicissitudes of life and human endeavors:

> To the noise of mariners and shipwrights which once resounded along the nulla – to the bustle and pomp of commerce and princely equipage – has succeeded a degree of loneliness and silence. [...] The bridge before us is fast following its predecessors [...] Though now mutilated and mouldering under the effects of time and neglect, and the ruder dilapidations of war, it is still an interesting object to the eye of the landscape painter and poet.

Such comments establish connections between the medieval and the modern, nature and industry, to the detriment of the latter. The ruined mill of an earlier colonizing power proved purposeful in establishing a continuum, granting a timeless quality to the scene and the place. The seemingly romantic statement obliquely refers to the failure and falling apart of the earlier system of mobility and circulation, thereby suggesting the possibility of repair by a stronger force. This idea is reiterated in a number of his paintings in the series, such as in depictions of collapsed bridges such as the 'Paugla pool'. A picturesque scene could be granted a sublime status if it could nobly inspire the artist with elevated thoughts.

Topographic representations framed by philosophical and sentimental utterances reaffirmed the sublime prospect of the place, reflecting that cartographic amassment of geographic space was not wholly incongruous with the aesthetic predilections of the day.

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Shootout voodoo exorcised but concerns remain for England

REUTERS, *Duesseldorf*

England fans woke up on Sunday not quite sure whether to celebrate a remarkably confident shootout performance that sent them into the Euro2024 semifinals or lament another display of caution and inertia by their players and manager.

On the profit side of the ledger was a shootout that should, finally, banish the folk memory of all the penalty pain that preceded it since the first of many defeats by West Germany in the 1990 World Cup semifinals.

Cole Palmer, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, Ivan Toney and Trent Alexander-Arnold all looked as if they would score, and all did so, expertly.

It should not have come as a surprise as Palmer, Toney and Saka are all regular and hugely impressive penalty takers for their clubs, while Bellingham and Alexander-Arnold are among the sweetest strikers of a ball in the game.

With goalkeeper Jordan Pickford going through the full repertoire of "taking control" before saving Manuel Akanji's weak effort, it was an exemplar of how to go about a shootout.

Factoring in a Nations League playoff, also against Switzerland, England have now won three of their last four shootouts under Southgate, having lost six of their seven before that.

England now have a very winnable game against the Netherlands, who have stumbled and scrapped their way into the last four, with the possibility of a third major final appearance and first on foreign soil tantalisingly close.

And yet, behind the singing and dancing, looms the uncomfortable truth that England have got this far largely playing very poorly, certainly in attack.

Their defence has been very good, with every opponent generally kept at long range, but despite boasting an extraordinary array of talent in their ranks, England have been nothing short of boring.

On Saturday, Saka's 80th-minute equaliser was their first shot on target, just as Bellingham's extraordinary equaliser against Slovakia was, in the 95th minute.

The average world ranking of the teams they have beaten -- Serbia, Denmark, Slovenia, Slovakia and Switzerland -- is 35, yet, other than in fleeting patches and moments of individual brilliance, never have now fifth-ranked England looked a dominant team.

They were better on Saturday in terms of probing for openings, but on the few occasions they did get behind the Swiss defence, the quality of cross or final pass was awful.

Southgate had, laughably, said on Friday that his mentality was to "go for it", yet England did anything but. On one occasion late in the game they took a short corner that, three touches later, ended up at the feet of their own goalkeeper.

For all the problems, however, England are still there, while Germany, Italy, Belgium and Portugal et al are not, and that's a scenario the fans would have gobbled up at the start of the tournament, however, it has been achieved.

» England have won just four penalty shootouts in their history but two of them have come against Switzerland, in 2019 in the UEFA Nations League and tonight at Euro 2024.

» England have reached the UEFA Euro semi-finals in consecutive tournaments for the first time.

» Switzerland have now been eliminated in all five of their major tournament quarter-final appearances: the 1934, 1938 and 1954 World Cups, and Euro 2020 and 2024.

» For just the second time in their 10th shootout at a major tournament (World Cup/Euros), England scored every single one of their penalties in the shootout (5/5), also doing so against Spain at Euro 96 (4/4).

Neer wins chess championship with heavy heart

ANISUR RAHMAN

FIDE Master Manon Reja Neer, a 14-year-old chess prodigy, emerged as the undefeated champion in the 48th National Chess Championship yesterday ahead of three Grandmasters, but rather than being on cloud nine, the teenager was going through a whirlwind of emotions, still coming to terms with the sudden demise of his beloved 'Zia sir'.

"I had nearly confirmed my championship win with two rounds in hand and was really happy about it. But now I am shocked and can't find the words to express my emotions after the death of my beloved Zia sir," Neer told The Daily Star yesterday.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, who passed away on Friday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the 12th round match of the championship, had started coaching players in the last few years and Neer was one of his students.

Neer, who left for Sri Lanka yesterday to take part in two tournaments, emulated Zia with his championship win as the latter had also won his first title at 14 in 1988.

"Zia sir was my closest rival in the just-concluded championship, I was ahead by only one point. He probably would have been happy to see me to become champion as I had once trained under him for 11 successive days, travelling from Narayanganj to his Mohammadpur resident," said the ninth-grader, adding that he could never beat GM Zia.

The teenage chess prodigy has become the 16th player to win the national championship. With his triumph, the ninth-grader also emulated GM Zia, who had also won his first championship at the age of 14.

However, the record of the youngest national champion in chess still belongs to GM Niaz Murshed, who won it in 1979 at the age of 13.

Neer surprised everyone by securing 10 points in 13 matches including three draws against three GMs – Niaz, Zia and Enamul Hossain Razib.

Neer feels his performance in the 21st Bangkok Chess Club Open in April, where he secured 6.5 points out of nine helped him to win the championship after three unsuccessful attempts.

"Since I started playing in the national championship, my target was to become champion. I think good performances in Thailand helped me a lot to play better," said Neer, who earned his first International Master norm from the Bangkok Chess Club Open and secured the second IM norm from the just concluding national championship.

Asked about his future plan, Neer said, "My ultimate target is to become world champion which is hard but not impossible. The immediate target is to secure the IM title and then become the country's sixth GM within next two years. For that, I need financial help, sponsorship and training," said Neer who also thanked Bangladesh Cricket Board's media committee chairman Tanvir Ahmed Titu for providing him air tickets to participate in tournaments overseas.

EURO SEMIS	July 10, Wednesday 1:00 am SPAIN VS FRANCE	July 11, Thursday 1:00 am NETHERLANDS VS ENGLAND

'Lion-hearted' Dutch to 'go for it'

REUTERS, *Dortmund*

The Netherlands feel they have an unexpected opportunity to achieve something special at the European Championship after a gritty comeback to beat Turkey on Saturday and advance to the semifinal.

Their 2-1 victory in a tension-filled quarterfinal in Berlin has set up a last-four meeting with England in Dortmund on Wednesday and a chance to move closer to reprise their only major tournament success, at the last Euros that Germany hosted in 1988.

"We are going to play two more games, if all goes well," coach Ronald Koeman -- who played in the 1988 winning side -- said after his men put together a determined showing to overcome a halftime deficit against Turkey.

"Nobody expected this. But our mission is not over yet. If you play a semifinal, you also want to reach the final."

Koeman looked to get ahead of himself, however, when asked which country he would like to face in Sunday's final. "I prefer to play against Spain because we have already played against France in the group stage," the coach said.

Then he checked himself: "We have to beat England first."

Koeman will know better than most what it takes to win the tournament, having been part of the side that won it 36 years ago by beating the Soviet Union in the final in Munich.

But this time his side have not had a convincing road to the semis, with the Dutch only advancing to the knockout stage of the tournament as one of the four lucky losers -- the teams finishing third in their group.

"As the Netherlands, we must be proud of our team. We have sometimes been criticised that other countries play more with their heart, but we have really shown a lion's heart," he insisted.

"We had to go very deep," added captain Virgil van Dijk.

Substitute striker Wout Weghorst agreed. "We are close. This is a unique opportunity. We are going for it."

The 'Uruguayan style' shines

REUTERS

Uruguay's diligence and resilience under pressure after going a man down against Brazil in Saturday's Copa America quarterfinal victory put the team's distinctive character in the spotlight, coach Marcelo Bielsa said.

Uruguay lost Nahitan Nandez to a red card on a VAR review, which reduced their side to 10 men for the final stages of the second half, but they shut shop and defended resolutely to take the match to penalties where they prevailed 4-2.

"Everything that happens, happens in Uruguayan style, because the players are the ones that give their all to the team," Bielsa told reporters.

"It was a match with very little goal opportunities, highly contested, very close, even with very little changes in possession. When we were one man down, we decided to dedicate ourselves to defending in our half.

"So holding on to that result as the Uruguayan team did shows the profile of Uruguayan football. And they were very calm in the penalty shootout that demands not only accuracy but also character."

Bielsa's teams are usually characterised by relentless attacking football and no team has scored more goals in the tournament than Uruguay, who netted nine times in the group stage.

But three straight clean sheets have also helped Uruguay book a semifinal against Colombia and Bielsa was quick to praise his squad's mentality rather than take credit for their defensive record.

"I am a bit more drawn to the offensive than the defensive game, but in a match that was as tight as this one, we created one more opportunity than our opponent and we defended well," Bielsa added.

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July 10, Wednesday, 6:00 am
ARGENTINA VS CANADA

July 11, Thursday, 6:00 am
URUGUAY VS COLOMBIA

Saifuddin paints Bangladesh cricket's sorry picture

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh seamer Mohammad Saifuddin does not always make things easy for himself whenever he speaks to the media.

From re-assuring that he wanted to play as a batter in an edition of the Bangladesh Premier League to complaining about BCB not paying enough attention to him while he was in rehab, Saifuddin has a history of landing in hot water for his statements.

This time, however, he exposed the fragility of Bangladesh cricket's dying pipeline by saying that the country hardly has 20-25 players capable of playing international cricket, meaning that there is a serious drought in the emergence of quality players.

Saifuddin, who trained for the first time in Mirpur yesterday since being left out of Bangladesh's T20 World Cup squad earlier this year, also said that his fitness was key for a return to the national side.

"To be honest, there are 20-25 players in Bangladesh who are capable of playing international cricket; there aren't that many players," Saifuddin told reporters on Sunday.

"Opportunities will come if I can stay fit. If you look at other countries, you'll see that there is way more competition. I think the number of players who are of international standard is very low [in Bangladesh]."

Two major takeaways can be made from what Saifuddin said.

Naturally, the first one is that a current player is convinced about the fact that Bangladesh's pipeline is drying up as evidenced by the lack of quality players coming through the ranks which is why the BCB as well as the team management often resort to players like Soumya Sarker and Afif Hossain – both of whom have done very little in recent times to warrant a place in a Bangladesh squad. BCB, under the leadership of Nazmul Hassan Papon, has always flaunted the idea of having a strong pipeline but its boasting in this regard has, time and again, been deflated when they go to major events and play relatively superior sides. Even the composition of the squads heading to these events portrays the harsh reality of Bangladesh's limited talent and a jeopardised future.

The second is a much more common loop in the country's cricketing scenario which has established a culture of failure. The loop brings forth how a player who gets dropped from the national team can bank on another player to underperform in order to make a return. In most cases, the player who gets dropped has very little urgency to perform his way into the team and can bide his time for someone else to lose his spot to get back in contention.

Saifuddin's case seems to be aligned with the latter as he may feel that the number of quality players in the pool is reasonable enough for him to make a comeback by dishing out average performances. The 27-year-old faltered when he had to compete with Tanzim Hasan Sakib in the Zimbabwe series before the team left for the USA for the T20 World Cup. Despite picking up more wickets than Sakib, he struggled to get his bearings right at the death in the final Zimbabwe T20I and that was enough for the selectors to axe him from the 17-member squad.

In an attempt to talk about a potential return to the national side and the general picture of Bangladesh cricket from his perspective, Saifuddin perhaps blurted out the reality of Bangladesh cricket and the mediocre mentality that a lot of players might harbour.

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Electrocution kills five at Ratha Yatra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

Five people were electrocuted to death and 41 others injured during Ratha Yatra (chariot procession) in Bogura town yesterday afternoon.

The incident happened when the dome of the Ratha came in contact with the overhead electric wire around 5:15pm.

The deceased were Ranjita, 60, of Shahjahanpur upazila, Naresh Mahanta, 40, of Adamdighi upazila, Atoshi Rani, 40, of Sadar upazila, Alok Kumar, 42, of Shibganj upazila, and Joly Rani Saha, 35, of Sariakandi upazila, said police.

Ratha Yatra is one of the major festivals of the Hindu community.

Police and locals said the Ratha Yatra, participated by several thousand devotees, started from a temple in Seujgari area around 5:00pm.

When the procession reached Amtala intersection around 5:15pm, Ratha's dome came in contact with the electric wire. The dome was made of steel, it electrocuted those holding it.

The procession was heading to Satmatha intersection area, said Arup Ratan, who joined the procession, adding that the dome caught fire and smoke was billowing.

"Everyone started shouting and running in panic.

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Devotees take out a procession pulling a chariot carrying the idol of Lord Jagannath in the capital's Dayaganj area. Ratha Yatra is one of the major festivals of the Hindus.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

UP chairman shot dead in broad daylight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

Chairman of Panchgaon Union Parishad, HM Sumon Howlader, was shot dead in broad daylight by a supporter of a president candidate of a school's governing body in Munshiganj's Tongibari upazila yesterday.

Police and eyewitnesses said the management committee polls for Panchgaon Waheed Ali High School was going on from 10:00am yesterday.

Sumon Howlader

Sumon was backing Dewan Moniruzzaman for president. Noor Mohammad, a supporter of another president candidate Milan and also a "friend" of Sumon, got angry with Sumon and a brawl ensued.

At one stage, Noor shot Sumon in the chest around 1:00pm and left the school ground.

Sumon was rushed to the local upazila health complex. He was later sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital but he died on the way.

Munshiganj Superintendent of Police Mohammad Aslam Khan said that they learnt that the assailant was a friend of the victim.

Police arrested three people in this connection.

Voter turnout high in French election

Far right hopes to win, but may fall short of absolute majority

French President Emmanuel Macron casts his ballot at a polling station in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, France yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

REUTERS, *Paris*

French voters turned out in force for the second round of a parliamentary election yesterday that could see the far-right National Rally (RN) emerge as the strongest party, severely denting President Emmanuel Macron's authority.

Turnout stood at 26.3 percent by around noon, up from 18.99 percent during the second round of voting in 2022, the Interior Ministry said. It was the highest midday turnout level since 1981, pollster Harris Interactive and Ipsos said, illustrating strong public interest in an election that has polarised political views.

The latest opinion polls have forecast the RN to win the most seats in the National Assembly, but predicted it may fall short of an absolute majority. A hung parliament would herald a prolonged period of instability and policy deadlock in the euro zone's second-biggest economy.

If the nationalist, eurosceptic RN did secure a majority, it would usher in France's first far-right government since World War Two and send shockwaves

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

4 BNP city units get new convening committees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday formed convening committees for its South and North Dhaka, Chattogram and Barishal city units.

All the previous committees, which were also convening committees, were dissolved recently as part of the party's revamping.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi made the announcement in a press release.

It said that Rafiqul Alam Mojnu has been made the convener of the Dhaka South, while Tanvir Ahmed Robin was appointed as the member secretary.

Saiful Alam Nirob has been selected as the convener of the Dhaka North, with Aminul Haque as the member secretary.

Ershadullah has been appointed as the convener of the Chattogram city and Nazimuddin Rahman its member secretary.

For Barisal city, Moniruzzaman Khan Faruk has been made the convener while Ziauddin Sikder Zia is the member secretary and Afroza Khanom Nasreen the joint convener.

Previously, Mojnu and Tanvir served as member secretary and joint convener of the Dhaka South respectively.

Nirob was earlier the president of BNP's youth wing Jubo Dal, and Aminul was a member secretary of the previous committee of Dhaka South.

Ershadullah earlier served as the vice president of the Chattogram City committee while Nazimur was the president of the district's pro-student body Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

The newly appointed leaders of the four city units have been given three months to form the full committees of their respective units.

GAZA CEASEFIRE PROPOSAL

Hamas waiting for Israeli response

55 more Palestinians killed as Israeli offensive enters 10th month

REUTERS, *Cairo*

- Tanks raid northern areas of Rafah
- Hezbollah unleashes heavy barrage in north Israel
- Gaza death toll now 38,153

Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, officials from the group said yesterday, five days after it accepted a key part of a US plan aimed at ending the offensive in Gaza now in its tenth month.

"We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the two Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be named.

The three-phase plan for the Palestinian enclave was put forward at the end of May by US President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt. It aims to end the offensive and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas.

Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that negotiations would continue this week but has not given any detailed timeline.

US Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns will travel to Qatar this week for negotiations, a source familiar with the matter said.

Meanwhile, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 38,153 people have been killed in the Israeli offensive now in its tenth month. The toll includes at least 55 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

The UN agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, called the situation in Gaza increasingly tragic, saying in a post on X, "families continue to face forced displacement, massive destruction and constant fear. Essential supplies are lacking, the heat is unbearable, diseases are spreading".

Fighting also continued to rage across Gaza yesterday, and north Israel came under rocket attack from Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Air raid sirens sent residents of 24 Israeli towns running for shelter. One

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Dorival takes responsibility after Brazil exit

AGENCIES

Brazil coach Dorival Junior said he takes "full responsibility" for his team's underwhelming Copa America quarterfinal exit after losing to 10-man Uruguay 4-2 in a penalty shootout on Saturday.

"This type of work requires a great amount of patience," said Dorival, who took charge in January, after the defeat at Allegiant Stadium.

"I do have to acknowledge that these weren't the expected results, and I take full responsibility for them, but I do think as well that this team has great room to grow and evolve and improve."

Despite having a one-man advantage after a red

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Brazil players cut forlorn figures following their penalty shootout defeat against Uruguay in a Copa America quarterfinal in Las Vegas on Saturday. The Selecao lost the game 4-2 in tiebreaker following a goalless draw in regulation time.

PHOTO: **INSTAGRAM**

Ruins of 4,000-yr-old temple found in Peru

REUTERS, *Lima*

A team of archaeologists have discovered the ruins of what appears to be a 4,000-year-old ceremonial temple buried in a sand dune of northern Peru, alongside skeletal human remains which may have been offerings for religious rituals.

The ruins were discovered in the sandy desert district of Zana, in the South American country's Lambayeque region, a short stretch from the Pacific Ocean and some 780 km north of the capital Lima.

"We are still waiting for radio-carbon dating to confirm the date, but the evidence suggests this religious construction could be part of a religious tradition of temples built on Peru's northern coast during that period," said Luis Muro, an archaeologist from Peru's Pontifical Catholic University who led the research.

Muro's team found the skeletal remains of three adults between the walls and bases of what was once a multi-storey structure, one of which was accompanied by offerings and possibly wrapped in a kind of linen or clothing, he said.

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Quota protests on; govt looks to SC for a way out

STAR REPORT

For the second consecutive day, students demonstrating against the quota system for government jobs occupied key city intersections, bringing traffic to a halt for hours.

They also blocked rail lines and major highways at places across the country.

The students' "Bangla Blockade" had a cascading effect on traffic on other streets. Thousands were stuck in gridlocks on city streets and thoroughfares for hours on end since 4:00pm.

The protesters, however, decided not to enforce any blockades today. Instead, they would continue their boycott of classes and exams.

"We will coordinate with students across the country tomorrow [today] to launch a tougher demonstration on Wednesday," said Nahid Islam, a Dhaka University student and an organiser of the movement.

"We have not called off the blockade. Instead, we are preparing for a large-scale blockade," he said.

Students of different public universities and colleges and jobseekers have been demonstrating for the last seven days demanding reinstatement of a 2018 circular that abolished the quota system in government jobs.

The Supreme Court on June 4 upheld a High Court verdict that declared the government circular illegal.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin said his office would take the next steps after receiving the full text of the HC verdict.

He said the government's petition against the HC verdict was scheduled to come up before the Appellate Division on Thursday.

He said the students should have patience and avoid public demonstrations since the matter was pending with the Supreme Court. "I don't know why they are carrying out the movement," he said.

Meanwhile, three ministers and two state ministers discussed the students' movement in a closed-door meeting yesterday at the Awami League president's political office in Dhanmondi.

- » People suffer on 2nd day of "Bangla Blockade"
- » Protesters will not enforce blockades today
- » Students to continue boycott of classes, exams
- » Students preparing for "large-scale blockade"
- » Ministers meet to discuss anti-quota protests
- » "Govt sympathetic towards demonstrators"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Students demonstrate blocking the Shahbagh intersection in the capital around 4:30pm yesterday as part of their "Bangla Blockade" programme demanding scrapping of the quota system in government jobs. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'LOAN FRAUD'
ACC seeks info on 14 firms from BB, Islami Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has written to Bangladesh Bank and Islami Bank seeking information on 14 companies, including 11 of Nabil Group, regarding embezzlement of crores of taka from the Shariah-based bank through alleged loan fraud.

The central bank and the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL) have been asked to provide the information within seven

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QUESTION LEAK
Six PSC officials, 11 others arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 17 people, including six officials of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission, have been arrested by the CID for their alleged involvement in leaking questions of government job exams.

Six PSC officials are deputy directors Abu Jafar and Jahangir Alam, Assistant Director Alamgir Kabir, Office Assistant Sajedul Islam, Auditor Priyonath Roy, office staff Khalilur Rahman, and former PSC driver Syed Abed Ali, according to the Criminal Investigation Department.

The other arrestees are Abu Solaiman Md Sohel, former Chhatra League leader and trader; Shahadat Hossain, a security guard of the Narayanganj passport office; Niamun Hasan, medical technician of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, Sakhawat

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Hasina in Beijing on 4-day visit
Will hold talks with Xi Jinping, Li Qiang tomorrow

BSS, *Beijing*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Beijing yesterday on a four-day bilateral visit to China at the invitation of her Chinese counterpart Li Qiang.

A special Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, carrying the prime minister and her entourage members, touched down at Beijing Capital International Airport at 6:00pm (local time).

During her stay in Beijing, Hasina will have a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. She will also hold a delegation-level bilateral meeting with the Chinese prime minster tomorrow.

Bangladesh and China are likely to sign 20 to 22 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) during the premier's visit, said Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1
PHOTO ON PAGE 2

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5 fall from train roof to their deaths

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Five people, including children, were crushed to death under the wheels of a train after falling off its roof in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila yesterday.

The incident occurred around 6:20am in the Ashrafpur area near Methikanda Railway Station in the upazila.

The deceased could not be identified till the filing of this report at 8:15pm.

However, the victims are presumed to be between the ages of 12 and 20, Shahidul Islam, in-charge of Narsingdi Railway Police Station, told The Daily Star.

"They were travelling on the roof of the Dhaka-bound Chattogram Mail train."

Quoting witnesses, he said they were on the roof of the first compartment. All five were seen jostling and fighting over something. "At one point, all of them fell off and were crushed under the wheels of the train."

The bodies were taken to the Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue around 5:00pm.

Shahidul said, "We could not determine the specific ages of the deceased as their bodies have been dismembered. Experts from Dhaka are expected to arrive soon to help us identify them."

Meanwhile, another man was run over by a train in Raipura town around 12:15pm.

Parimal Sutradhar, 70, of the West Kandapara area in Narsingdi town, was run over by the Kalani Express at Srirampur Railgate area.

Dr Mohammad Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, resident medical officer of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, said, "Six bodies were brought to the hospital by railway personnel around 5:00pm. The bodies were dismembered and could not be identified immediately. Once the post-mortems are complete, we will return the bodies back to the railway police."

Shahidul further said, "If the bodies are not identified by tomorrow, they will be buried at the government cemetery."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reaches Beijing Capital International Airport yesterday. Top Chinese officials and the Bangladesh ambassador to China received her at the airport. She is on a four-day official visit to China.

PHOTO: **BSS**

Russian strikes on Ukraine kill 36

Gut Kyiv children's hospital; UN condemns attack

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russia struck cities across Ukraine yesterday with a missile barrage that killed 36 people and heavily damaged a Kyiv children's hospital in an assault condemned as a ruthless attack on civilians.

Dozens of volunteers, doctors and rescue workers were digging through debris of a part of Okhmatdyt paediatric hospital in a desperate search for survivors after the rare day-time bombardment.

First responders ran for cover when sirens and a blast sounded hours after the initial strikes that hit as Ukraine struggles to protect itself from Russian aerial attacks.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russian forces fired more than 40 missiles at least five major civilian hubs mainly in the south and east of the country, as well as Kyiv.

The attack came as Zelensky visited Warsaw before heading to the Nato summit in Washington, where he was expected to appeal for more military support from the country's allies.

The UN harshly condemned wave of deadly Russian strikes across Ukraine, including on Kyiv, saying "dozens of people have been killed and injured".

AFP reporters at the scene of the attacks heard air raid sirens and explosions ring out as the missiles crashed into the capital and debris from downed projectiles rained down over the city.

Natalia Svidler, 40, was in the hospital at the time of the strike with her two-year-old son, who was due to have surgery this week, when the air raid sirens sounded.

"The nurses told us to go down to the basement. After a while we heard a loud rumble and then the ceiling in the basement collapsed a little," she said at the scene.

"Everyone got very scared, of course. Everyone started screaming and running," she told AFP.

City officials said the attack had also damaged several residential buildings and an office block in Kyiv where AFP reporters saw cars on fire and shredded trees in charred courtyards.

Ukrainian energy operator DTEK also said three electrical substations had been destroyed or damaged in the attack, the latest in series of strikes that have halved the country's energy generation capacity in recent months.

Zelensky said that there were an unknown number of people trapped under the rubble of the Okhmatdyt children's hospital and it was not immediately clear how many had been killed.

An AFP reporter saw one body at the scene, covered with an emergency blanket.

Municipal officials said that five people had been pulled from the rubble while at least 10 people had been killed in the barrage that hit Kyiv.

Russian forces have repeatedly targeted the capital with massive barrages since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, and the last major attack on Kyiv with drones and missiles was last month.

FARIDPUR MOB BEATING

UP chairman, member removed from posts

UNB, *Faridpur*

Shah Asaduzzaman and Ajit Kumar Biswas, chairman and member of Dumain union parishad under Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur, have been removed from their posts over allegations of their involvement in the fatal beating of two construction workers accused of torching an idol at a local temple on April 18.

The decision was announced on July 7 in a notification, issued by the Local Government Division under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Purabi Goldar.

On April 18, two construction workers were beaten to death by villagers after being suspected of setting fire to an idol at the Panchpalli Sarbojonin Kali Temple in Panchpalli under Dumain union.

According to the notification, Shah Asaduzzaman and Ajit Kumar Biswas were allegedly involved in the incident, and as such, both officials were suspended as per recommendation from the deputy commissioner of Faridpur.

The notification also directed the Madhukhali upazila nirbahi officer to declare the posts vacant and issue a gazette notification in this regard.

Following the mob beating on April 18, video footage of the incident surfaced on social media, which showed Shah Asaduzzaman participating in the assault. Since then, both the chairman and the member have been in hiding.

Hijra tortured by BSF along Tentulia border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

A 45-year-old Bangladeshi transperson was tortured allegedly by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Banglabandha border in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila early yesterday.

Kiron alias Raju, 45, of Narayanganj Sadar upazila, is currently undergoing treatment at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

According to the victim, 11 people from the hijra community reached Banglabandha border area around 1:00am to illegally enter India with the help of a local broker, whom they each paid Tk 10,000.

Ten of them managed to enter India, but Kiron got caught by BSF members.

Kiron was then beaten by BSF men with sticks and rifle butts before being left near Bangladesh territory around 5:00am.

Later, BGB men rescued and admitted Kiron to Tentulia Upazila Health Complex. Kiron was later transferred to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital for better treatment.

Contacted, Lt Col Ziaul Haque, commanding officer of 18 BGB Battalion, said a letter was sent to the BSF to hold a flag meeting over the incident but they were yet to get a response.

Quota protests on; govt looks to SC for a way out

FROM PAGE 1

AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader; Law Minister Anisul Huq; Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury; and State Minister for Information Mohammad Ali Arafat; State Minister for Education Shamsun Naher along with AL office Secretary Biplab Barua were at the meeting.

Sources said the participants expected a solution to the issue soon. They said the government was sympathetic towards the demonstrators and that it would act sensibly. They were of the opinion that the protesters should not carry out any programme that causes public suffering.

DEMO IN DHAKA

Like the previous day, the protesters blocked Shahbagh, Science Lab, Nilkhet, Technical, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, and Zero Point intersections for at least four hours.

Hundreds of students of Dhaka University gathered in front of the Central Library around 3:30pm and headed for Shahbagh in processions.

Holding placards and chanting slogans, they blocked Shahbagh intersection around 4:00pm.

Other groups of mostly Dhaka University students blocked the Chankharpul intersection near Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover, and Banglamotor and Sonargaon intersections.

Around the same time, students of Dhaka College and Eden Mahila College blocked the Nilkhet and Science Lab intersections.

"We have been left with no other options other than taking to the streets. We will not stop our movement until our demands are met," Rashed Al Hasan, a student of Dhaka College, told The Daily Star.

Defying police obstruction, students of Jagannath University blocked the Zero Point intersection in Gulistan for three hours from 4:00pm.

Around 4:15pm, students from Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked the street near their university in Agargaon.

Some students blocked the Paltan intersection around 5:00pm.

Several hundred students marched towards Farmgate around 5:00pm, halting traffic on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

A huge number of people were seen walking to their destinations.

There, the students ended their blockade for the day around 7:30pm and marched towards Shahbagh.

HIGHWAYS, RAIL LINES

Students blocked rail lines in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar level crossing for nearly an hour from 6:40pm. Besides, rail lines in Mymensingh, Rajshahi, and Chattogram were also blocked for several hours.

They also blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram, Dhaka-Aricha, Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Barishal-Kuakata, and Dinajpur-Dhaka highways.

Cumilla University students blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram highway for four hours from 4:00pm. They staged a sit-in on the highway at Kotbari in Cumilla Sadar.

Students of Chittagong University along with students from various CU-affiliated educational institutions first blocked the road in front of Gate-2 of Sholoshahar and then staged a sit-in in Tigerpass area of Chattogram city.

Hridoy Ahmed Rizvi, a Chhatra League activist at the university, allegedly threatened an organiser of the movement at CU.

Khan Talat Mahmud Rafi, a first-year honours student of Dramatics, alleged that Hridoy called his father in Netrakona on Sunday night and said that there would be dire consequences for Rafi if he did not quit the movement.

Contacted, Hridoy claimed that his phone had been "hacked".

Rail communication between Dhaka and Mymensingh was suspended for two hours from 1:30pm as students of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh rail line for the third consecutive day.

The students set up barricades at Jabbarer Mor, halting the Jamalpur Express on its tracks. Rail communication resumed at 3:10pm, reports UNB.

Hundreds of students from Rajshahi University blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi rail line near the campus for nearly five hours from 11:30am.

WHAT MINISTERS SAID

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government has no decision about the quota system, as the matter is now pending with the Supreme Court.

He said the protesters can place their arguments before the court through lawyers.

"When the High Court was holding hearings on the case filed for keeping the quota system, those who were demonstrating had no lawyers. They did not present their arguments before the High Court.

"Now the case is before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. They can now place arguments before the Appellate Division through lawyers. The Appellate Division will give a fair verdict after hearing their arguments," he said.

Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader said programmes that cause public sufferings should be avoided.

"The court scrapped the circular that abolished the quota system. The government has appealed against that decision. Creating public suffering by blocking roads should be avoided until the court delivers its verdict," Quader said.

Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury said he would not comment on a matter pending with the court.

Hasina in Beijing on 4-day visit

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking at a press conference at the foreign ministry in Dhaka on Sunday, the minister said inauguration of a number of projects will also be announced during the PM's visit to China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Bangladesh in October 2016 when the relationship between the two countries was elevated to a strategic partnership.

The two countries would celebrate the golden jubilee of the diplomatic relations next year.

The Bangladesh premier's visit to China is taking place within 15 days after her tour of India from June 21 to 22.

Jin Liqun, president of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, will pay a courtesy call on Hasina at the meeting room of her place of residence today.

The premier will join a summit on Trade, Business and Investment Opportunities between Bangladesh and China at the China World Summit Wing in Beijing.

In the afternoon, a meeting is scheduled to be held between the prime minister and the president of Consultative Party at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing.

Hasina will also place a wreath at the Monument to the People's Heroes at Tiananmen Square.

In the evening, she will attend a dinner hosted in her honour by the Bangladesh envoy to China at the Bangladesh House in Beijing.

On July 10, a delegation-level bilateral meeting, led by Hasina and Li Qiang, will be held at the Great Hall of the People.

She will later attend a banquet hosted by the Chinese premier at the same venue.

In the afternoon, Hasina will call on Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People.

The Bangladesh premier is scheduled to depart from Beijing Capital International Airport at 11:00am (Beijing time) on July 11 by a special Biman flight.

The flight is scheduled to land at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka, at 2:00pm (Bangladesh time) the same day.

Six PSC officials, 11 others arrested

FROM PAGE 1

Hossain, a trader; Sayem Hossain, Liton Sarker, Sayed Sohanur Rahman Siam, son of Abed, Jahidul Islam, Mamunur Rashid, and Noman Siddiqi.

Touhidul Islam, special superintendent of CID's cyber investigation and operation, told The Daily Star, "We have arrested them after conducting raids in different areas over the last two days."

"The arrestees were involved in leaking questions of the deputy assistant engineer recruitment test of Bangladesh Railway held on July 5. They were also involved in the leak of questions of multiple non-cadre examinations."

"We are interrogating them at the CID office," he said, adding that a case was filed against the arrestees with Paltan Police Station in connection with leaking question papers.

According to sources, Abed Ali, driver of a former PSC chairman, was involved in the question leak. His son Sohanur, a Chhatra League leader, was also involved.

Abed Ali, of Dasar upazila, owns crores of taka.

His son Sohan studied abroad and then at a private university in the country. It is also learnt that Abed has two multi-storey buildings in Dhaka and a luxurious house in Madaripur.

Abed also campaigned seeking candidacy for the post of chairman in the last upazila parishad election.

Earlier, Channel 24 aired an investigative report on the question leak. There have been allegations of question paper leak in various PSC examinations, including for cadre and non-cadre posts, said the report.

According to the report, questions of the test for recruiting 516 people in Bangladesh Railway were leaked.

The report said question papers of 30 cadre and non-cadre examinations, including BCS, were leaked and some PSC officials were involved. The racket has amassed a huge amount of money by selling questions, the report added.

Sources in the CID said arrested PSC Office Assistant Sajedul took the railway recruitment exam question paper from Deputy Director Jafar.

The racket made around Tk 2 crore leaking the question papers.

Sajedul earlier leaked questions of PSC exams and driver Abed abetted him, the sources added.

In another development, Dhaka north city Chhatra League yesterday relieved Abed's son Sohanur, relief and disaster management secretary of the unit, for his alleged involved in leaking questions.

A press release of the unit said Sohanur was removed due to his involvement in anti-organisational and unethical activities.

In another development, the Public Service Commission yesterday said there was no scope for leaking questions of cadre and non-cadre exams held over the last 12 years.

There have been no complaints from any quarters about the exams, said a PSC statement.

The negative report aired by Channel 24 about the exams has tarnished the image of the institution.

The reporter concerned got a copy of a question via WhatsApp an hour before the exam, the statement said, adding that to ensure transparency and prevent question leaks, at least six sets of questions are prepared for each BCS exam and at least four sets for any non-cadre tests.

A lottery is held to determine which set will be used 30 to 35 minutes before a test begins, it said.

"The same procedures were followed for the July 5 recruitment test."

If any person or groups are found to be involved in leaking questions or cheating in this exam, the commission will take action against them following a probe, it added.

ACC seeks info on 14 firms from BB, Islami Bank

FROM PAGE 1

working days after receiving the letters from the graft watchdog.

The letters were sent yesterday.

The Nabil Group companies include Nabil Naba Foods Ltd, Nabil Cold Storage, Nabil Feed Mills Ltd, Nabil Auto Rice Mill, Nabil Auto Flour Mill, Shimul Enterprise, Naba Agro Trade International, Anwara Trade International, Naba Pharma Limited, Nabil Green Crops Limited, and International Product Palace.

The 11 Nabil Group companies maintained accounts with Islami Bank's Gulshan Corporate Branch, New Market branch in Rajshahi and Pabna branch in Pabna.

The ACC also sought information on M/s Murad Enterprise and its affiliates (client of IBBL Chaktai branch in Chattogram), United Super Traders and its affiliates (client of IBBL Jubilee Road branch in Chattogram), and Century Food Products Limited and its affiliates (client of IBBL Khatunganj Corporate branch in Chattogram).

Golam Kibria Chowdhury, owner of United Super Traders, and others have allegedly embezzled crores of taka from Islami Bank.

A three-member ACC committee is investigating the allegations, said the letters.

According to a Bangladesh Bank inspection report, the IBBL in its 1,970th executive committee meeting on June 5, 2022, approved loans of Tk 950 crore for Nabil Grain Crops Ltd to be disbursed from the bank's Gulshan branch.

The company is groupedin the marginal category (new company) as per the Internal Credit Risk Rating System (ICRRS), said the central bank in its observation report.

BB officials said the IBBL should have taken at least Tk 230 crore as collateral money, including Tk 110 crore as deposits, from the company. As ensuring such safeguards is not mandatory for banks under the easy loan conditions, the loans become risky.

The IBBL Rajshahi branch approved Tk 3,100 crore loans to 11 Nabil Group companies, including Tk 700 crore to Nabil Feed Mills Ltd, also in June 2022.

In the meeting minutes, the IBBL claimed that Nabil Feed Mills Ltd and Nabil Grain Crops Ltd are not companies of the same group. However, the central bank suspected that the companies are owned by Nabil Group, according to the BB report.

If this is the case, then the IBBL has exceeded the single borrower exposure limit, which is a violation of The Bank Company Act, said the central bank.

In November 2023, the ACC wrote to the central bank seeking information on this alleged loan fraud.

In January this year, the BB said that the inspection of those institutions was underway and that it would sent the report once the inspection is completed.

The Daily Star could not reach Nabil Group Managing Director Md Aminul Islam for comments yesterday as he did not answer calls and SMS.

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Pubali Bank achieved highest credit rating 'AAA' which indicates the highest credit quality with lowest expectation of credit risk

Court issues travel ban on customs official Enamul

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on Mohammed Enamul Haque, commissioner of Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in Sylhet, in a case filed over acquiring wealth worth Tk 9.76 crore illegally.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after the Anti-Corruption Commission's Deputy Director Farzana Yasmin, also investigation officer of the case, appealed to the court, an official of the anti-graft watchdog told The Daily Star.

On June 4, the court ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all immovable properties

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

BNP not fueling ongoing protests

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has no reason to be involved in the current teachers' and students' movements on university campuses, said the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

He said this in response to Awami League's claim that BNP had been patronising these protests.

"As teachers and students are carrying out these movements independently based on their professional perspectives, why would BNP instigate those agitations?" said Fakhrul.

Fakhrul said his party believes the teachers'

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON**

Hundreds of vehicles remain stuck on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway as anti-quota protestors block the Farmgate ramp. Many had to disembark from their vehicles and start walking. *Inset*, a mother, weary of walking under the sun, rests on the sidewalk with her child on her lap.

Quota protest intensifies, so does public suffering

MD ABBAS

From Shahbagh to Farmgate, with Banglamotor in between, major intersections of Dhaka were paralysed for several hours as protests against quota in government jobs swept through the capital yesterday.

The blockades enforced by students also extended to the Government Science Lab intersection, Chankharpool, areas adjacent to Dhaka University and in front of other educational institutions.

The ripple effect of these blockades created severe congestion at key locations such as Tantibazar, Ray Saheb Bazar, Bangshal, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Shahbagh, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Agargaon, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Mirpur-10, New Market, and Science Lab.

By 6:00pm, the congestion spread to Mohakhali, Banani, Uttara, and other areas. There were long lines of private cars, buses, and CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

The students also blocked the railway at Karawan Bazar level crossing for half an hour.

Many inter-district passengers also had to suffer as the protesters blocked major railways and highways, disconnecting Dhaka from different parts of the country.

The ordeal began at 3:30pm when hundreds of students demanding quota reforms started their "Bangla Blockade" programme from Shahbagh.

They even blocked the Farmgate ramp of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway leaving hundreds of vehicles stuck there.

The sufferings intensified after the office closure as many job holders were forced to walk to their destinations. Some bikers were seen quarrelling with the protesters.

The protestors blocked the railway at Karawan Bazar level crossing around 6:40pm, halting train movements, which they withdrew an hour later.

Vehicular movement resumed in Farmgate, Karawan Bazar and Bangla Motor areas around 7:45pm.

The protesters finally lifted the blockade at Shahbagh around 8:35pm, after almost four hours.

It took Pankaj Malakar, a private job holder, two and a half hours to reach Farmgate from Bailey Road on his bike. "I was stuck multiple times and had to take several detours," he said.

Mushfiq Alam, a private service holder, was seen waiting at Farmgate for public transport. "I have been waiting for 40 minutes but there's no sign of any transport," he said.

Rumana Jannat, a medical technologist, was stuck in a gridlock near Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel for over an hour. She eventually left the bus she was on and started walking.

College students Rafi Ahmed, Sujan Maiti, and Ishtiaq Hossain also expressed their dismay as they were stuck in the Bijoy Sarani area for over 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, the students demonstrating

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

45 died in 1,045 incidents

Says Oikya Parishad report from July 2023 to June 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad has claimed that 45 people were killed in 1,045 incidents of communal violence between July 2023 and June 2024.

The organisation released these findings in its latest report at a press briefing, titled, "Report launching on torture and persecution of religious-ethnic minorities in Bangladesh in the past year," at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

While reading out the written statement, Advocate Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the organisation, said from July 2023 to June 2024, ten people were targeted in attempted killings in various incidents of communal violence, 36 people were threatened with death, and 479 people were physically tortured.

There were 102 incidents of attacks, vandalism, looting, and arson on the houses and businesses of minority communities, he said, adding that there were 47 incidents of encroachment on houses and lands.

Additionally, 45 incidents of grabbing houses and lands, attempted evictions, and threats were reported.

There were also 11 cases of threats or attempts to force people to leave the country, 15 cases of grabbing or attempting to grab the properties

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PROTEST OVER PENSION

Univ teachers vow to continue strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers yesterday vowed to continue their work abstention movement until their demand to reinstate the previous pension scheme is met.

Teachers and staff members boycotted all classes, examinations, and administrative activities to press home their demands.

At Dhaka University, officials and staff members held a protest rally in front of the administrative building after a campus procession. A separate rally in front of the Arts Building was also held.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) and president of the Dhaka University Teachers Association, told the media that they have been in contact with the government, but no formal meeting has been scheduled yet.

"Since our demands were not addressed, we started with a half-day strike, then escalated to a full-day strike. We have now initiated this full-day work abstention movement. We will not return to classes until our demands are fulfilled," he said.

Teachers at other public universities, including Buet, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Ruet, BSMRSTU, and Comilla University, among others, continued the movement to demand the reinstatement of the previous pension system.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Flood situation unchanged in the north

Over 1.60 lakh marooned in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat; 400 families stranded in Rangpur

STAR REPORT

The flood in the north remains unchanged.

In Kurigram, the Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers continue to flow above the danger level, while the water of Teesta and other rivers are rising.

The flood situation also remains unchanged in three unions along the Dharla river shoal in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

The Kurigram District Relief and Rehabilitation Office reports that all nine upazilas of the district have been affected, impacting 1,35,939 people from 40,000 families.

Only 2,395 people have taken shelter in 404 flood shelters.

Local administration has distributed 397 tonnes of rice, Tk 21.85 lakh in cash, and 21,330 packets of dry food to affected individuals.

An additional 1,079 tonnes of rice and Tk 23.5 lakh in cash are reserved for future needs.

In Lalmonirhat, 25,000 people from 7,000 families are affected.

Tk 5 lakh, 100 tonnes of rice, and 500 packets of dry food have been provided as relief.

Water Development Board officials said the Brahmaputra at Chilmari point is flowing 56cm above the danger level, Dudhkumar at Pateshwari 39cm, and Dharla at Bridge Point in Kurigram 32cm above the danger level.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

6,500 hectares of agri land under water

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Farmers have suffered significant losses due to the ongoing flood in Kurigram, as around 6,500 hectares of agricultural land -- including Aman seedbeds and vegetable fields -- have been under water over the past week.

Officials of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said out of the 6,500 hectares, various vegetables were being grown on 2,000 hectares, 500 hectares were used as Aman seedbeds, and 4,000 hectares were used for jute and other crops. While jute cultivation has not suffered much damage yet, there is a concern that prolonged flooding might also impact these crops.

Meanwhile, farmers in the affected areas claimed that the damage was much higher than the DAE estimates.

Surjamal Mia, a farmer of Char Madhya Kadamtala village in Kurigram Sadar, said his three-bigha land where he was growing pepper and pointed gourd (potol) has gone underwater.

He also feared that the jute he is growing in four bighas of land will also be damaged if the flood gets prolonged.

Farmer Nazrul Islam of Kalatipara village in Ulipur upazila said he cultivated pepper on five bighas of land, planning to sell Tk 4 lakh worth of peppers.

"But now the flood has damaged everything. This year's flood has affected farmers the worst," he said.

Sudhir Chandra Das, 70, a farmer of Jorgach village in Chilmari upazila, said his Aman seedbed on 40 decimals of land was completely damaged.

"I'll have to prepare the seedbeds again once the water recedes, but I don't know when that will happen," he added.

Contacted, Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram, said vegetables and Aman seedbeds submerged under the floodwater are completely destroyed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BNP not

FROM PAGE 3

protest against the new universal pension scheme and the students' agitation against the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs are justified.

"We will call a spade a spade and we will talk about what is logical," he said.

The BNP leader also admitted that the united movements of public university teachers and students have inspired the party. "When the people of the country unite in their own interests, it inspires us with great hope," he said.

The BNP leader said even after 50 years of the country's existence, keeping a 56 percent quota in government jobs is entirely illogical because it hinders the development of merit.

6,500 hectares

FROM PAGE 3

DAE staff are still assessing the full extent of the damage at the field level, he added.

However, Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of WDB in Kurigram, said there is no possibility of flood water receding in the next 3-4 days.

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
লালমাটিয়াতে স্বনামধন্য ডেভেলপারের তৈরী দক্ষিণমুখী ২২৩৮ বর্গফুটের রোড ফেসিং ১টি ব্রান্ডনিউ ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হবে। ১৪ তলা বিল্ডিংয়ের ৮ তলায় অবস্থিত।
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Flood situation

FROM PAGE 3

In Lalmonirhat, the Dharla at Shimulbari point is 16cm above the danger level, while the Teesta is 32cm below the danger level at Teesta Barrage's Dalia point.

Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Kurigram, said the flood situation is expected to persist due to water rushing in from upstream India.

Meanwhile, many flood victims said they were yet to receive any government assistance.

Lutfar Rahman, 60, of Char Madhya Kadamtala in Kurigram Sadar, said they have been living amid floodwater since last Tuesday and have not received any government or private relief assistance till yesterday.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Saidul Arif assured that they have enough stock of relief aid and that materials are being distributed through upazila and union parishads.

Meanwhile in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur, villages in Shahidbagh, Tepamadhupur, Balapara, and Haragach unions went under water on Sunday, affecting approximately 400 families, said Ahsan Habib Sarkar, the upazila project implementation officer.

Many residents have moved their children, elderly, and livestock to higher ground.

In Char Dushmara, a government primary school halted classes due to flooding. Additionally, a bamboo bridge over the Manas river, a branch of the Teesta, was washed away by strong current.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center, Teesta was flowing just 0.19cm below the danger level as of 3:00pm yesterday.

Kaunia Upazila Executive Officer Mahidul Haque stated they are closely monitoring the rising water levels and have taken all necessary precautions.

Quota protest

FROM PAGE 3

against quotas in government jobs decided not to hold any blockade programmes today.

However, they would continue to boycott classes and exams, demanding the reinstatement of a 2018 order that abolished quotas.

Nahid Islam, a DU student and one of the organisers of the movement, said, "We will coordinate with students across the country tomorrow (today) to go for a tougher movement on Wednesday."

Deadly Ctg drains get bamboo band-aid

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Ctg*

Bamboo fences, that's all the Chattogram City Corporation could come up with as a temporary solution to the problem of unguarded canals this monsoon, as projects worth crores of taka continue to linger on.

At least 11 people have died and many others were injured after falling into the city's drains and canals since 2017.

The city has a total of 57 canals stretching 161 kilometres, of which 36 are now under a mega project by the Chattogram Development Authority to address the city's waterlogging woes.

Besides, there are a total of 765-km of drains in the city.

According to CCC officials, they have nothing much to do with the canals under the CDA's project.

However, the CCC has recently identified at least 100 vulnerable spots in the remaining 21 canals that are not under the CDA's project.

The list of the spots has been submitted to the CCC's engineering department, said Farhadul Alam, executive engineer of CCC.

In total, the city has a total of 5,527 risky spots in its drains, canals and footpaths, according to a 2021 CCC survey.

"Protecting all the open canals and drains with concrete walls is time consuming, so we will mark the risky spots with bamboo sticks to make people stay cautious," said CCC chief engineer (acting) Shahin-ul-Islam Chowdhury.

Unsurprisingly, residents and experts are less than impressed.

"Marking the vulnerable spots with bamboo sticks is not a proper solution to save lives from unprotected canals and drains during waterlogging," said Subhash Barua, vice-president of Planned Chattogram, a forum of town planners.

"CCC authorities must be accountable for their failure to secure the unprotected drains and canals over the years," he added.

Court issues

FROM PAGE 3

of Enamul, former commissioner of the Commissionerate of Customs Valuation and Internal Audit, in connection with the case.

The properties are: 11 flats in Kakrail, Mohammadpur, and Gulshan areas of the capital, five kathas of land in Gazipur, and eight kathas in Dhaka's Badda.

On July 31 last year, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam in Dhaka filed the case, accusing Enamul of amassing Tk 9.76 crore, which is inconsistent with his income and beyond his known sources of income.

According to the case statement, the accused bought land, flats, and commercial spaces at 64 places for Tk 21.52 crore between 1993 and 2022. He had gold ornaments, savings, and investment in share market, and fish farm worth Tk 58.32 lakh.

Univ teachers

FROM PAGE 3

Prof Habibur Rahman, president of RU Teachers Association, said, "We are being mentally tortured. We seek relief from this ordeal. This movement is not just for the current teachers but for future generations who aspire to join the teaching profession."

Teachers from 35 public universities have been refraining from work since Monday, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension benefits instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme under the Universal Pension System.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)
IUB
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
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The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a federal enterprise with worldwide operations. We support the German Government in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. We are also engaged in international education activities around the globe. Through our work we assist people and societies in shaping their own future and improving living condition.
GIZ has been working as a development partner of Bangladesh since 1972 under bilateral agreement. Currently, we are working in the areas of renewable energy, adaptation to climate change, textile and leather sector, biodiversity, as well as good governance, displacement, and migration.
Energising Development (EnDev) is a global technical assistance programme that has been working in Bangladesh since 2009. EnDev as facilitated access to modern and clean energy solutions for rural households and businesses. In Bangladesh, the programme has supported the provision of clean cooking technology and solar energy solutions. So far, over 1.9 million people have been reached with clean cooking technology and over 1.4 million people with solar energy solutions. Currently EnDev program in Bangladesh focuses on three main areas: development of the market for e-cooking appliances, support for biomass based improved cook stoves, including policy support for the sector, and demonstration of business case for solar battery charging stations for e-rickshaws.
GIZ is looking for a suitable organisation who **intended to work on the promotion and dissemination of the improved biomass cookstoves in among the tribal and indigenous communities of northern flatland regions of Bangladesh, which mainly include Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions.** Following tasks need to be performed under this contract-
- Undertake promotional activities to raise awareness on improved cook stoves (ICS) for tribal communities.
- Strengthen the supply chain for manufacturer/distributor/supplier of improved cook stoves (ICS) in tribal region.
- Facilitate in selling of 3500 improved biomass cookstoves in the identified tribal communities.
- Provide training to 50 women and girls from tribal communities on the sales and maintenance of ICS to generate livelihood opportunity.

Technical Offer
- Technical -methodological concept • Strategy • Work Plan • Process • Personnel assignment plan • Detailed CV of Proposed Expert/Experts

Financial offer (In Separate Envelop)
Interested firms can collect the detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Assessment Grid at the following link: https://enlistment.gizbd.org. Please note, that firms need to register to collect the tender documents.
Interested parties are requesting to attend Prebid meeting which will be held on 15th July 2024 at 10:00 to 12:00 PM, please check pre-bid instruction file for address.
Interested parties with relevant and proven experience shall Submit **Technical and Financial Proposal** by **23rd July 2024** in separate sealed envelopes. The envelopes shall be addressed to **"Contracts, Procurement & IT Unit"** denoted with remark **"83468610- Service Contract for Promotion and dissemination of improved cook stoves in tribal communities and training of women and girls on improved cook stoves for livelihood opportunities."**
GIZ reserves the right to accept or reject offers in part or full without assigning any reason whatsoever.

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Progoti Foundation for Education and Development
Permanent Sanad Holder
TENDER INVITATION
Tender is invited from the bonafide/intending suppliers/firms for the following items:
1. **Procurement of 20 pcs Multiple Output DC Power Supply or equivalent Trainer Board for Electrical Circuit and Electronics Lab, Department of EEE**
2. **Procurement of 50 different types of Test Materials and Apparatus for Strength Materials Lab, Environmental Engineering Lab, Geotechnical Engineering Lab, Transportation Lab, Fluid Mechanics Lab, Surveying Lab and Engineering Materials Lab, Department of Civil Engineering**

The schedule of the items with terms and conditions can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (1st floor) of the University until **28.07.2024** during office hours (until 03:00 p.m.) on working days. The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is Tk.500/- (Taka Five Hundred) only.
The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender schedule **by 29.07.2024 within 02:00 P.M.** The tender (hard copy) must be dropped in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University. The tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be opened on **the same day (29.07.2024) at 02:30 P.M.** in the conference room (4th floor) of East West University in the presence of the representatives of the bidders.
The bidders must mention the **"name of the item"** at the top of envelope. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.
East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.
Chief of HR & Logistics

Renovation delay

FROM PAGE 5

Mehedi Hasan, an official of Max Infrastructure Limited, claimed that they could not complete the work within the deadline despite having adequate logistical capacity as BR could not pay them money in due time.

Contacted, Zishan Dutta, bridge engineer of the BR (eastern zone), admitted that BR failed to pay the contractor due to a fund crisis.

"However, the renovation work is now progressing fast. About 80 percent of the work has been completed and the bridge is expected to open to the public by July this year," he added.

FERRY SERVICE: FROM CONVENIENCE TO DEATH TRAP

Although the ferry service was launched to mitigate the suffering of people due to the bridge's closure, it has instead turned into a death trap for commuters.

Accidents on the ferry so far have claimed two lives. Besides, lax monitoring, insufficient ferries, and illegal boat movement on the river using the ghat have heightened the risk.

Ashraf Uddin, a director of Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board, was killed when a boat hit a ferry while crossing the river last week, while Fatema Tuz Johora, a college student, died while getting into an auto-rickshaw at the ferry ghat on April 29.

"The boats recklessly ply the river using the ferry ghat," said Kanak Das, a resident of Boalkhali upazila.

Asked how boats are illegally using RHD's ghat, Moslem Uddin, executive engineer of RHD in Chattogram, said they have already taken measures to stop the illegal boat movement.

Constructed as a metre-gauge single-line rail bridge in 1931, the Kalurghat Bridge was later reconfigured in 1962 to allow vehicular movement too.

However, BR has long been working to replace Kalurghat Bridge.

A proposal to construct a new rail and road bridge has already been approved. The Korean Exim Bank will fund its construction.

45 died in 1,045

FROM PAGE 3

of deities, temples, and churches, seven cases of grabbing or attempting to grab cremation grounds, 94 incidents of attacks, vandalism, looting, and arson, and 40 cases of vandalism and attempted destruction of idols.

There were also 12 cases of kidnapping, disappearance, and forced conversion, while eight people were arrested on fictitious charges of defamation of religion, he added.

In the last year, 32 incidents of communal violence took place during the national elections and five during local government elections, he said, citing the report.

"This statistic is only a mere part of the communal violence," he said, adding that a comparative review of communal violence over the past years shows that the incidents of violence have not changed much even today.

"In such a prevailing communal situation, it is noticeable that during the election period of 1970, the minority population decreased from 19 percent to 8.6 percent now," Dasgupta said.

The environment for the free practice of religion has been completely curtailed, he added.

"The communal evil forces, which are hiding in the administrative and political fields, did not allow the religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous people of this country to ensure their land rights," he observed.

"The religious minority groups are still in fear. Their fate has not changed. They have no security for their lives," he said.

He alleged that the Awami League government has not implemented its commitments towards minorities pledged in their previous election manifesto, including the formation of a National Minority Commission.

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN
PROGRAMME ASSISTANT/
FINANCIAL ASSISTANT
The Embassy of Sweden is seeking a candidate for the position as Programme Assistant / Financial Assistant. The position forms part of the Development Cooperation Section and reports to the Head of Development Cooperation Section. The Programme Assistant / Financial Assistant also assists the Administrative Section with financial tasks. The Embassy has a staff of close to 40 persons. The duties of the Embassy involve working to implement bilateral development cooperation with Bangladesh, promoting political relations and trade between both countries and providing consular, visa and other migration services. For more information about the Swedish Embassy, please visit: https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/bangladesh-dhaka/
Qualification and Professional Experience
- Relevant academic background.
- Minimum 3 years of experience in similar roles in international organizations, Embassies, large non-governmental organizations, or private sector.
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Skills and Competencies
- Fluent written and spoken English and proficient in Bangla.
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Take advantage of this career opportunity and apply with a motivation letter (not more than 400 words), your resume and three professional references from former managers to
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Receipt of application will not be acknowledged. Only those that will be invited for an interview will be contacted.
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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ
ফোনঃ ০২-৬৬৮৫৩৭৭/ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬৬৮১২৭১
ইমেইলঃ eegopal@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নংঃ ৩৫.০১.৩৫০০.৪২৮.০৭.০০২.২৪-১৭৬৭ তারিখঃ ০৪/০৭/২০২৪

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালনা (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে প্রতিক্ষেত্রে ৫০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ) লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ (CPTU) কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ কার্যালয় হতে আগামী ০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৬/০৮/২০২৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা মানি রশিদের মাধ্যমে পরিশোধকরতঃ আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ১১/০৮/২০২৪ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:০০টার মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণপূর্বক এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহবান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

উল্লেখ্য যে, ইতোপূর্বে অত্র দপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরে লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি বাবদ ২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) টাকা +১৫% ভ্যাট সহ বিনা জরিমানায় আগামী ৩১/০৭/২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা প্রদানপূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। ব্যর্থতায় কোন ওজর-আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

4.7.24
মোঃ আজহারুল ইসলাম
পরিচিতি নংঃ ৬০২৩০৬
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (চ.দা.), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, গোপালগঞ্জ
GD- 23

BCL man 'threatens' CU quota protest leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

An organiser of the ongoing anti-quota protests at Chittagong University received a death threat from an alleged member of CU unit of Chhatra League.

Khan Talat Mahmud Rafi, a student of the dramatics department and a resident of Alaol dormitory, claimed that his father, Tariqul Islam Khan, who resides in Netrakona, received a phone call on Sunday night. An unknown person said if Rafi did not back down from the protest, he will face dire consequences, he alleged.

The call came from a phone number used by Hridoy Ahmed Rizvi, a student of the same department and a BCL activist, he added.

Rizvi is associated with the shuttle train-based BCL faction "CFC group", said university sources.

"I told my father to lodge a general diary with the police station in Netrakona," Rafi said.

Asked, Rizvi said his cell phone got "hacked" recently.

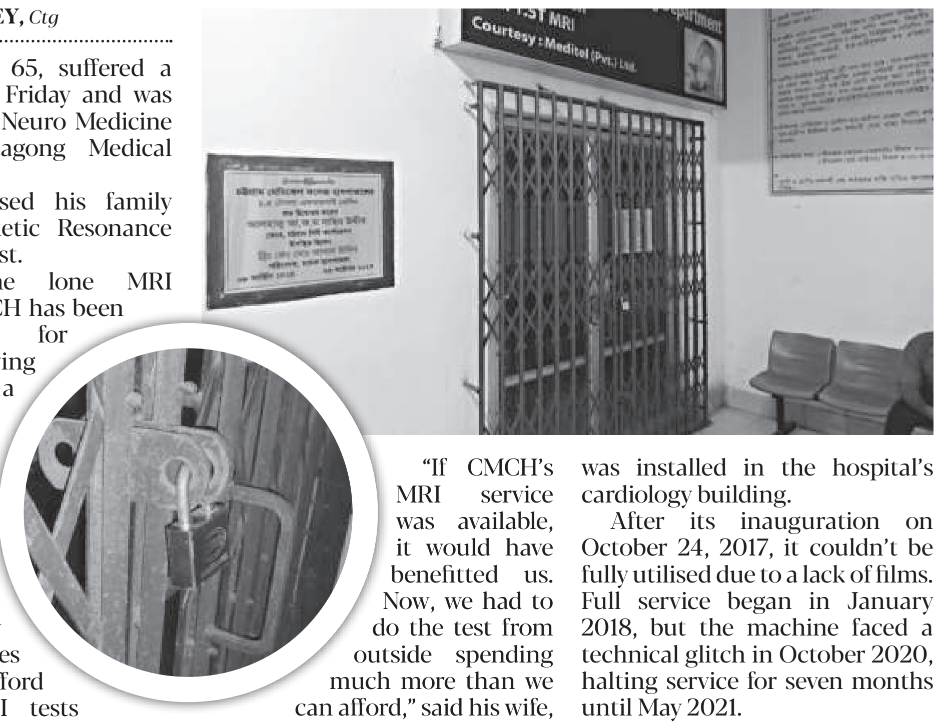
"I don't know who called his family. My phone was shut down due to a technical issue for nearly 24 hours. After learning about the incident, I informed my political seniors to take steps in this regard. Apart from that, I will inform the proctor's office to investigate the incident," said Rizvi.

CHITTAGONG MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

MRI machine non-functional for 2yrs

Patients bearing extra cost to do tests from outside

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Ctg*



Jahangir Alam, 65, suffered a brain stroke on Friday and was admitted to the Neuro Medicine Ward of Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Doctors advised his family to get a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) test.

However, the lone MRI machine at CMCH has been non-functional for two years, leaving the family in a dilemma about how to afford the expensive test elsewhere.

Many poor patients like Jahangir come to CMCH for treatment, only to find themselves unable to afford the costly MRI tests at private diagnostic centres, which range from Tk 9,000 to Tk 20,000.

Before the machine broke down on May 16, 2022, CMCH provided MRI services for Tk 3,000-5,000.

"I am retired and spent most of my savings on my daughters' marriages while another daughter is still studying. I am struggling to collect money for this expensive test," said Jahangir from his hospital bed.

Md Nasir, 32, a vegetable vendor from Fatikchhari upazila in Chattogram, faced a similar ordeal after suffering a spinal cord injury.

"If CMCH's MRI service was available, it would have benefitted us. Now, we had to do the test from outside spending much more than we can afford," said his wife, Mamtaz Akter.

"MRI is a modern diagnostic test that takes very clear images of internal organs to detect specific diseases or abnormalities," explained Pradip Kumar Kayasthagir, a professor at CMCH's Neuro Medicine Ward.

He said around 120 patients are admitted to his ward daily, and at least 10 percent need an MRI.

HOW THINGS UNFOLDED

The health ministry allocated a Tk 9.84 crore new MRI machine of the Japanese Hitachi brand to CMCH in 2017 after the old one failed in 2014, according to Dr. Rajib Palit, CMCH's deputy director. The machine was installed in the hospital's cardiology building.

After its inauguration on October 24, 2017, it couldn't be fully utilised due to a lack of films. Full service began in January 2018, but the machine faced a technical glitch in October 2020, halting service for seven months until May 2021.

The machine kept having glitches until it finally stopped working on May 16, 2022.

"There is no post of biomedical engineer at the hospital, so medical equipment are not being properly maintained," said Dr Subas Majumder, head of CMCH's radiology and imaging department.

CMCH PAYING FOR HIS OWN DECISION

Since the machine's warranty expired in August 2020, it will now take Tk 7 crore to repair it.

CMCH could have repaired it for Tk 1 crore with a maintenance contract with the supplier company, but the hospital only wanted to pay Tk 65 lakh, according to sources.

"I have informed the health ministry about our requirements, including the need for an MRI machine. We need Tk 7 crore to repair the existing one and Tk 17 crore to buy a new machine," said CMCH director Brig Gen. Shamim Ahsan.

Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen in a recent visit to CMCH said, "I feel bad knowing that the MRI machine in the hospital is out of order. Chattogram is the second largest city after Dhaka. I will do whatever is necessary to fix the problem."

EMPHASIS ON FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

At least 20 MRI tests were performed daily when the machine was operational between 2018 and 2020. With each test costing a minimum of Tk 3,000, CMCH could collect at least Tk 60,000 daily, amounting to Tk 5,18,40,000 over three years.

"We deposit all the money realised from patients' diagnostic tests to the government fund," said the CMCH director.

Dr Faisal Iqbal Chowdhury, general secretary of the Bangladesh Medical Association's Chattogram chapter, said government-run hospitals need financial autonomy to get urgent repairs done.

The current system requires hospital directors to request funds from the health ministry even for minor emergencies, leading to unnecessary delays in providing essential services, he added.

Fun trip to Cox's Bazar ends in tragedy

2 teens killed in bike crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

What started as a joyful trip by six teenage friends to Cox's Bazar ended in a tragedy as one of their motorcycles was hit by a truck on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway early yesterday morning, killing two of the friends.

Md Emon, 17, son of Md Yusuf, and Ariful Islam, 17, son of Abdur Rob, died in the accident that occurred at the Dohazari-Dewanhat intersection around 4:00am yesterday, said OC Khan Mohammad Erfan of Dohazari Highway Police Station.

Both were residents of Noakhali district and 10th-graders at a school in Maijdee.

The six friends, on three motorcycles, were returning home from their trip to the seaside town when the truck, coming from the opposite direction, hit the motorcycle that Ariful and Yusuf were riding.

Locals rushed them to Chandanaish Upazila Health Complex where Emon was declared dead.

Ariful died at CMCH.

Ahsan Ullah, maternal uncle of Ariful, said the six friends had travelled to Cox's Bazar on Friday, but they told their families that they were going by bus.

When asked how a 17-year-old could own a motorcycle, he said Ariful, being the youngest child, was favoured by his parents and they may have bought him the motorbike after repeated requests.

DENGUE

One dies, 63 get hospitalised in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more dengue patient died and 63 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

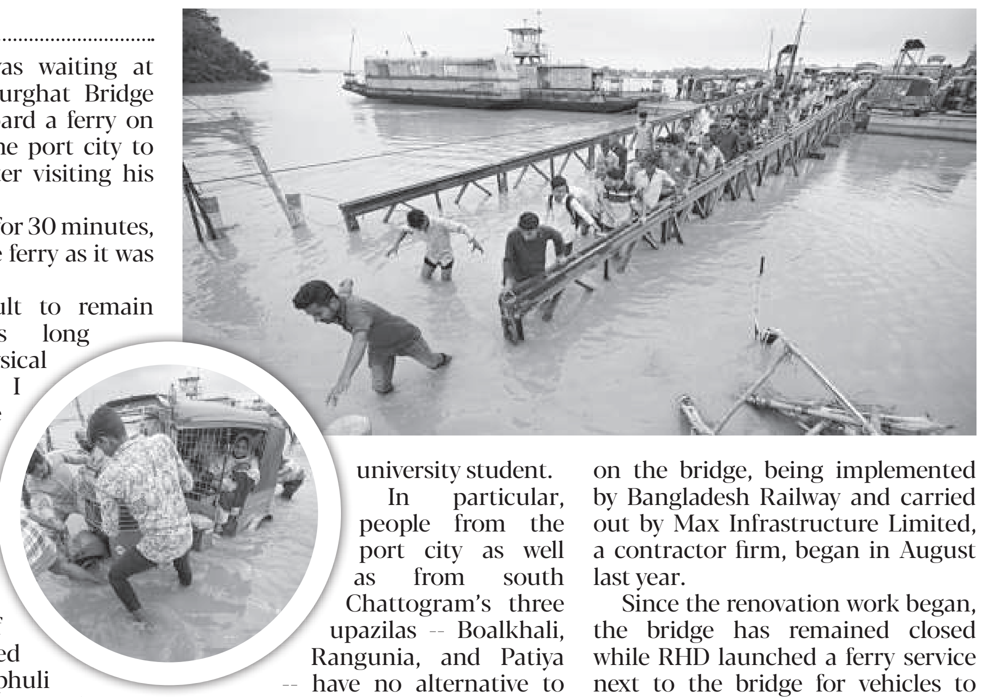
With the new death, the total number of deaths rose to 47 while the total number of cases reached 4,041.

Some 266 dengue patients are receiving treatment in different hospitals. Of them, 138 are from outside Dhaka.

KALURGHAT BRIDGE IN CHATTOGRAM

Renovation delay prolongs suffering

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*



Abdul Malek, 52, was waiting at the ghat beside Kalurghat Bridge in Chattogram to board a ferry on his way back from the port city to Boalkhali upazila after visiting his doctor on Thursday.

Even after waiting for 30 minutes, he failed to board the ferry as it was packed.

"It is very difficult to remain standing for this long with multiple physical complications that I have. If the bridge had been opened to traffic, it would have saved us from a lot of miseries," he told this correspondent.

Like Malek, thousands of commuters who need to cross the Karnaphuli river are suffering immensely every day to board the ferry due to the delay in renovation work of the 93-year-old Kalurghat Bridge.

"The delay in the bridge's renovation work has prolonged our sufferings," said Jalal Uddin, a university student.

In particular, people from the port city as well as from south Chattogram's three upazilas -- Boalkhali, Rangunia, and Patiya -- have no alternative to crossing the river without using the bridge.

According to the Roads and Highways Department, around 22,000-25,000 commuters cross the bridge on every working day.

The Tk 43 crore renovation work on the bridge, being implemented by Bangladesh Railway and carried out by Max Infrastructure Limited, a contractor firm, began in August last year.

Since the renovation work began, the bridge has remained closed while RHD launched a ferry service next to the bridge for vehicles to cross the river.

The work was supposed to be completed by October 31, 2023.

Locals blame the negligence of both BR and the contractor firm for the delay in renovation work.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Youth stabbed to death in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A young man was stabbed to death allegedly by his friend in Pakhir Goli area of the port city on Sunday night.

The deceased is Md Mona, 25, said police.

Mona got into an altercation with his friend Jewel and some of Jewel's accomplices, and at one stage, they stabbed him, said SM Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Locals took him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the doctor declared him dead. Police are conducting drives to arrest the criminals, he said.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 9

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

16 grenades found in Gazipur construction site

STAR REPORT

Police evacuated and sealed off a privately owned land in Gazipur city yesterday after the construction workers dug up 16 grenades at the property.

The bomb disposal unit from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) visited the spot and defused the grenades around 2:30pm, said Syed Rafiul Karim, officer-in-charge of Gazipur Metropolitan Police Station.

While digging up the northern end of the land in the city's South Chhayabeethi area, workers came across those buried in the ground in an urn around 9:00am, said the OC quoting locals.

On information, police sealed off the spot, the OC said.

Abul Kashem of the district's Kapasia upazila had bought and fenced the land in the city's South Chhayabeethi area years ago. He recently decided to build a house there and appointed workers, according to locals.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, the chief of the bomb disposal unit, told The Daily Star, "We have recovered around 16 live military-grade grenades from the spot. All of those were disposed of successfully with adequate precaution and proper procedures."

It took around three hours to dispose of all the grenades, said Rahmat, also the deputy commissioner of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of DMP.

"We assume the grenades were hidden under the soil during the Liberation War or later," he added.

EDCL

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩৯৫-৩৯৭ তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা,
ঢাকা-১২০৮।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মুজিব শতবর্ষ MUJIB 100

ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমটি প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসার সাহিত জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করছে :-

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	বিবরণ	পরিমান
০১।	ইডিসিএল/ ক্রয়/স্থানীয়/দরপত্র/২০২৪/২৬৫ তারিখঃ ৮/০৭/২০২৪ইং	Calcium Lactate Pentahydrate BP (European Source) (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	৫,০০০.০ কেজি

সিকিউরিটি/ আর্নেষ্ট মানি	দরপত্র শিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরৎযোগ্য)	দরপত্র গ্রহনের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
২.৫%	টাকা ১,২৫০.০০ প্রতি সেট	২৩/০৭/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকা	২৩/০৭/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১২-১৫ ঘটিকা

সকল কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকলিন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্য্যালয় হইতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করা যাইবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, যাহাদের ভ্যাট রেজিষ্ট্রেশন নাই তাহাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।
দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র শিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হইবে না।

মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক, প্রকিউরমেন্ট
পক্ষেঃ ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক।

(৪.৫ ইঞ্চি ৪ কলাম)

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Zone-02, Dhaka.

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

আমাদের ঢাকা
আমাদের ঐতিহ্য

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.02.128.2024
Dated: 07/07/2024

Corrigendum-2

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Previous Last Selling date and Time	Previous Tender Closing Date & Time	Revised Last Selling date and Time	Revised Tender Closing date & Time
01	Tender ID. 993288	Repairing Works of Road Cutting by different organization of ward no 6 and 8 under zone-2 (Group-kha), DSCC. FY 2024/2025	07-Jul-2024 11:15	07-Jul-2024 12:30	11-Jul-2024 13:15	11-Jul-2024 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Signed/
(Md. Harunur Rashid)
Zone-2 (Khilgoan)
Dhaka South City Corporation

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৩/২০২৪-২০২৫

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Six months in review
BEST OF DHALLYWOOD

During Eid-ul-Azha, five films were released. The standout was Shakib Khan starrer 'Toofan', directed by Raihan Rafi, which was both commercially successful and well-received by audiences.

ZAHID AKBAR

In the first six months of this year, around 30 films have been released in the country, with only a few achieving notable commercial successes. However, several movies and songs have generated significant buzz in the entertainment industry and among audiences.

Early releases: A slow start

From January to March, a few films, including ***Shesh Bazi, Rukhe Darao, Chhaya Brikkho, Kagojer Bou,*** and ***Peyarar Subash***, were released, but none made a significant impact commercially or critically. The situation changed with the arrival of April.

Eid-ul-Fitr releases

The festival of Eid has always been an opportune time for film releases due to higher audience turnout. Eleven films were released during Eid-ul-Fitr. Leading the charge was Himel Ashraf's ***Rajkumar***, starring Shakib Khan. Although it had an extended run in multiplexes, it fell short commercially compared to last year's blockbuster ***Priyotoma***.

Among other notable releases, Mishuk Moni's ***Deyaler Desh***, starring Sariful Razz and Shobnom Bubly, received praise for Bubly's performance. Mostafa Kamal Raz's ***Omar***, featuring Razz as its lead, also garnered attention and was released internationally.

Gias Uddin Selim's much-anticipated ***Kajol Rekha***, featuring Sariful Razz and Mondera Chakroborty, sparked discussions among critics and audiences but did not perform well at the box office. The simultaneous release of three films featuring Razz failed to engage as many viewers as anticipated. Additionally, ***Mona: Jinn-2*** had a modest run in multiplexes.

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Post-Eid-ul-Fitr releases

After winning awards at various international film festivals, including Iran's prestigious Fajr Film Festival, ***Fatima***, featuring Tasnia Farin in her first Bangladeshi silver screen project, generated buzz but failed commercially.

Eid-ul-Azha releases

During Eid-ul-Azha, five films were released. The standout was Shakib Khan starrer ***Toofan***, directed by Raihan Rafi, which was both commercially successful and well-received by audiences. According to the production house Alpha-i, ***Toofan*** set a record for the highest number of shows at Star Cineplex and was released internationally, winning the hearts of viewers.

Chart-topping songs

Despite numerous releases, few songs gained widespread attention. However, songs from Shakib Khan's films stood out. The duet ***O Rajkumar*** from ***Rajkumar***, sung by Somnur Monir Konal and Balam, became a crowd favourite. Prince Mahmud's ***Borbaad***, sung by Alif, from the same film was also well-received. The duet ***Ninduke*** from ***Lipstick***, sung by Nancy and Imran, and Mithun Chakra's ***Bisorjoner Betha*** from ***Deyaler Desh*** were popular among listeners.

The biggest hit of the first half of this year is perhaps the song ***Laage Ura Dhura*** from ***Toofan***. A duet by Pritom Hasan and Debosrie Antara, it gained significant popularity across all audience segments, bringing emerging musician Antara into the limelight. The song ***Dushtu Kokil*** by Dilshad Nahar Kona from the same film is currently trending and well-received by listeners.

Although the beginning of the year didn't quite start on a high note for Dhallywood, it picked up its pace during Eid as audiences flocked to theatres to watch their favourite stars. Anticipation mounts high for the remaining six months of the year, hoping to prove fruitful for the industry.

Rituparna Sengupta to star in Bangladeshi film

Indian actress Rituparna Sengupta is set to collaborate with Rashid Polash on his latest directorial film ***Tari***.

The director informed The Daily Star that the actress has given her initial confirmation over the phone. "We will officially sign the agreement with the actress soon," Polash said.

He also mentioned that some parts of the film have already been shot in Rajshahi. They plan to complete the remaining scenes in September when Rituparna arrives in Dhaka. In the movie, Rituparna will play the role of an extra artiste.

The story of ***Tari*** is written by Ahadur Rahman, with the screenplay and dialogues by Golam Rabbani. The director plans to release the film this year under the Punya Films banner.

'Despicable Me 4' tops box office on opening weekend

Animated comedy ***Despicable Me 4*** soared to the top of the North American box office during its opening weekend, according to figures from industry tracker Exhibitor Relations released Sunday.

The fourth main instalment in the ***Minions*** franchise, featuring Will Ferrell as the voice of a new villain, garnered USD 75 million in ticket sales in the United States and Canada since its release on Friday by Universal Pictures.

This is an exceptional opening for the fourth instalment of an animated series, second only to ***Toy Story 4***, stated box office analyst David A Gross.

NEWS

Lavish lifestyle with illegal money

FROM PAGE 12

is the sign of cowards. Rather, an organisation becomes efficient through proper self-criticism. We do not want to shy away from criticism. We want to accept criticism and ensure maximum transparency in the judicial process," he said.

The National University organised the discussion titled "Bangabandhu's commentary on corruption and building corruption free society" at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital's Segunbagicha.

The chief justice said corruption has increased in comparison with the gradually increasing rate of literacy.

"Laws alone do not solve all problems and address corruption. Awareness and social movement are needed for this."

Justice Obaidul said young people have to ask whether their parents earned their money in a fair way.

"Wives must be curious about whether a part of the wealth of their husbands is illegal. Friends and families should be aware whether their relatives were making their incomes in the right way. This is the first step of social awareness. If the corrupt father, husband or colleague cannot be isolated and boycotted, the deep wounds from corruption will never be healed and the disease will not be cured," he added.

He said corruption is not only depriving the people from the benefits of development, but is also destroying the traditional values.

"The show of wealth has now become a matter of competition and enjoying luxury services with illegal money has become the latest fashion. No one wants to know about the source of this money. Rather, many are feeling jealous ... . Corruption has exhausted our sense of shame and made the pride of honesty meaningless."

The chief justice said strict enforcement of laws is needed to fight corruption.

Canada stand

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Emiliano Martinez to get past Ecuador in the last eight and while Lionel Scaloni's team have yet to really hit top gear they start as clear favourites against Canada.

American coach Jesse Marsch has made an instant impact with Canada, taking over in mid-May and quickly implementing his high-energy, pressing style to great effect.

Marsch, who was reported to be close to taking over as USA coach before the decision last year to re-hire Gregg Berhalter, has had the last laugh as his team have produced a memorable run to the last four while the Americans failed to get out of their group.

Canada got past a Venezuela team that had won all three of their group stage games, winning on penalties at the end of a pulsating encounter on Friday.

However, they know that Lionel Messi and Argentina represent a very different proposition.

The teams met in the opening group game of the tournament with Argentina winning 2-0, but there is no shortage of confidence in Marsch's team.

"It's going to take everything," said Bayern Munich wing-back Alphonso Davies.

"Going into this game, we know what's on the line. We win and go forward, we lose and go home. They're going to come out with everything. We're hungrier than ever, we expect a battle -- as they should," he said.

Three of the four quarterfinals were decided on penalties, but Marsch insists his team will play their usual attacking style.

"The game against Argentina will have to be the best we've ever played ... We're not going to sit back and just try to defend. We will be aggressive. We're going to try to play the way we want to play and see if we can keep it up," he promised.

Spare no one involved

FROM PAGE 12

candidates, who took part in the January 7 polls, compete to establish supremacy.

The gap within the party leaders further widened following AL's decision to open the field for all partymen to contest the upazila elections without allocating the party symbol to anyone.

According to Human Rights Support Society, a rights organisation, a total of 1,004 incidents of political violence, including 781 incidents of post-polls violence, took place in the last six months, resulting in the death of 91 people. Of them, 70 were ruling partymen.

France faces

FROM PAGE 12

common ground.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, a centrist and close ally of Macron, tendered his resignation but the head of state rejected it.

"The president has asked Gabriel Attal to remain prime minister for the time being in order to ensure the country's stability," Macron's office said in a statement.

A fragmented parliament will make it hard for anyone to push through a domestic agenda and is likely to weaken France's role in the European Union and further afield.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin was seen entering the Elysee presidential palace shortly after Attal, suggesting the president was canvassing opinions from his allies about what to do next.

Leaders of the component parties of the NFP met overnight and were due to meet again later yesterday to discuss who should replace Attal and what strategy the alliance should adopt, said a source at the Communist Party, one of its smaller members.

The NFP, hastily assembled for this election in an attempt to unify the left-wing vote against the far right, has no single leader and did not say before the election who would be its pick for prime minister.

Tondelier, one of a number of NFP figures seen as potential candidates for the post, said on France Inter radio it could be someone from the hard-left France Unbowed party, the Greens or the Socialists, the three largest parties in the alliance.

Generous exit policy offered to borrowers

FROM PAGE 12

another year, read BB notice.

Under the facility, borrowers will not be eligible to get new loans until they have adjusted the full loan amount.

The central bank said that this facility would not be considered as rescheduling or restructuring of loans.

BB asked banks for proper provisioning against the loans and taking security before adjustment of the loans, it added.

Banks will have to take legal action to recover the loans if the borrowers fail to repay the loans after getting the facility.

Earlier in May 2019, the central bank introduced a one-time exit policy for defaulters to bring down the high bad loans in the country's banking sector. The bad loans then amounted to Tk 110,873 crore.

"The exit policy should have been left to the banks' discretion," said Monzur Hossain, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

This policy will affect the banks' profitability, while the loan defaulters will be tempted by the facility, he said.

Mohammad Nurul Amin, former chairman of the Association of Bankers of Bangladesh, echoed the same. "Defaulters are likely to be encouraged to not repay loans due to the facility."

Israeli tanks storm

FROM PAGE 12

against Hamas infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, and that it had taken out of action more than 30 fighters.

The new Israeli offensive comes as Egypt, Qatar and the United States stepped up efforts to mediate a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas as the Gaza offensive entered its tenth month.

Mediators were in contact with Hamas amid "intensive Egyptian meetings this week with all parties", Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News said.

At least 38,193 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 87,903 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 40 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

Gaza residents said tanks advanced from at least three directions yesterday and reached the heart of Gaza City, backed by heavy Israeli fire from the air and ground. That forced thousands of people out of their homes to look for safer shelter, which for many was impossible to find, and some slept on the roadside.

Medics at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital in Gaza City had to evacuate patients to the already crowded and under-equipped Indonesian Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, Palestinian health officials said. An Israeli strike in the eastern suburb of Shejaia killed four Palestinians, medics said.

'Khaleda's life at risk'

FROM PAGE 12

suffering from multiple critical illnesses and needs to be treated at a multi-disciplinary treatment centre abroad."

Fakhrul alleged that the government was intentionally ignoring the issue of sending Khaleda abroad for treatment.

He voiced his concerns, saying Khaleda had to be admitted to hospital frequently as her illnesses were getting complicated.

Demanding her immediate and unconditional release, Fakhul said, "She has been subjected to serious injustice because of political vendetta. By denying her treatment abroad, she is slowly being driven closer to death."

The BNP chairperson returned home on July 2 after spending 10 days at Evercare Hospital following the procedure for pacemaker implantation.

The 79-year-old former prime minister has long been battling various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and issues related to the kidney, lung, heart, and eyes.

Since her conditional release from prison in 2020, the BNP chief has frequently received medical care at the hospital under the supervision of a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Khaleda's doctors have advised sending her abroad since she was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis in November 2021.

Prof Yunus challenges court order

FROM PAGE 12

allegations brought against his clients, including Prof Yunus, were completely fabricated and baseless.

The six others are Nurjahan Begum, Md Shahjahan, Nazneen Sultana, Hizzatul Islam, Nazmul Islam, and Ashraful Hasan.

On June 25, two Supreme Court lawyers, who are also accused in the same case, filed another petition with the HC challenging the Dhaka court's order that framed charges against Prof Yunus and 13 others.

SC lawyers Md Yousuf Ali and Jafrul Hasan Sharif submitted the petition saying that they have not committed any offence and that the trial court issued the charge-framing order using an AI tool, which is not permitted.

The entire amount of Tk 25.22 crore was part of the entitlement of Grameen Telecom's listed 164 employees. The employees contributed money to their trade union for paying for expenses, including lawyers' fees, they said.

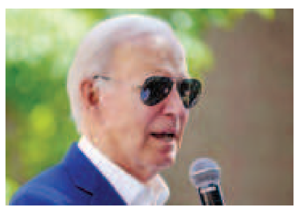
The trade union representative paid the fees to them (lawyers Yousuf and Jafrul) out of that amount and the same does not constitute any offence and therefore, the instant proceedings are liable to be quashed to ensure justice, the SC lawyers stated in the petition.

Biden asks Democrats to stick with him

REUTERS, *Washington*

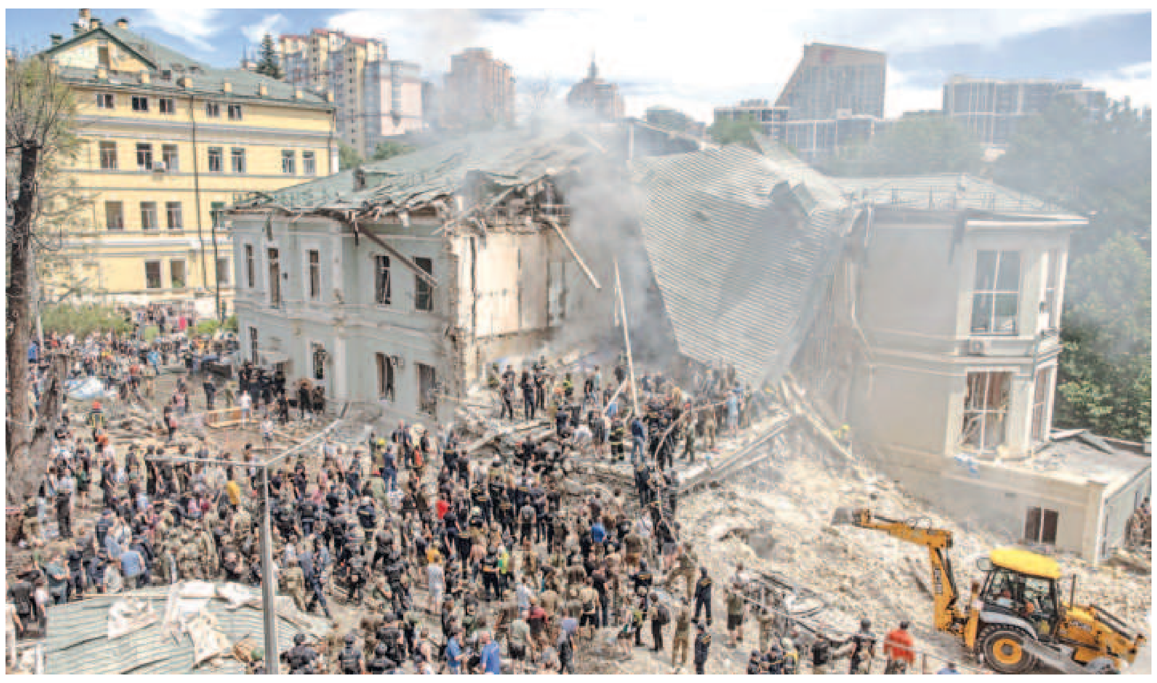
US President Joe Biden told his fellow Democrats yesterday that he is "firmly committed" to staying in the 2024 presidential race, seeking to head off concerns the party could lose both the White House and Congress in the November 5 election.

"I am not going anywhere," Biden told MSNBC after calling into the network's Morning Joe program.



A handful of House of Representatives Democrats have called on Biden, 81, to terminate a campaign that has been on defense since a shaky June 27 debate against Republican Donald Trump. A series of public events since then have not put an end to Democrats' questions about whether Biden can win or hold up through another four years in office.

Conversations were certain to intensify when lawmakers return to Capitol Hill.



Emergency and rescue personnel along with medics and others clear the rubble of the destroyed building of Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital following a Russian missile attack in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv yesterday, amid Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Stranded aid trucks deepen Gaza hunger crisis

REUTERS, *Al-Arish*

Hundreds of trucks loaded with food and water have been stranded on a scorching Egyptian road, some for nearly two months, awaiting permission to deliver the much needed humanitarian supplies to Gaza.

About 50 kilometres from the Gaza border, trucks carrying flour, water and other aid line a dusty road in both directions. The drivers say they have been waiting for several weeks in the searing Egyptian summer heat.

The standstill is exacerbating Gaza's dire humanitarian crisis after nine months of offensive. Aid groups warn there is a high risk of famine across the besieged coastal territory.

The truck drivers, parked on the outskirts of the Egyptian city of al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, say they have been unable to deliver humanitarian supplies ever since Israel expanded its offensive on the Gaza-Egypt border in May. Some food has had to be discarded, they said.

"I swear to God, before this load, we came here and stood for more than 50 days and eventually the load was returned because it had expired," said truck driver Elsayed el-Nabawi. Israeli military started its assault on the southern Gazan city of Rafah in May.

EU PARLIAMENT

Le Pen's and Orban's far-right groups unite

AFP, *Brussels*

Marine Le Pen's far-right party was yesterday poised to strike an alliance with that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in the EU parliament, a day after being dealt a surprise defeat in French elections.

Officials from Le Pen's National Rally (RN) announced a "constitutive meeting of the new group, Patriots for Europe," which Orban launched just over a week ago, to be followed by a news conference in Brussels later yesterday.

Orban's spokesman Zoltan Kovacs said on X, formerly Twitter, that "Patriots for Europe continues to grow as Marine Le Pen's National Rally joins".

With the RN, the new grouping stands to become the third-biggest force in the European Parliament, behind the conservative European People's Party (EPP) of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and the Socialists & Democrats.

The announcement came a day after French voters relegated the anti-immigrant National Rally to third spot in legislative elections.

India's PM Modi arrives in Russia

AFP, *Moscow*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Russia yesterday, as the Indian leader treaded a fine line between maintaining a longstanding relationship with Moscow and courting closer Western ties.

The visit is Modi's first since Russia launched its campaign in Ukraine and since he was returned to power last month as leader of the world's most populous country.

"I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with my friend President Vladimir Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues," said Modi in a statement.

He will hold talks with Putin today.

Moscow remains a key supplier of cut-price oil and weapons to India.

Boeing to plead guilty to fraud in US probe

REUTERS, *New York*

Boeing BA.N has agreed to plead guilty to a criminal fraud conspiracy charge and pay a fine of $243.6 million to resolve a US Justice Department (DOJ) investigation into two 737 MAX fatal crashes, the government said in a court filing on Sunday.

The plea deal, which requires a judge's approval, would brand the planemaker a convicted felon in connection with crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia over a five-month period in 2018 and 2019 that killed 346 people. The settlement drew swift criticism from victims' families.

The DOJ push to charge Boeing has deepened an ongoing crisis engulfing Boeing since a separate January in-flight blowout exposed continuing safety and quality issues at the planemaker.

Taliban slash govt salaries of Afghan women

AFP, *Kabul*

Afghan authorities have slashed the salaries of women government workers who have been forced to stay at home since the Taliban seized power, the finance ministry said yesterday.

After kicking out the foreign-backed government in 2021, the Taliban government stopped most women employed in the public sector from attending their offices while continuing to pay them.

"Women who are at home and do not go to the office... their salaries are 5,000 Afghanis ($70) a month," Ahmad Wali Haqmal, the finance ministry spokesman, told AFP.

Women who are permitted to work in segregated areas such as in government hospitals or schools would continue to get paid a salary according to their position.

Women had previously earned up to around 35,000 Afghanis in the public sector, including university professors forced off campus.

Administrative roles in ministries could pay around 20,000 Afghanis, although this was reduced for many to around 15,000 after the Taliban seized power.

A 25-year-old woman, who asked not to be identified for security reasons and who has worked for the Information and Culture department outside Kabul since early 2021, said her salary has dropped from 10,000 Afghanis.

"Making women stay at home is already a very big problem for us -- we are in a very bad mental and psychological condition -- and now that our salaries have decreased, this has only worsened," she told AFP.

She uses her salary to support the seven members of her family, including her sick mother, but said it would barely last her two weeks.

The salary change came into effect in July and is estimated to affect tens of thousands of women who work in the public sector, the finance ministry spokesman said.

Since returning to power in 2021, Taliban authorities have curtailed the freedoms of women based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law, which the United Nations has labelled "gender apartheid".

Women have been pushed out of public life, including bans on education, as well as visiting public parks, gyms and baths.

Afghanistan has been battered by decades of war, long propped up by international aid that has been dramatically reduced since the Taliban took back power.

Four Indian soldiers killed in clashes in J&K

Six others injured

AFP, *New Delhi*

Four Indian soldiers were killed and at least six others were wounded in gun battles with militants in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state, a senior police officer said yesterday.

The officer, who was not authorised to speak to the media, said fighting broke out after militants ambushed an army convoy in the Malhar area of Jammu.

This is the latest incident in an uptick of attacks in the disputed territory.

On Sunday, two soldiers and six suspected militants were killed in two separate gun battles in villages in the Kulgam district, police said.

India and Pakistan both claim Muslim-majority Kashmir in full and have fought three wars for control of the Himalayan region.

Rebel groups have waged an insurgency since 1989, demanding independence for the territory or its merger with Pakistan.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels.

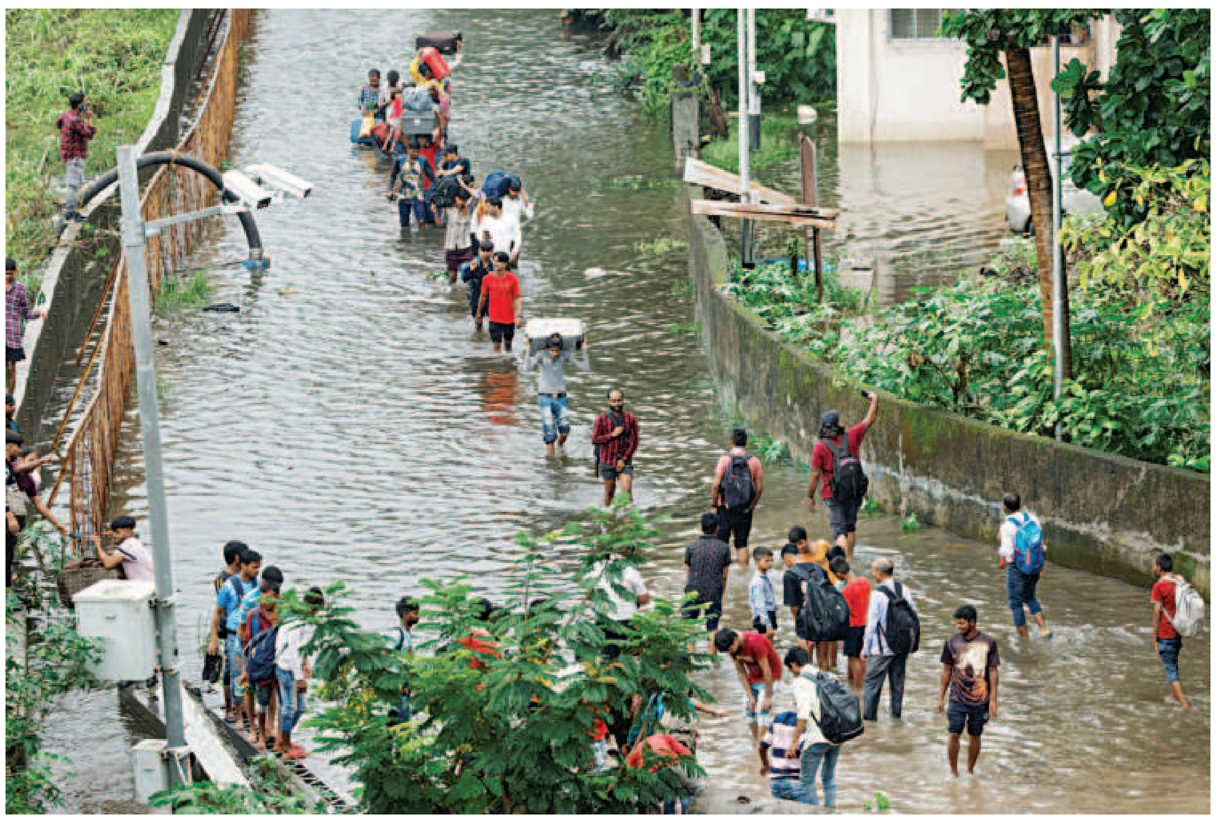


PHOTO: **REUTERS**

People walk on a waterlogged street after heavy rains in Mumbai, India yesterday. Heavy rains flooded roads and railway lines in India's financial capital, disrupting flights and forcing the closure of schools and colleges.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা
website: www.police.gov.bd

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০০০০.৪৩১.৪০.০০১.২০২৪-২০৯২ তারিখঃ ০৮ জুলাই ২০২৪খ্রিঃ

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
২.	এজেন্সি	ঃ	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা ।
৩.	ক্রয়কারী কার্যালয় প্রধান	ঃ	মহা-পুলিশ পরিদর্শক, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা।
৪.	কি জন্য আহবান	ঃ	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা'র প্রশাসনিক কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য দৈনিক চাহিদা ভিত্তিক যানবাহন (বাস, ট্রাক, কার্ভাড ভ্যান, মাইক্রোবাস ও কার) চালক ও জ্বালানী সহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ করণ।
৫.	দরপত্র সূত্র	ঃ	স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০০০০.৪৩১.৪০.০০১.২০২৪/০৩ (২০২৪-২০২৫) অর্থ বছর।
৬.	তারিখ	ঃ	০৭/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৭.	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৮.	বাজেট ও তহবিলের উৎস	ঃ	জিওবি (রাজস্ব বাজেট ২০২৪-২০২৫)
৯.	দরপত্রের নাম	ঃ	দৈনিক চাহিদা ভিত্তিক যানবাহন (বাস, ট্রাক, কার্ভাড ভ্যান, মাইক্রোবাস ও কার) চালক ও জ্বালানী সহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ করণ
১০.	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	ঃ	০৯/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।
১১.	প্রি-টেন্ডার সভার সময় ও স্থান	ঃ	৩১/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা, এনসিকম ভবনের ৪র্থ তলা।
১২.	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	ঃ	০৬/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১৩.	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৭/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৪.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৭/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৫.	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়কারী, গ্রহণ ও খোলা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	এআইজি (এমটি অ্যান্ড ওয়ার্কশপ), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা এর কার্যালয়।
১৬.	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ	সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ০২ (দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ একাধিক বাস, ট্রাক, কার্ভাড ভ্যান, মাইক্রোবাস ও কার এর সত্ত্বাধিকারী এবং নিজস্ব গাড়ী পার্কিংএর ব্যবস্থা থাকতে হবে।
১৭.	দরপত্রের সাথে যে সমস্ত কাগজপত্রাদি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে	ঃ	(ক) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের মূল রশিদ, (খ) গাড়ীর রেজিষ্ট্রেশন, ট্যাক্স টোকেন, বীমা, ফিটনেস সংক্রান্ত হালনাগাদ কাগজপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি, (ঘ) অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (ঙ) দরদাতা ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদ, আয়কর সনদ এবং ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদ এর সত্যায়িত কপি (চ) দরপত্র দলিলে বর্ণিত অন্যান্য কাগজপত্রাদি।
১৮.	কাজের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও	ঃ	দরপত্র দলিলে বর্নিত আছে।
১৯.	কাজের বিবরণ	ঃ	

২০.

লট নং	বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্রের সঙ্গে জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)	কাজের সময়সীমা
০১	বাস (৪৫ আসন বিশিষ্ট), ট্রাক (৫/৩ টন), কার্ভাড ভ্যান (৫/৩ টন), মাইক্রোবাস (০৭/০৮ আসন বিশিষ্ট), মাইক্রোবাস (১২ আসন বিশিষ্ট) ও কার চালক ও জ্বালানী সহ ভাড়ায় সরবরাহ	১,০০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা	১,০০,০০০ (এক লক্ষ) টাকা	কার্যাদেশ মোতাবেক ৩০ জুন ২০২৫খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত অথবা পরবর্তী বছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার নিয়ুক্ত না হওয়া পর্যন্ত।

২১.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	ঃ	মোঃ আবু হাসান, বিপিএম-সেবা
২২.	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	ঃ	এআইজি (এমটি অ্যান্ড ওয়ার্কশপ), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা।
২৩.	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর সহিত যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা	ঃ	ফোন নং-০২-৫৫১০১৭০৮, e-mail:aigmt_w@police.gov.bd
২৪.	দরপত্র গ্রহণ/মূল্যায়ন	ঃ	দরপত্র দলিলে বর্নিত শর্তাবলী ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা,২০০৮ অনুসারে করা হবে।
২৫.	অন্যান্য শর্তাদি	ঃ	(ক) দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত আছে।
		ঃ	(খ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

০৮.০৭.২৪

মোঃ আবু হাসান, বিপিএম-সেবা
বিপি-৭৫০৫১০৯০২১
অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি (এমটি অ্যান্ড ওয়ার্কশপ)
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা
ফোন নং-০২-৫৫১০১৭০৮
e-mail: aigmt_w@police.gov.bd

GD- 24

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Inflation continues to break records

Lack of timely govt actions is costing us dearly

The government's inability to keep annual inflation anywhere near its target of 7.5 percent is deeply concerning. As reported by this daily, the annual average inflation has surged to 9.73 percent in the just-concluded fiscal year, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This is the highest inflation experienced in 12 years since 2011-2012, when annual inflation was 10.62 percent. What is even more concerning is that this is the second consecutive year that the Consumer Prices Index has stood at more than 9 percent. This means that the tremendous inflationary pressure experienced by citizens has actually persisted for two straight years.

The resulting erosion of people's real income and the deterioration of their living standards—particularly of low-income groups—are there for all to see. According to an earlier survey by the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM), as many as 70 percent of the households in Bangladesh had to change their food habits involuntarily to cope with rising prices. It further discovered that food insecurity among the poor had increased drastically, meaning that the prospect of malnutrition and various health concerns has also risen considerably. Despite such warnings, the fact that the government has failed to bring inflation down by now is completely unacceptable. True, there have been some measures to address it, but those were taken too late, and because of the "time lag effect," we are yet to see them really kick in.

The good news is that some of those measures may eventually pay off down the line. However, as experts have said, the government needs to do more. For starters, perhaps it should increase the interest rate further to tame inflation. Moreover, its failure to properly regulate the market means that a section of business groups is continuing to artificially prop up prices. These businesses, unfortunately, are either politically connected, or have acquired monopoly powers due to failed government policies, which makes holding them accountable difficult. But that is exactly what the government must do, without exception.

So, while its focus—although late—has so far been on demand containment, now it must also shift to addressing the distortions in the market and the problems in supply chain. And these issues have persisted in our country for years and have somewhat become entrenched. Despite that, the government needs to take a holistic approach to finally fix them. Parallel to that, it must ramp up its support for lower-income groups. That should include its rice distribution programme, as well as selling essential food items at subsidised rates to low-income earners.

Bring discipline back into politics

HRSS data on political violence paints a scary picture

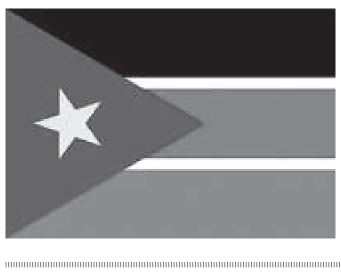
A new study on political violence has once again underscored the treacherous currents of politics in Bangladesh. According to a report citing the findings of the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), in the first half of 2024, political conflicts claimed as many as 91 lives. Strikingly, 71 of them were supporters of the ruling party. These incidents were linked to electoral violence, territorial dominance, party infighting, and clashes between police and the opposition. The fact that even an affiliation with the Awami League, which "helped itself" to a record fourth consecutive term in January, was no guarantee for safety goes to show the overall deterioration of our political climate.

These numbers came up in an overview of the state of human rights in Bangladesh between January and June. During this period, there were 1,004 incidents of political violence that also saw at least 4,026 people getting injured. The list of fatalities, however, gives only a partial view of the precarity of political activists as it was the opposition that suffered disproportionately in every other aspect. For example, 714 political workers and leaders were arrested during this time, 574 of whom belong to BNP and Jamaat. Additionally, law enforcement agencies and ruling party activists foiled at least 99 opposition rallies. We also saw how questionable legal tactics were used to weaken the opposition before the general election, including ghost cases, mass arrests, mass convictions, long pre-trial detentions, etc.—as if to justify the opposition's decision to boycott the election.

But the absence of a functional opposition led to the ruling party allowing its "rebel" members to run "independently", putting one segment of the party against another, disregarding the fracture growing within its fold. It is as if the chaos it sowed to derail the opposition campaign has come full circle to derail its own momentum. The lack of intraparty discipline far predates the January 7 election, however, and its "cultivation" over the years has led to constant infighting, so much so that ruling party members are now killing each other for their own gain.

This is deeply troubling. These political deaths—an apt description would be "murders"—are an extreme manifestation of a rot that has been eating away at our politics for a long time, and it will continue to spiral if steps are not taken to establish party discipline, rule of law, and of course, democracy in the country. As the party in power, the fallout of any chaos within it inevitably spills over into the public life, and as such, the party leadership must strictly discipline their rank and file. They also must ensure equal treatment and opportunities for all political entities.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



South Sudan's independence

On this day in 2011, South Sudan declared its independence after a referendum to secede from Sudan passed overwhelmingly.

How a flawed data ecosystem can distort economic reality

MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun
is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue and non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The recently published revised data on the Balance of Payment (BoP) by Bangladesh Bank (BB) is quite revealing, as it reconciled the discrepancy in export income reported by two government organisations: the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the National Board of Revenue (NBR). According to the EPB, exports grew by 3.93 percent during July-April of the fiscal year 2024. However, the central bank has come up with a revised export figure indicating a negative export growth of 6.8 percent during the same period. The reconciled export statistics revealed a discrepancy of $13.8 billion, which means the actual export income was $33.67 billion as opposed to the $47.47 billion shown. In FY2023, the difference of export earnings between the EPB and BB was $12 billion. The reduced export income in the first nine months of FY2024—$13.8 billion—is equivalent to three percent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the preliminary GDP estimate for FY 2024 is $459 billion.

Although the overall deficit in the BoP remains the same, there are internal changes within the BoP statement. The financial account now shows a surplus of $653 million for July-March of FY2024 instead of a deficit of $9.25 billion reported earlier by the BB. This has turned a positive current account into a deficit one. The earlier data by BB covering July-March of FY2024 showed that the current account surplus was $5.8 billion. The corrected data reveals that the current account is in a deficit of $4.1 billion during the same period.

Though the BB has passed the buck to the EPB and the NBR, saying that the NBR made multiple entries of export data received from the EPB, the mismatch of export values among the BB, EPB, and NBR raises a fundamental question regarding the precision of economic reporting and its ramifications for Bangladesh's economy.

The modification was made in response to extensive criticism of the significant difference between the actual export receipts and the shipment value that has been consistent for several years. For a long time, it has been a mystery how there could be such a large gap between export receipts and shipment values. This correction finally resolved the longstanding mystery surrounding the export data discrepancy. Exporters, who have been experiencing various challenges due to lower global demand and import control by BB, have consistently contended that the export data provided by EPB did not reflect the reality.

Due to time lag and disputes, there could be some differences between the BB and the EPB export value data. However, the astronomical difference between the numbers from the two sources in FY2024 surprised everyone. In the absence of any clarification from the government bodies responsible for collecting export data, various explanations have been floating around. For example, the export proceeds could have been brought into the country through informal channels or as remittances. Another plausible reason could be that only a portion of the export proceeds were brought in since there is an expectation of the devaluation of the Bangladeshi taka against the US dollar. The uncertainty before the national elections in early 2024 could also have been a reason for capital flight through not bringing the export proceeds into the country.

But now, the BB has reconciled data on export income from various sources such as EPB and NBR and found that the NBR has been making multiple entries of export income, which led to a discrepancy in export value data. The reconciliation of the data among the three important government bodies has led to a surplus financial account and a deficit current account, which, in the end, keeps the overall BoP the same.

However, the revised export figures have implications for Bangladesh's macroeconomic indicators and consequent policymaking. A reduction of $13.8 billion in export income during July-April of FY2024 will lead to a downward revision of GDP growth projections not only for FY2024 but also for FY2025. The Ministry of Finance has just announced the national budget for FY2025 in June 2024, which presents the economic outlook for the next three years—from FY2025 to FY2027—based on the Medium-Term Macroeconomic Policy Statement (MTMPS), where projections for various economic indicators are made.

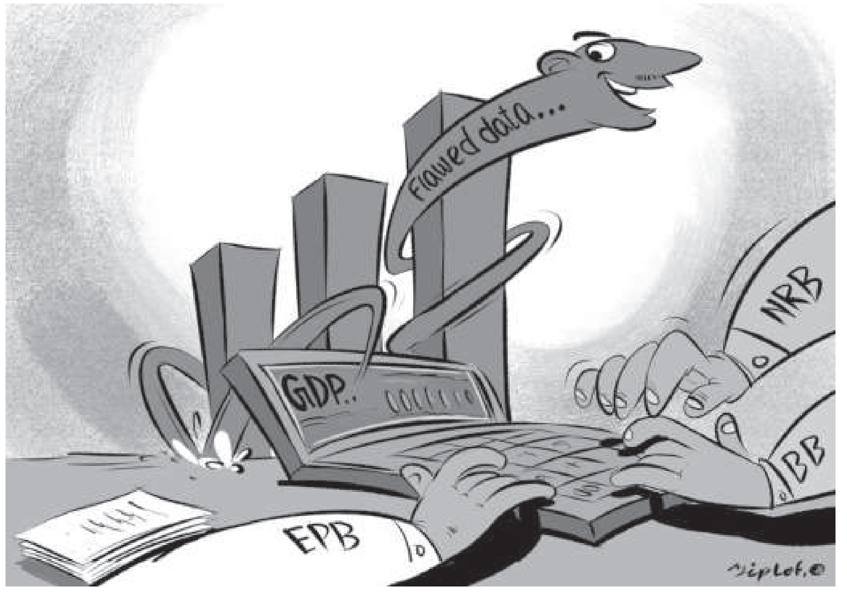


ILLUSTRATION: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

The decline in exports reduces the contribution of exports to GDP, negatively affecting overall economic growth. Due to the export sector's interconnectedness with other sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, services, and logistics, this impact will be reflected in other economic activities as well. A decline in exports can lead to reduced industrial production, lower service demand, and decreased employment in export-oriented industries.

The export-GDP ratio is a key indicator of the economy. A lower export indicates a potential decline in export competitiveness or demand. Exports and remittances are the primary sources of foreign exchange earnings in Bangladesh. A decline in exports reduces the inflow of foreign currency, negatively impacting the country's foreign exchange reserves and its ability to finance imports and service external debt.

Similarly, the debt-GDP ratio is a critical indicator of fiscal health and economic stability. A lower GDP growth rate due to declining exports can lead to an increase in the debt-GDP ratio. A higher debt-GDP ratio implies higher debt servicing costs, which can strain public finances. Currently, Bangladesh's debt stock stands at 37.7 percent of GDP as per the revised budget of FY2024, which is estimated to increase to 38.6 percent in FY2025 as per MTMPS.

The discrepancy in export data and its impact on macroeconomic indicators bring back the broader issue of our data ecosystem.

Accurate economic data is crucial for effective policymaking. The revised export figures will necessitate adjustments in economic policies to address the challenges posed by declining exports. Policymakers will need to take measures to stimulate export growth, diversify the export base, and enhance competitiveness.

Discrepancies in economic data can affect investor confidence. Accurate and reliable data is essential for investors to make informed decisions. To restore confidence, the government and relevant institutions must enhance transparency and accuracy in economic reporting.

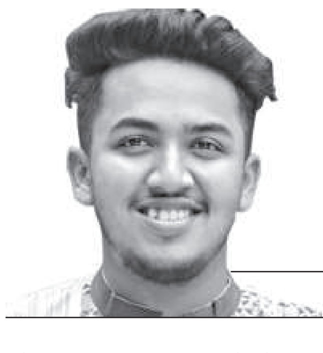
The anomalies in export data from various sources reinforce the need to integrate data from multiple sources, providing a more comprehensive and accurate picture of export activities. This also necessitates strengthening institutional coordination. Advanced data analytics and technology are now needed to improve the accuracy and efficiency of data collection and reporting processes.

Though late, this initiative has finally been taken. It is high time we developed standardised data collection and reporting methodologies to ensure consistency and accuracy across institutions. There should be adequate human resources to work on export data at NBR. Besides, the capacity of those engaged in data management should be raised to ensure quality and precision.

Transparency and accountability are crucial for maintaining trust in economic data and policymaking. Enhancing transparency involves public disclosure of data and methodologies. Unfortunately, various government institutions are still reluctant to share data with the public. Now that major economic indicators estimated in the past have become mostly irrelevant, policymakers should revise all economic data and restore transparency to the data ecosystem without delay.

FROM LECTURE HALLS TO THE STREETS

Universities submerged in dual protests



Meherab Hossain
is a young fellow of Oxfam, Bangladesh and a post-graduate student of sociology at Khulna University.

MEHERAB HOSSAIN

The monsoon rains lash against the paved streets of Dhaka University, but the downpour does little to dampen the fiery spirits on campus. Huddled under a sea of colourful umbrellas, thousands of students stand defiant, their voices rising.

What began as a localised protest in the heart of the capital has swiftly morphed into a nationwide movement. From Khulna University in the south to Rajshahi University in the north, students across Bangladesh are joining the chorus of dissent. Social media feeds are flooded with images and videos from campuses nationwide. In Dhaka, students have traded the comfort of dry lecture halls for the wet streets, their textbooks temporarily abandoned in favour of protest signs that run with ink in the relentless rain. As news of their stand spreads, it ignites similar actions nationwide. Students gather in solidarity in Chattogram, Sylhet, and beyond; their umbrellas are a colourful testament to their resilience and unity.

But this isn't just a student uprising. A parallel storm is brewing in faculty lounges and administrative offices nationwide. Professors and lecturers tasked with guiding the next generation find themselves locked in battle against a system they believe has failed them. It's as if the monsoon has washed away the thin veneer of normalcy, revealing the deep-seated frustrations that have long simmered beneath the surface of Bangladesh's academic world. Two distinct yet interconnected movements are unfolding, each threatening to reshape the foundations of higher education in Bangladesh. The students' grievances centre on the labyrinthine quota system that has long governed public sector jobs in Bangladesh, where 56 percent of government positions are reserved for various groups. It's as if the concept of affirmative action has been cranked up to eleven.

The students' demands are simple yet revolutionary. They want to tear down this quota tower, brick by brick, and build a new system where talent trumps all. They're calling for a return to a 2018 circular that promised a fairer shake.

But this isn't just about jobs. It's about a generation's hopes and dreams. These students envision a future where their hard work and abilities matter more than their family history or connections. They're fighting for themselves and the Bangladesh they want to see: meritocratic, fair, and full of opportunity.

On the other side of this academic coin, we find the teachers. These men and women have dedicated their lives to shaping young minds, only to be caught in a bureaucratic tangle. Their beef is with the "Prottoy Scheme"—a new pension system.

To understand their fury, you need to know that these educators have long felt like the forgotten cousins of the civil service family. They've clamoured for a separate pay scale for years, recognising their unique societal role. Instead, they got lumped in with everyone else in the 2015 pay scale revision. This new pension scheme makes them feel like they're being pushed further into the margins.

It's not just about money, though. It's about dignity. It's about feeling valued in a society that often pays lip service to education while treating educators as an afterthought. The teachers' protests might be less visible than the students' because of the smaller number of umbrellas and the higher number of closed-door meetings, but they're no less passionate. So here we are, a nation caught between two waves of protest, each threatening to overflow the banks of our higher education system. It's a crisis, yes, but it's also an opportunity. It is an opportunity to reimagine how we value merit, support our educators, and prepare the next generation for the challenges ahead.

The solutions won't be easy. Reforming the quota system means navigating a minefield of vested interests and historical obligations. Addressing the teachers' concerns requires fundamentally reconsidering how we value education. But the alternative—allowing this unrest to fester—is unthinkable. There's a palpable sense of déjà vu. Bangladesh has been at a crossroads where the choices will echo through generations. The question is: Do we have the courage to make the right choices? The students and teachers of Bangladesh have thrown down the gauntlet. It's time for the powers that be to pick it up. The future of a nation's education and perhaps the country itself hangs in the balance.

Let's hope wisdom prevails for all those young minds waiting to be shaped and all those dedicated educators ready to shape them. As the monsoon rains continue to fall, we're left wondering: Will these waters of discontent nourish the seeds of change, or will they wash away hope for another generation? Like the protests, the answer remains fluid and uncertain in the torrential downpour of Bangladesh's academic crisis.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

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Collective action can save us from a dystopian future

Twelve scholars, social entrepreneurs and advocates write about the International Panel for Social Progress (IPSP)'s new push to put social progress in the global centre stage.

VISUAL: **STAR**

The challenges of environmental degradation, social inequalities, democratic decline, disruptive technological innovation, and dysfunctions in global cooperation have never been more pressing. Pandemic, unjust wars, and extreme weather have threatened social cohesion and democratic institutions, revealed new vulnerabilities, and laid bare the weaknesses of prevailing development approaches and global governance. Addressing these challenges require new forms of coming-together to recognise the mutual interdependence of these challenges along with the diversity of local and national contexts, to fully grasp and unpack the complexity of systemic transformation and the timelines of ongoing dynamics on Earth and in societies. This is essential to imagine adequate solutions and to make the most of the emerging opportunities. We, representing a group of several hundred scholars, social entrepreneurs and advocates from across the globe, have come together as the new iteration of the International Panel for Social Progress (IPSP) to construct a vision that averts the looming dystopian future and drive a discourse that can put social progress in the global centre stage.

In 2018, the IPSP offered a general picture of the type of institutions and reforms which, by allowing substantial variations across the world, could inspire the advent of a society based on the values of equality, freedom, emancipation, participation, and inclusion. Such a perspective constituted a powerful narrative to support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, there is a growing sense that the piecemeal or sectoral implementation of good public policies or that inspiring but isolated civil society initiatives do not suffice to counter the negative social, environmental and governance externalities produced by the current power structures and by the predominant forms of economic organisations. The clear identification of the main causes of these negative externalities is key to developing a design, a sequencing, and an implementation of actions that would transform the dynamics at play.

A broad outline for better societies exists. It includes: creating an inclusive and responsible economy by taming markets and corporations through responsible socioeconomic and environmental regulatory systems and by fostering economic and social organisations with a broader purpose; bringing circularity into our value chains and way of life; reducing social inequalities and empowering people through universal services and through pre- and re-distribution; deepening democracy through participatory and deliberative mechanisms and better information systems; enhancing global cooperation and reforming global governance to preserve common goods such as biodiversity and to improve resilience under global changes; and harnessing technology for positive impact.

While recognising that many of the solutions for better societies already exist, the need of the hour is a renewed big push on a global scale, both at the level of ideas and actions, because progress has been decidedly mixed and new complexities and concerns have accentuated the challenge. There is an urgency of new coming-togethers adapted to local conditions, cast in long-term systemic visions and narratives of better futures, and co-constructed, promoted and implemented by fluid coalitions of public, private and non-governmental actors. The question that motivates us as the new iteration of the IPSP is how we can help coalitions of actors to emerge and to organise, and how we can help nurture them, to implement the social progress agenda.

In 2023, the IPSP, established 10 years ago, decided to reconvene, in a larger and more inclusive format, to continue its tradition of scientific objectivity and independent analysis, but now also to engage in co-construction with stakeholders and member-based organisations to ensure greater relevance of its work for change-makers, and thus aiming at much greater impact. It will gather cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary expertise, from science and from practice, to provide a comprehensive, systemic understanding of the complex dynamics of multi-actor interactions, with a special attention devoted to the Global South and to underrepresented voices. Starting in 2024, it will work towards operationalising the social progress agenda as a new global horizon through developing innovative formats and tools to support change-makers and to impact processes leading to the transition. It will work towards designing reforms and transformations that address the structural flaws of current economic and social institutions and regulations as well as the biases of power realities while fostering the potential for social change by supporting dissemination of social innovations and rethinking our relationship with living organisms to respect the system of complex and dynamic interactions in which we live. An International Platform for Social Progress as a web source will be available later this year to crowdsource the transformative initiatives and projects throughout the world and to provide a guide to the most inspiring and most replicable ones. Intergenerational dimensions will be central to our work and younger generations will be mobilised through networking, and social media.

There will be many options and possibilities to join the IPSP and to contribute to its work: from the local to the global, from inner communities to larger networks, from civil society to the largest corporations, from city governments to supranational organisations, from education circles to the general and social media. Technology will help us translate, communicate, transfer knowledge, and connect change-makers. The diversity of contributors will match the diversity of users of the knowledge base developed by the IPSP.

The new big push by IPSP to put social progress in the global centre stage starts with six priority work streams: mapping of the systemic interactions and power structures of societal challenges; measuring what we value; rethinking the information system as a public good in the age of social media and artificial intelligence; developing a framework for an ecological rule of law; defining performance for governments and businesses that reflects social progress; and identifying and promoting new pathways for global solidarity.

A dystopian future cannot be humanity's destiny. Coalescing the individual and collective will for sustainable and cohesive pathways towards better societies has never been more urgent. The task is huge and success far from certain. But the responsibility is existential, and the challenge must be seized now by everyone, everywhere, all at once.

A version of this article was first published in Le Monde on April 19, 2024.

Olivier Bouin, *director of the Network of French Institutes for Advanced Study;* **Marc Fleurbaey**, *senior researcher, CNRS and professor, Paris School of Economics;* **Merike Blofield**, *professor of political science, University of Hamburg;* **Pedro Conceicao**, *director of the Human Development Report Office, UNDP;* **Ravi Kanbur**, *professor of economics and world affairs, Cornell University;* **Takyiwaa Manuh**, *emerita professor of the University of Ghana;* **Elisa Reis**, *professor of political sociology, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro;* **Marie Laure Salles**, *director of the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies;* **Dennis J Snower**, *president, Global Solutions Initiative;* **Margo Thomas**, *president and CEO, Women's Economic Imperative;* **Ingrid Volkmer**, *professor of digital communication and globalisation, University of Melbourne; and* **Hossain Zillur Rahman**, *founder-chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and chairperson of BRAC Bangladesh.*

Rememebering an educationist, artist, and socialite from the yester generation

Prof Syed Munir Khasru
is chairman of the international think tank, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG).

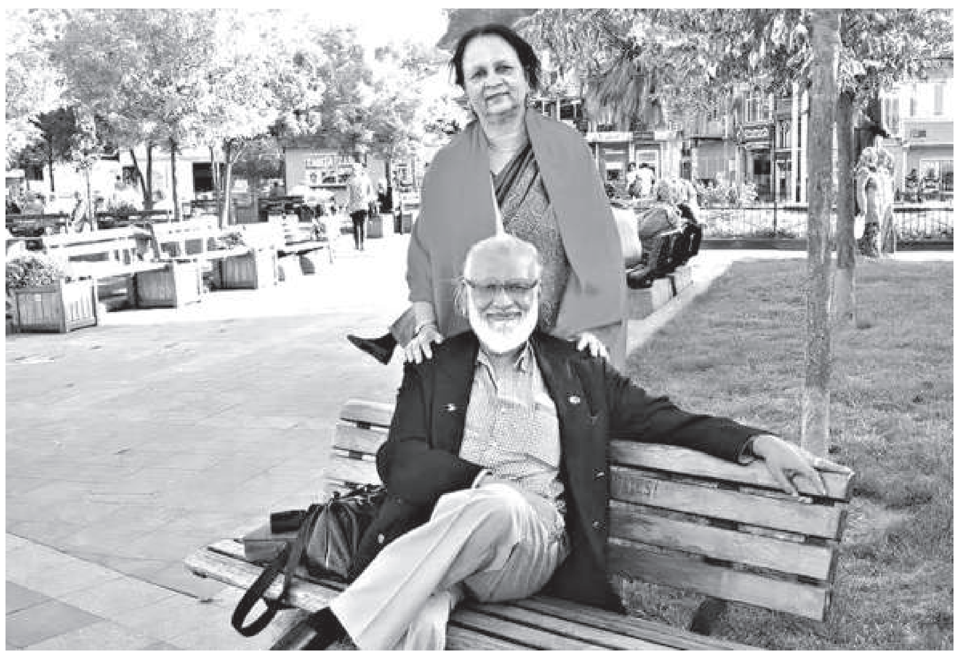
SYED MUNIR KHASRU

Asma Abbasi, who breathed her last on July 4, was a personality who epitomised values and a lifestyle that were modern and progressive enough to dwarf many of us from later generations. Born and having lived in a time when women having a career and active social life was frowned upon, she sailed gracefully in both, as an educationist and much-loved celebrity in social circles. From being a professor of Bangla to deftly anchoring education programmes, from being culturally active to engagement in multiple social outfits—her energy and enthusiasm were boundless. One of her remarkable traits was her incorrigible positivity and instant warmth that would make even a stranger feel at ease with her.

She was married to Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, a well-known singer, promoter, and researcher of folklore music who was the son of Abbasuddin Ahmed, the legendary Bengali folk song composer and singer. Coming from a traditional, conservative Sylheti family with her father being the principal of a Madrasa while being married to such a culturally enriched family must have been challenging for Asma Abbasi. But she blended in seamlessly by actively supporting the cultural heritage of her in-laws. Her two daughters delved into creative fields: Samira Abbasi became a singer and Sharmini Abbasi a writer. Asma Abbasi, however, made sure that the core religious values and traditions remained strong within the family. She received education from the Islamic Centre, near their ancestral home in Purana Paltan.

When they were in their prime, the Abbasi couple was one of the most well known in Dhaka. While her husband has been a prolific singer and artist, Asma Abbasi was a well-known figure in most circles with the confidence to walk into any gatherings with poise and dignity. Her instant warmth would generate positive energy in the room. Never shy to take the stage, she would seize any opportunity to speak with her usual charm and ability to grab people's attention. She was equally prolific in her literary work; books authored by her include Komola Ronger Dinguli (The Orange-Coloured Days), Shey Kon Bon er Horeen (From Which Forest is the Deer), and Hason Raja.

She received the gold medal award from the Ministry of Education as the best college teacher. As anchor of programmes on education and religion on BTV, she was well accepted by the audience when BTV used to be the only electronic media for information and entertainment. She also did programmes for Radio Bangladesh. In addition, she served as a member of the Film Censor Board, Family Planning Board, and as advisor to Kochi-Kachar Mela (an organisation for children). Asma Abbasi was the longest serving cultural secretary of Ladies Club, one of the oldest and well-known social outfits for women of her generation. As member of Inner Wheel Club of Dhaka and District Chairman of Inner Wheel Bangladesh, she led social and philanthropic works in the community.



Asma Abbasi with her husband, Mustafa Zaman Abbasi. PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

On a more personal note, Asma Abbasi was the younger sister of my mother, late Najma Khasru, and they were among five siblings whose father was the late Maulvi Habibur Rahman Chaudhury, former principal of Sylhet (Govt.) Alia Madrasah and mother the late Syeda Hifzunnesa Khanam, sister of well-known literary figure Syed Mujtaba Ali. As Asma Abbasi's nephew, I had the pleasure and privilege to enjoy her affection and be a witness to the childlike simplicity and candour that she had. Any of my friends she had met in our house would instantly become another nephew/niece and she would greet them with the warmth of a favourite aunt. She would also go out of the way to make people happy, even at the frail stage of her life. She would cook by herself to send me her signature achari gosh (pickled beef curry), in spite of my repeated requests not to go through so much trouble as we lived in two different parts of the city.

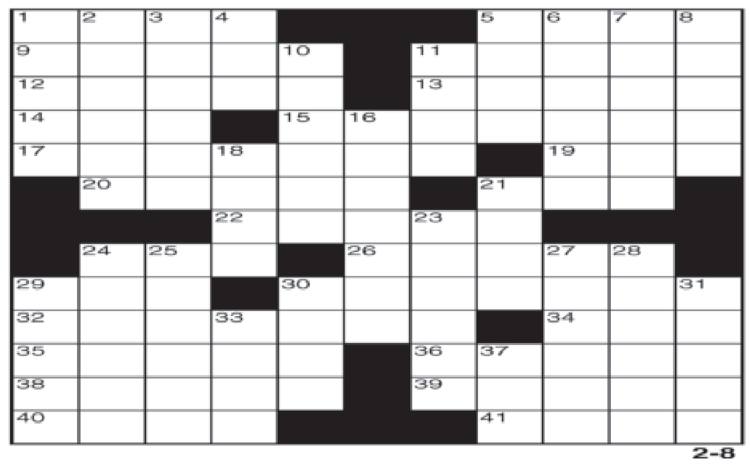
After the last Qurbani Eid, she asked me to send her home-made sheek kabab. It was easier to do this when we used to live in an independent house in the picturesque Ispahani Colony and a little tricky in an apartment due to the need to have a stove that can burn charcoal. To satisfy her culinary desires, I bought a special stove to make the kebab at home and then sent it to her. A few days back she called me around midnight and before I could pick up the phone, it got disconnected. Since it was quite late, I wanted to call her back later, thinking that she must have been calling to thank me. I had no idea that the unanswered call would be the last call from her and in hindsight, I regret that I had not immediately call her back.

The lesson learned is that when people reach a certain point in their life, when every single day lived is a blessing to be counted and not life taken for granted—we should be vigilant to attend to them. When the time comes for our last phone call, last meal, last walk, last talk, last sunrise and sunset, last prayers—it is likely that we will know little of it beforehand and can only hope that our loved ones will be there as we make the transit from this world to the other. So, for those in the twilight years of their life, let no phone call from them be unattended or messages unanswered, and let them not be left alone. May Khala's soul rest in peace.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Gum masses
5 Reduced amount
9 Homer classic
11 Pasta topping
12 Blackboard material
13 Inert gas
14 Sewing aid
15 Car parts
17 Stamp users
19 Maiden name label
20 Low card
21 Sleep spot
22 Country division
24 Dietary concern
26 Coped
29 Attach a patch
30 Sprees
32 Some fast-food chicken
34 Guy's friend
35 Mexican farewell
36 Steer clear of
38 Gives for a time
39 Like the Capitol
40 Therefore
41 Hardy heroine

DOWN
1 Bits of smoke
2 In cahoots
3 Wiest of films
4 Was inactive
5 Cooking fat
6 Oregon city
7 Got a touchdown
8 Good judgment
10 Flaw
11 Lacking
16 Device for book lovers
18 Maid's target
21 Abacus piece
23 Showed fear
24 Tributary
25 Storefront sight
27 Pea or peanut
28 Barters
29 Hackneyed
30 Porgy's love
31 Winter gliders
33 Ninny
37 Auction unit



Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to
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SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

R	E	D	I	A	L	■	R	A	C	E
A	G	E	N	D	A	■	O	M	A	N
M	O	C	K	I	N	G	B	I	R	D
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■	D	I	E	S	■	A	R	C	H	■
C	E	N	T	■	A	N	T	H	E	M
O	F	F	■	B	I	T	■	O	R	E
T	O	O	F	A	R	■	G	R	O	W
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FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR FINANCES

Saving up the first paychecks

Aside from emergencies, saving up also means that you are investing towards the future. This can mean earning that dream vacation you have always wanted, buying that expensive piece of gadget, or even starting your own business down the line.

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

Congratulations! You finally landed your first full-time job. Even if it's not the one you had dreamt of since you were a kid, it's still going to help pay the bills - at least, however much possible. Of course, this also means a bunch of new responsibilities, some more tedious than others. Now that you are in charge of your own money, one key duty you will be burdened with is financial management, which is a task definitely easier said than done.

While your first paychecks might feel like a magic ticket to financial freedom, think about how your current financial habits can impact your future for years to come. So, before you rush out and celebrate with a well-deserved shopping spree - consider the alternative of putting some of that money aside. Whether you still have your parents' support or some other source of money flow, the money that you earn in your first proper job will always help you out, especially in the case of emergencies.

So, what entails the process of saving up your first full-time paycheck? Let's take a look at the 'why' and 'how' of it.

Why save?

As much as we may dislike it, life throws us curve balls at times. An emergency fund, ideally three to six months of salary, is a safety net that you can always depend on no matter how dire a situation may get. Are you facing car troubles, unexpected medical bills, or a sudden job loss? Keeping some money saved aside from your first paychecks will ensure that you won't spiral into debt during the worst possible scenarios.

Aside from emergencies, saving up also means that you are investing towards the future. This can mean earning that dream vacation you have always wanted, buying that expensive piece of gadget, or even starting your own business down the line. You might tell yourself that the money you are earning from your first full-time job isn't enough in quantity for a substantial investment. The truth is, it doesn't have to be.

If you start saving early, even a small amount tucked away now will grow significantly over time due to compound interest. Even aside from that, you are developing a valuable practice that will help you for the rest of your life. Soon into your adulthood, your personal expenses will pile up - more so if you decide to settle down and start a family of your own. At that time, you will be grateful to your past self for going through the arduous, yet rewarding path of saving up early.

How to save?

Now that you are well-acquainted with the benefits you will reap if you start saving early, the first thing you need to do to actually start saving is track your expenses. There are free budgeting apps that will help you track daily expenditures and monthly earnings on your phone. Or, if you are the traditional type, get a notebook and jot down your spending manually. Either way, identify areas you need to cut back. This could be not having a cup of coffee every day and using cheaper modes of public transport at times to save up on commute costs.

A popular budgeting strategy is the 50-30-20 rule, which simply means that you use 50% of your income for essential needs, 30% on wants, and 20% towards savings and paying debts. Of course, you are free to adjust this percentage based on your lifestyle and preferences. For example, reducing the frequency of going to movies or dining out can subsequently increase the amount of savings, which can be greatly beneficial for you in the long run.

Another method you could consider is setting up automatic transfers on your bank account, so that any money deposited in your checking account gets sent to your savings account. This way, you are forcing yourself away from the temptation to spend recklessly. Mentally label that savings account as "do not touch" money - unless of course, in the case of emergencies.

All in all, adopting the practice of saving money early - especially your first-ever paychecks - will be appreciated by your future self down the line. It's often common for youths and young adults to splurge their first earnings into whatever they fancy. While doing so will certainly make you happy, keep in mind that this satisfaction is short-lived at best. Take control of your finances today and start reaping the rewards of smart saving!

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

United International University (UIU)

Lecturer, Public Health

Deadline: July 16

Eligibility:

- MBBS/BDS degree or Bachelor's degree in Public Health/Microbiology/Biochemistry/Environmental Science/Statistics/Anthropology and Master's degree in Public Health..

Minimum experience: N/A

IDLC Finance PLC

Associate Relationship Manager, Corporate Division

Deadline: July 10

Eligibility:

- MBM or MBA/BBA majoring in Finance, Economics, Accounting, or Banking with minimum a CGPA of 3.00 out of 4 from any reputed university.

Minimum experience: 2 years

H&M

Industrial Engineer

Deadline: July 12

Eligibility:

- Academic background in Industrial/Textile Engineering.

Minimum experience: 4-6 years

International Rescue Committee

Senior IT Infrastructure Manager

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility:

- Minimum graduation in engineering or technology with industry certifications such as CompTIA A+, Network+, etc. preferable.

Minimum experience: 6 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "If you want to be a true professional, do something outside yourself."
>
> RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Sustaining energy at work

A holistic guide to beating the afternoon slump

SYEDA ADIBA ARIF

Ever found yourself struggling to function properly during the second half at your workplace? You're not alone. Extended meetings, prolonged desk hours, and periods of intense focus are quite commonplace in corporate jobs. Hence, it's quite easy to get fatigued and burnt out if you're not mindful about your work habits during your 9 to 5. The following techniques can be useful in efforts to stay energised throughout the workday, which is essential for both your wellbeing and productivity. And no, it's not just coffee.

Start with good sleep

Without adequate sleep the night before, no matter what you do will be futile in keeping your energy levels high. Good sleep is needed to feel fresh, focus where it matters and make meaningful contributions at work.

Dr. Philip Stieg, a neurosurgeon who founded the Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Centre, claims lack of sleep might impair creativity, short-term memory, and attention span. Try to get at least seven hours of sleep every night. Humans are not machines; but even machines have planned downtimes that keep them functional, and the same applies in a truer scale for humans.

Eat the right way

Make a personal rule for yourself to not take your lunch at your desk if you can avoid it. Find a nice place much away from your desk, be it in the cafeteria or a cosy lounging zone and take some time to eat your lunch with or without company. A nutrient-rich, well-balanced meal, devoid of excessive grease does an excellent job of preventing fatigue.

Always try to consume a balanced lunch consisting of lean meats, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Carry practical snacks with you to refuel throughout the day. Make a realistic meal plan for your hours at work, and stick to it to the best of your ability. Additionally, always carry a bottle of water with you and take frequent sips throughout the day, refilling as necessary.

Get some movement

For any job, there will be some days that are busier than others. In corporate jobs, a busy day often translates to spending most of it at our desks or in back-to-back meetings. It's crucial to break free out of that & ensure at least some kind of movement throughout. Absorbing sunlight and fresh air, or stretching limbs and taking short walks, or simply getting up every hour for only a minute, works wonders in offsetting the weariness that comes with extended periods of immobility. Even the shortest bursts of physical activity can instantly make one feel revitalised. Besides, it is also important to focus on good posture at work. If you have the option, opt for an ergonomic set up.

Recharge with colleagues

Nobody can relate more to whatever workplace struggle you are facing, than the colleagues who you work with daily. Taking a few breaks to interact with coworkers goes a long way in inducing joy. Dr. Ben Waber, Prominent scientist at the MIT Media Lab, highlights the advantages of taking 'micro-breaks' of up to ten minutes. You can use these breaks to unwind with your favourite colleagues. To prevent burnout, view breaks as mandatory rather than voluntary, and plan your schedule accordingly.

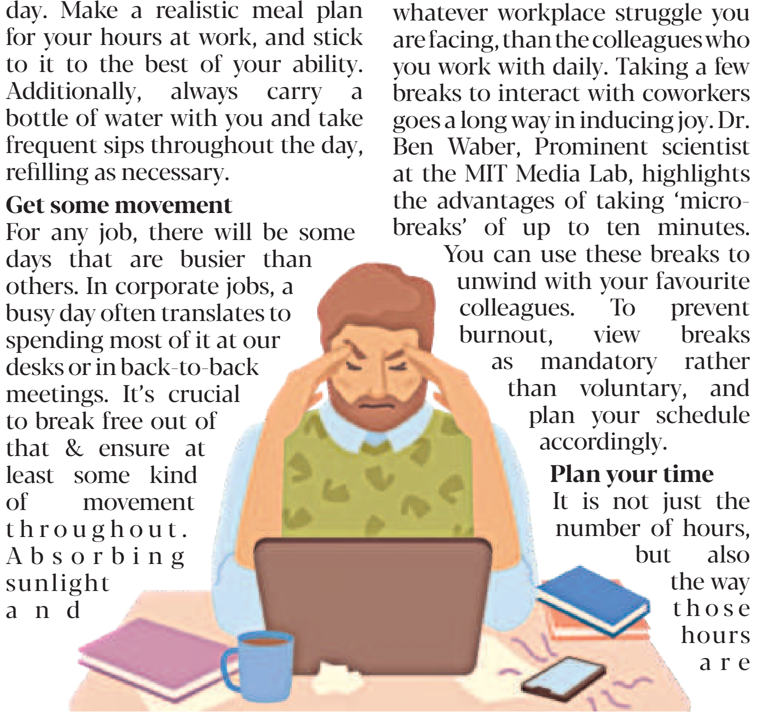
Plan your time

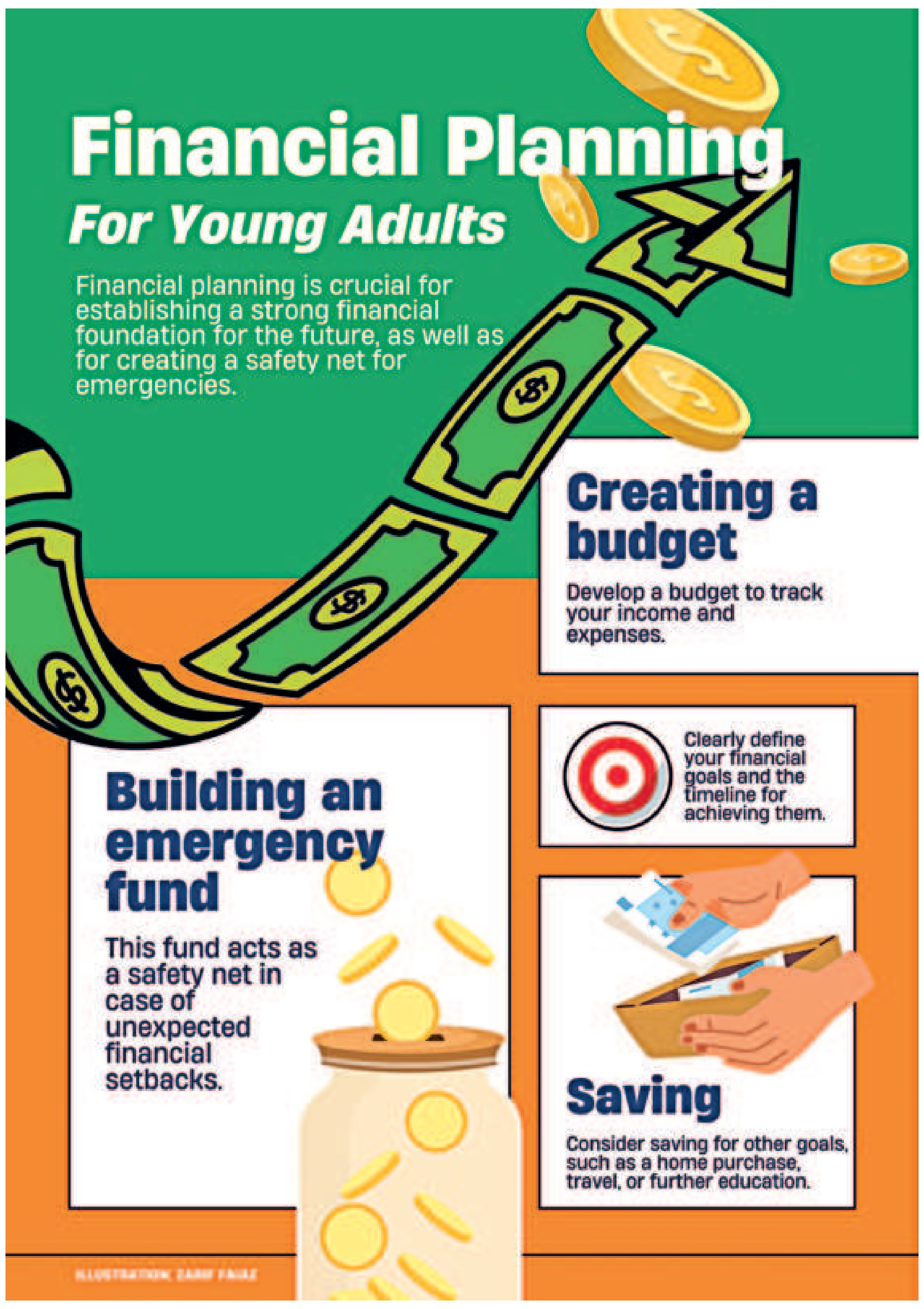
It is not just the number of hours, but also the way those hours are arranged that play a role in your energy levels. Zhang, Spreitzer, and Qiu's (2023) research demonstrates that energy levels are influenced by the ratio of meeting time to individual work. A well-structured week alternates between solitary work and meetings. Instead of compacting meeting schedules or pairing critical meetings with intense individual tasks, pair high-stress meetings with low-stress one-on-one work whenever possible and vice versa.

Employers and employees alike can benefit from the enhancing productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction that sustained energy at the workplace can bring. Employees should adopt a well-rounded approach that includes good planning, nutrition and workload management.

Employers should prioritise employee well-being by actively listening to the needs of the employees, designing wellness programs that truly work and eschewing the "set it and forget it" approach. By fostering an environment that supports these practices, all parties can win.

***Adiba Arif** is an HR Manager at BAT Bangladesh and a corporate columnist for The Daily Star. Having completed her Bachelor's from IBA, University of Dhaka, she is currently pursuing a Master's in Data Science & Analytics at East West University.*





Financial Planning
For Young Adults

Financial planning is crucial for establishing a strong financial foundation for the future, as well as for creating a safety net for emergencies.

Creating a budget

Develop a budget to track your income and expenses.

Clearly define your financial goals and the timeline for achieving them.

Building an emergency fund

This fund acts as a safety net in case of unexpected financial setbacks.

Saving

Consider saving for other goals, such as a home purchase, travel, or further education.

ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

BSRM FAST BUILD
BSRM building a safer nation
WITH BSRM FASTBUILD
YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME
WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS
COMPLETE GUIDANCE APP FOR HOME BUILDING
Google Play
App Store

Generous exit policy offered to borrowers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday unveiled the latest iteration of its exit policy that offers borrowers the option to close off their loan account within three years by paying only 10 percent as down payment and no interest.

The move, which comes at a time when interest waiver facilities are being widely criticised in the parliament, is aimed at window-dressing the country's bad loan scenario.

At the end of March, defaulted loans soared to a record Tk 182,000 crore -- which is 11.11 percent of total outstanding credit -- much to the displeasure of the International Monetary Fund. The exit policy is expected to make the situation more palatable.

"The financial condition of clients has been adversely affected by various uncontrollable factors -- that's why an exit policy is needed to recover the loans from them," the BB said in a notice yesterday.

The exit policy applies to defaulted loans, loans with a low probability of recovery and loans taken by defunct companies.

Borrowers will have to provide a minimum of 10 percent down payment in cash by the borrowers and in return, they will get an interest waiver under the policy.

However, the interest waiver facility cannot be extended to loans created by forgery and wilful defaulters, as per BB's notice.

Clients can repay the loans in one instalment or more than one instalment but the maximum repayment tenure will be two years. However, banks can extend the tenure by

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Ranju Begum is making the most of monsoon as it ushers the blooming of water lilies in the marsh near her home in Turjnimahal village of Khulna's Rupsha upazila. She spends her mornings collecting the flowers, which she later sells for Tk 10 per 6-8 pieces, helping her earn some extra money for her family. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Prof Yunus challenges court order for charge framing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom yesterday filed a petition with the High Court challenging a Dhaka court's order that framed charges against them.

The case was filed over misappropriation of about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund.

Lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun submitted the petition on behalf of the accused seeking an HC order to scrap the trial proceedings.

Mamun told The Daily Star that the HC might hear the petition today.

The lawyer said his clients have not committed any offence. They paid the money to their workers in accordance with the law and that there was no question of money laundering.

Mamun said the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

'Khaleda's life at risk'

Says BNP after her hospital admission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday claimed that its Chairperson Khaleda Zia's life was at risk after she was admitted to the Evercare Hospital in the capital yesterday morning.

"She [Khaleda] suddenly fell ill early in the morning. Her physical condition is deteriorating and her life is now in danger," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said while talking to reporters at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

"We've been repeatedly saying she has been

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

AL INFIGHTING

Spare no one involved in killings

PM asks home minister

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to ensure the arrest of all those linked to killings that occurred during infighting within the ruling Awami League.

She gave the order at a meeting with the home minister at the Gono Bhaban on Sunday, and asked him not to spare anyone regardless of their political identities and positions, said sources.

The development came after two union parishad chairmen were shot dead in Munshiganj's Tongibari upazila and Khulna's Dumuria upazila reportedly over internal feuds.

Contacted, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told The Daily Star that the PM has asked him to go for tough action against all those involved in the clashes and murders.

The issue of infighting was also discussed at a meeting, convened by AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, at the party president's Dhanmondi office yesterday, where several ministers and AL leaders discussed the ongoing quota reform demonstrations and university teachers' protests over the new pension scheme.

According to meeting sources, AL leaders opined that the party's main concern is now infighting within the organisation and stressed the need to resolve it.

They said the meeting also decided that the party's top brass would sit with AL President Sheikh Hasina after her return from China and will seek her decision in this regard.

Many leaders at the meeting spoke of holding countrywide programmes by central AL leaders to bridge the gap between the partymen, which has widened over the last two polls, in order to bring discipline within the organisation, they added.

Infighting and killings have become almost regular within the Awami League as party-sponsored candidates and "party-independent"

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Lavish lifestyle with illegal money now latest fashion

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan has said some court officials' tendency to take bribes for placing cases before the judges has long been polluting the judiciary.

Speaking at a discussion in the capital yesterday, he urged all to give him information about corruption in the judiciary through the Supreme Court registrar general's office.

Obaidul Hassan

"There is no denying the fact that information about the tendency to indulge in corruption by different court officials is gradually heightening our concern and making us alarmed.

"...I have found our judges to be incredibly talented and most of them want to continue their work with honesty. But we don't have the right to tarnish the image of the judges for the sake of a few officials and employees. We know that denying or avoiding problems

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

France faces coalition puzzle

Difficult negotiations loom to form govt as left-wing alliance denies far right a majority in surprise polls result

REUTERS, *Paris*

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday asked his prime minister to stay in the role for now, pending what will be difficult negotiations to form a new government after a surprise left-wing surge in elections that delivered a hung parliament.

The leftist New Popular Front (NFP) emerged as the dominant force in the National Assembly after Sunday's election, thwarting Marine Le Pen's quest to bring the far right to power.

Of all 577 constituencies, the left won 182 seats, Macron's centrist alliance 168 and Le Pen's National Rally (RN) and allies 143, Interior Ministry data cited by Le Monde newspaper showed.

Other media had slightly different counts, and final numbers will depend partly on individual MPs joining different groupings. To govern with an absolute majority, 289 seats were needed.

However, with no single group securing a working majority, the outcome heralded a period of political volatility just before the Paris Olympics and raised uncertainty among investors about who would run the euro zone's second largest economy.

"It's not going to be simple, no, it's not going to be easy, and no, it's not going to be comfortable," Green party leader Marine Tondelier told France Inter radio. "It's going to take a bit of time."

The range of possibilities include the NFP forming a minority government or the cobbling together of an unwieldy coalition of parties with almost no

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

- Left-wing alliance wins **182** seats, centrist alliance**163** seats and right-wing alliance **143** seats
- **289** is the the majority mark in the **577**-seated parliament
- A fragmented parliament likely to weaken France's position globally and in EU

Canada stand between Argentina and another final

AFP, *Miami*

The Copa America is down to the final four with a pair of fascinating semifinals and favourites Argentina hoping they can win their third straight major title.

CONMEBOL
COPA AMERICA
USA 2024

The Argentines, world champions and defending Copa title holders, open the semifinal action when they face surprise package Canada in New Jersey, with the match kicking off at 6:00am Bangladesh time tomorrow.

Tied on 15 Copa America titles with Uruguay, Argentina are hoping to become the most successful nation in the tournament's history.

The Albiceleste needed penalty shoot-out heroics from their goalkeeper

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

People walk past the rubble of destroyed buildings along a street in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Israeli tanks storm Gaza City districts

Residents report heavy fire; several buildings destroyed

AGENCIES

- Mediators to host new talks to push for truce
- 40 more Palestinians killed

Israeli forces bombarded Gaza City early yesterday and columns of tanks advanced into the heart of the city from different directions in what residents said was one of the heaviest attacks in the Palestinian territory since the start of the offensive.

The Gaza Civil Emergency Service said it believed dozens of people were killed but emergency teams were unable to reach them because of ongoing offensives in Daraj and Tuffah in the east and Tel Al-Hawa, Sabra and Rimal further west.

Residents said neighbourhoods in Gaza City, which lies in the north of the Gaza Strip, had been bombed throughout the night into the early morning hours. Several multi-floor buildings have been destroyed, they added.

One Israeli tank thrust pushed people towards the western road near the Mediterranean, residents said.

"The enemy is behind us and the sea is in front of us, where we will we go?" said Abdel-Ghani, one Gaza City

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

for the perfect living
AKIJ CERAMICS

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION
DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 10, 2024
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KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

GDP growth tops 6% in third quarter

B1

Gautam Gambhir named India head coach

P11

How has Awami League fared in first six months?

P8

India races to build power plants in Arunachal Pradesh

P6

PSC QUESTION PAPERS

At least 30 leaks in 12 years

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A syndicate involving officials and employees of the Public Service Commission has leaked at least 30 question papers for government recruitment tests, including those for the Bangladesh Civil Service exams, over the last 12 years.

Investigators, however, believe the syndicate has been active for about two decades.

This is according to CID officials and a first information report filed with the Paltan Police Station regarding the question leaks.

So far, 17 people, including six officials of the PSC, have been arrested. The arrestees include former PSC driver Syed Abed Ali, who lost his job in 2014 for involvement in leaking question papers.

Not having a job at the PSC did not deter Abed. He remained a key member of the syndicate and even got his son involved in the racket.

The CID filed the case on Monday night, accusing 31 named and 50 to 60 unidentified people. At least 14 named accused are on the run, read the FIR.

Investigators have found that at least two deputy directors -- Jahangir Alam and Abu Zafar -- and Assistant Director SM Alamgir Kabir and former assistant director Nikhil Chandra Roy, were involved.

Jahangir, Zafar, and Alamgir have been arrested while Nikhil is now on the run.

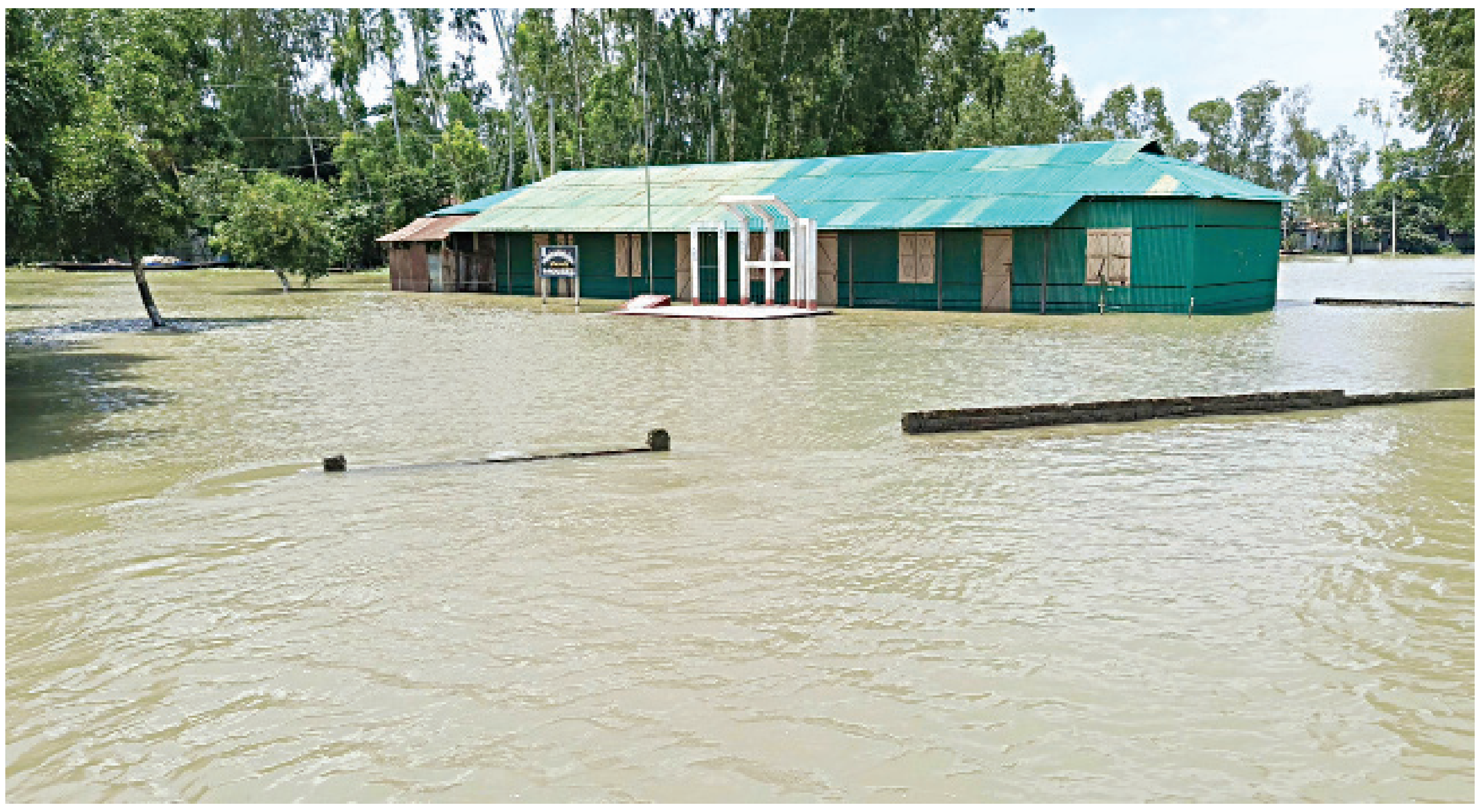
These officials used to leak question papers and hand those over to Abed through PSC dispatch rider Khalilur Rahman and office assistant Sajedul Islam.

These former and incumbent PSC officials and employees have been found to have become very wealthy.

Even though some of them were fourth-class employees, they own expensive cars, multiple flats, and commercial spaces in posh areas of the capital.

Over the last three months, there were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The Patrakhata Feichka Government Primary School in Putimari char area of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila has been submerged for the past one week. With the Brahmaputra still flowing above the danger level, at least 80 homesteads, along with croplands, remain flooded in this area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **S DILIP ROY**

Driving to a fortune!

PSC chauffeur has wealth worth over Tk 50cr: CID

STAR REPORT

Syed Abed Ali, a former driver for a Public Service Commission chairman, owns assets worth over Tk 50 crore, the CID found in its primary investigation.

Syed Abed Ali

The assets include a six-storey building in Mirpur's Paikpara, three flats in West Shewrapara, a Toyota Harrier SUV and a Toyota Premio, along with cash in bank accounts, an investigator told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department has already seized the vehicles.

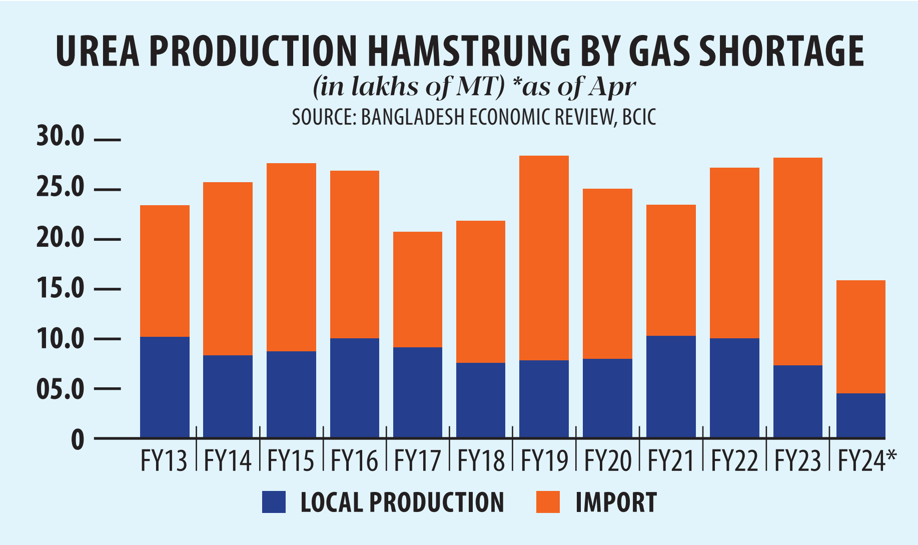
Abed was arrested on Monday in a case filed for leaking the questions of 30 public service recruitment exams, including the BCS, over the last 12 years.

His name came to the fore

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Urea output plummets on feeble gas supply

Imports meeting fertiliser needs ahead of aman season



ASIFUR RAHMAN *and* **SAJJAD HOSSAIN**

Bangladesh is mostly relying on imports for urea as gas shortage has brought local fertiliser production to a near halt, in a development that will cost the country dearly in terms of foreign currency reserves and food inflation.

The country's six urea factories need 329 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcfd), according to Petrobangla. Since February, Petrobangla has been providing only 107 mmcfd to the fertiliser sector. Subsequently, four of the six factories have halted production.

Only Ghorashal Polash Fertiliser (GPFPLC) and Karnaphuli Fertiliser (Kafco) are getting their required gas and are in operation. Of the two, the government

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

HASINA, XI TALKS

Economy, trade to be in focus

PORIMOL PALMA

Beijing will push for initiatives with strategic interests in Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal, while Dhaka will focus on trade and economy as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang today.

The joint statement that will come out following the meetings at the Great Hall of the People will lay the vision for the future relationship, which is now a "strategic partnership of cooperation".

Foreign policy analysts view the three-day visit to Beijing, which comes 16 days after the state visit to New Delhi, as a balancing act by Hasina, who hopes to be in the good books of the two competing regional powers as they jostle for influence in South Asia as well as in the Bay of Bengal region.

"Balancing [relations with] the two Asian competitors is very crucial

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Chinese firms to invest in textile, fintech and EVs

Hasina urges Chinese companies to expand investments in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

PREMIER cemenT

Bangladeshi and Chinse companies yesterday signed 18 memorandums of understanding relating to investments in different sectors of Bangladesh.

Chinse companies have showed interest in investing in Bangladesh's textile, electric vehicle, solar power, fintech, and technology sectors, according to a statement from Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

Under an MoU worth $50 million, Bangladeshi mobile financial service company Nagad will forge a partnership with Huawei Technologies to build a digital financial platform.

A $20 million investment deal was signed for the "Bangladesh Capital Market Digital Transformation Project" between Dex Bangladesh Tech Ltd and Huawei Technologies.

Deshbondhu Group of Bangladesh signed an MoU worth $400 million with Chemtex and China Chemical CNCC to establish a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Court orders confiscation of Tk 11.34cr assets of Ctg cop, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

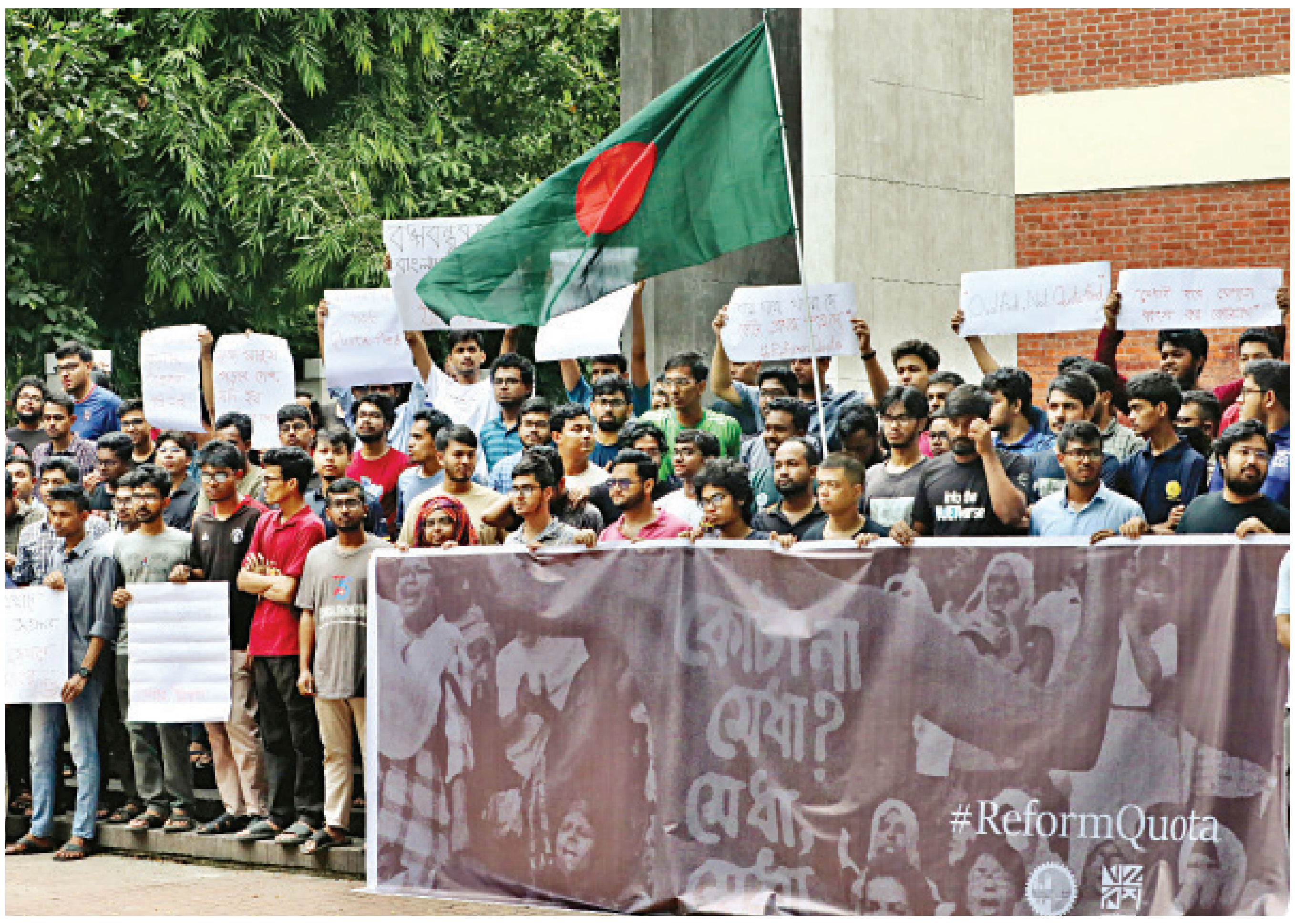
A Chattogram court has ordered the confiscation of movable and immovable properties worth Tk 11.34 crore of Kamrul Hasan, additional deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, and his wife Saima Begum over corruption charges.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Begum Zebunnesa passed the order on Monday after the Anti-Corruption Commission sought the court's order to confiscate the couple's properties and freeze their bank accounts.

The court asked the commission to take measures to appoint an administratorto look after the properties, Kazi Sanowar Ahmed Lavlu, a public prosecutor of the ACC, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The ACC, during an investigation, found that the couple owned land in the port city's North Halishahar, West Nasirabad, Khulshi, Chandgaon, and Dhaka's Savar.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Buet students demonstrate in front of the main entrance to the university in the capital yesterday demanding scrapping of the quota system in government jobs. Students of most of the public universities across the country have also been boycotting classes and exams since Saturday to press home their demand.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

QUOTA REFORM DEMO

Protesters set to resume blockade today

SC to hear petition against HC verdict restoring quota in govt jobs

STAR REPORT

After a one-day break in their blockade programme, students demonstrating against the quota system in government jobs have announced a nationwide blockade for today.

"As part of the programme, all highways and railways across the country will be blocked," Nahid Islam, a Dhaka University student and an organiser of the movement, told a press conference in front of the DU central library yesterday.

The daylong movement will begin at 10:00am and continue until dusk, during which students will enforce blockades at key intersections in the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country, the organisers said.

However, many will be looking at the Supreme Court's Appellate Division today as it is scheduled to hear a petition against the High Court ruling that reinstated a 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the 9th through 13th grades of government jobs.

Regarding the hearing, Nahid said, "Since this case has reached the court, legal procedures will be followed. We have complete faith in the justice system.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: SHADAB SHAHROKH HAI

LIBRARY LANE

The forgotten bookshops of NEW MARKET

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

Nilkhet, Mirpur, Banglabazar -- many destinations are well known amongst bookworms of Dhaka. However, nestled within the bustling New Market lies a lesser-known, historical book market. What happened to Library Lane, this once vibrant hub of knowledge? Today, the future of the place hangs in the balance, its rich history fading into memory.

The forgotten lane

It used to fashion an apt moniker. Library Lane -- they used to call it. And fittingly so.

Once upon a time, there used to be more than 50 bookstores here. This fabled lane is on the left of the Gate-1 of New Market. Shopkeepers here say the bookstores used to expand from Gate-1, all the way to Gate-2.

One could find all sorts of books here. Novels, self-help, classic literature, books on religion and law -- you name it. It was also a major hub for academic and reference books. The books sold here are original, either collected directly from the publisher or imported. However, their collections have been fading, much like the lane itself, which has been dissipating for years.

From more than 50 to 40, at the moment, barely 10-12 shops remain. Some of them have yielded to the market demand and given up their identity, making room for stationary products. Iconic bookshops such as Zeenat Book Supply, which had been a popular go-to place for book lovers since 1963, closed its business in 2023. Others stubbornly stand, but barely so under the pressure of the present market.

What happened?

It's a good question to ask. What drove such a popular section of the market into the present sorry state? The answer is: a lot happened over the last few decades!

Firstly, reading habits changed. Md Jumma, the owner of one of the older shops in the market called Aligarh Library, which has been here since the '70s, holds a very strong opinion about this.

"Ever since passing became easy, reading habits went down. Nowadays, you can just write anything in the exam and still pass. There is no desire for knowledge, no desire to read. This has been one of the biggest issues that caused the decline in business. Of course, then came Covid," he said.

Md Reazul Hakim owns "Book Syndicate", one of the oldest bookstores in the market. He inherited the business from his father, who started the business back in 1954 when New Market was first opened.

"We sell original books and as you can imagine, they can be costly. Piracy has taken the market off balance by printing and photocopying books whenever they feel like it. And of course, they can sell at less than half price because of this," he said, referring to the declining state of the library lane.

The bleak future

At midday, when the Nilkhet book market is abuzz, the Library Lane feels desolate. Standing on the pavement in the middle of the clearing, one can feel how much this place has witnessed and now it's a decaying history of Dhaka itself. Whatever buzz you find here is less because of the bookstores and more because of the stationary, crockeries, and accessories shops.

Since 2019, six bookstores have bidden farewell to their business here. The past year alone has witnessed the fall of four of those. At this rate, the lane will be nothing more than a memory in a few years.

Whatever remains of this once popular hangout of bibliophiles is now a skeleton of its older self. Whether or not this place can be revived, remains to be seen. But don't miss your chance to visit this place if you have a soft spot for books.

BB CYBER HEIST CASE

CID gets 79th date for submitting probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit the probe report in the Bangladesh Bank cyber heist case by September 4.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after Raihan Uddin Khan, additional superintendent of police and also the investigating officer of the case, failed to submit the probe report by yesterday.

CID has now taken 79 dates to complete its probe into the case filed over the heist of $101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February 2016.

On May 6, the same court asked CID to submit the probe report on the case by July 9 (yesterday).

At least $81 million was transferred to the accounts of Manila-based RCBC, from where it disappeared into the casinos of the Philippines.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Director (Accounts and Budgeting) Zobayer Bin Huda filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on March 15, 2016.

So far, Bangladesh retrieved $15 million from RCBC and recovered another $20 million sent to a bank in Sri Lanka.

On February 1, 2022, Bangladesh Bank sued Rizal Bank in a US court in order to recover $66m of stolen funds.

Chhatra Dal leader 'missing' for 9 days

BNP claims he was 'picked up' by plainclothes men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka College Unit Chhatra Dal Vice President Atiqur Rahman Rasel has been missing for nine days, after he was allegedly picked up by plainclothes men from Dhaka's Azimpur on July 1.

His father Md Abul Hossain on July 2 filed a general diary with Lalbagh Police Station regarding his son's disappearance.

Talking to The Daily Star, Abul Hossain said he wants his son back safe. "We are anxious as we could not trace my son yet."

"If my son committed any crime, the law enforcers should produce him before a court. If they did not pick him up, it is their responsibility to trace him," he added.

Abul Hossain said they could contact Rasel on July 1 evening for the last time, when he said he was going to Azimpur. Shortly after, his phone was found switched off, he added.

Earlier, BNP in a statement, claimed plainclothes men picked Rasel up from Azimpur area.

At least 30 leaks in 12 years

FROM PAGE 1

transactions worth at least Tk 25 crore in the bank accounts of the syndicate members.

With assistance from the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, the CID seized the bank account documents of 17 accused.

Sources said multiple money laundering cases could be filed after reviewing the documents.

Touhidul Islam, special superintendent of the CID's cyber investigation and operations, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have found evidence that the 17 arrestees, including the PSC officials, were involved in leaking question papers for the railway recruitment exams held on July 5."

The syndicate was also involved in leaking questions of some other exams, he said.

Asked when the syndicate started leaking questions, Touhidul said one of the arrested PSC employees joined the commission in 1997 and began leaking questions within five years.

"We are investigating and conducting drives to arrest all those responsible," he said.

Asked about leaking questions of BCS exams, Touhidul said, "We have information, but we need to verify those."

Sources in the CID said they suspect more people from the PSC were involved.

During interrogation, Sajedul said he used to get the question papers from Zafar a day before the exam and that two members of the syndicate -- businessman Sakhawat Hossain and his brother Siam Hossain -- would teach examinees the answers at flats in Dhaka.

Abed and his son's job was to get the examinees who would pay for the questions, said sources.

According to sources, PSC DD Jahangir, who hails from Gaibandha, has multiple flats in Dhaka in addition to a home in his village.

He has a 2,000sqft well-furnished flat in Block-D of Bashundhara Residential Area. The CID arrested him from there on the night of July 7.

The CID also found multiple flats owned by Jahangir in Mirpur and Bhatara of the capital.

Investigators have information that there were transactions worth at least Tk 13 crore in his three bank accounts, sources said, without mentioning when the transactions were made.

On July 5, when the railway exam was being held, there were unusual transactions in his bank account.

PSC DD Zafar, who hails from Patuakhali, lives with his family in Azimpur Government Colony of Dhaka. However, he owns a plot of land and a flat in Mohammadpur.

Along with Jahangir, Zafar owns a coaching centre -- Jyoti Commercial Center -- for jobseekers at Chowdhurypara of Malibagh in the capital. The coaching centre is named after Zafar's wife, the sources said.

Asma Begum and Humayun Kabir, who run the coaching centre, used to gather jobseekers willing to pay for the leaked questions too, they said.

Meanwhile, six out of 17 arrestees yesterday made confessional statements before a Dhaka court. The 11 others were sent to jail.

Abed, Khalilur, Sajedul, Sakhawat, Siam and private university student Liton Sarker made the confessional statements.

Yesterday evening, the PSC suspended Jahangir, Zafar, Alamgir, Sajedul, and Khalilur.

The PSC also formed a three-member probe committee, led by Joint Secretary Abdul Alim Khan, to investigate the allegations of leaking questions.

The other members of the body are PSC directors Mohammad Azizul Haque and Dilawez Durdana.

The committee has been asked to submit a report within 14 working days, said PSC Chairman Sohorab Hossain at a press conference at his office.

He said the railway recruitment exam would be cancelled if evidence of question leak was found.

His announcement came following a protest rally of jobseekers in front of the PSC Agargaon office yesterday demanding scrapping of the test.

Second semi

FROM PAGE 12

is anything to go by, considering 12 encounters between the two teams have produced only a single drawn result with Uruguay leading 6-5, the Bank of America Stadium is poised to stage an even battle between two sides unwilling to take the game to a penalty shootout.

This type of high-stakes match calls for individual brilliance to become part of folklore, a tailor-made stage for attacking midfielders like Colombia's James Rodriguez or Uruguay's Real Madrid star Fede Valverde; players who possess the skill and nerve to conjure a long-distance goal out of thin air.

Colombia have continued to impress under Nestor Lorenzo, with the late-career "second wind" for playmaker Rodriguez providing them with a creative spark. Rodriguez has never quite lived up to expectations at the club level but has recaptured the electric form he showed at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. "Everything is coming together," he said after providing two assists and scoring a penalty against Panama.

Uruguay, a side buoyant after eliminating pre-tournament favorites, might end up lamenting the suspension of Nahitan Nandez and injuries to defenders Ronaldo Araujo and Matias Vina.

Nevertheless, the match promises to be a knife-edge affair, with veteran Argentine coach Marcelo Bielsa having brought his intensity-demanding style to Uruguay, coupled with the fact that Colombia remain a dangerous counter-attacking team, possessing match-winners with pacy wingers in Luis Diaz.

"The match against Colombia will be just as demanding [as playing Brazil] because they are a team that has been developing a lot match by match," Bielsa said. "Like Brazil, they have important strikers in every position, but we are confident we can play on equal footing with any opponent," the revered tactician added.

Regardless of who triumphs on the field, whether Colombia's quest for a second trophy since 2001 draws nearer or Uruguay moves one step closer to claiming the most Copa titles, the momentum gained from tomorrow's win will play a significant role in Monday's final.

Court orders

FROM PAGE 1

Kamrul also owns properties in a 12-storey commercial building in Savar named "Savar City Centre and Savar City Centre Tower".

The cop invested nearly Tk 8.02 crore in the commercial building, but the actual value of the properties is several times higher. He owns flats, shops, and commercial spaces in the building, the ACC investigation revealed.

The couple owns movable properties worth Tk 9.44 crore and immovable properties worth Tk 1.90 crore. Kamrul's wife owns M/S Sowdagor Navigation, which operates in the maritime sector.

ACC sources said the couple was trying to hand over their properties to others after the commission launched an investigation into their wealth.

Sanowar Ahmed said, "It's not possible for a police official to own such huge businesses and properties with his income. As the couple is trying to hand over their properties, we appealed to the court to issue an order, and the court granted our appeal."

Chinese firms to invest in textile, fintech

FROM PAGE 1

polyester staple fibre and other man-made fibre textile mill on 33 acres of land in Mongla Economic Zone.

The MoUs were signed on the sidelines of the "Summit on Trade, Business and Investment Opportunities between Bangladesh and China".

Bangladesh embassy in Beijing, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, the SEC, and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade organised the event at the China World Summit Wing of Shangri-La in Beijing.

Speaking at the summit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said now is the time for Bangladesh and China to explore new areas of further collaboration in trade and investment to create a prosperous future for both nations, reports UNB.

"Our shared vision for economic growth, technological advancement, and sustainable development forms the cornerstone of our bilateral relations," she said.

Hasina, now on an official visit to China, invited the Chinese businesses to visit Bangladesh, explore opportunities, and experience the warmth and hospitality of Bangladeshis.

"You will find in us all the support and assistance you need. Let us work together to build a stronger, more prosperous, and more connected world."

The PM said, "We are committed to addressing trade imbalances and creating a more equitable trade relationship."

Hasina said Bangladesh is keen on exporting more products, including textiles, garments, leather goods, jute products and agricultural produce, to China.

"We welcome Chinese investments in our export-oriented industries, which will help us diversify our export basket and reduce trade deficits," she said.

The premier encouraged Chinese companies to form joint ventures with Bangladeshi firms.

She also invited Chinese companies to establish R&D centres in Bangladesh, leveraging Bangladesh's skilled workforce and academic ingenuity.

Hasina called upon the Chinese business community to consider investing in infrastructure; energy, including renewable energy; and logistics in Bangladesh.

She said that climate-resilient smart farming opens opportunities for collaboration.

The premier said Bangladesh plans to establish three special tourism zones where Chinese firms can invest.

She also urged Chinese investors to explore portfolio investments in Bangladesh, as the SEC is working to further develop the country's capital markets.

"We have made significant progress in developing a robust bond market. We are on the brink of introducing derivative products, which will further diversify and widen our financial markets," she said.

"China has been significantly contributing to our infrastructure projects, technological advancements, and overall growth of our economy."

She said Bangladesh offers one of the most liberal investment regimes in the world, and BIDA provides a number of services to foreign investors under one roof.

"... We are establishing 100 special economic zones [SEZs], each equipped with state-of-the-art facilities."

Bangladesh is also developing five country-specific economic zones to foster closer economic ties with the key partner nations, the PM added.

OTHER MOUS

China Road and Bridge Corporation and Ningbo Cixing Company Ltd signed an MoU on the investment framework agreement in Bangladesh's Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone.

Billion10 Communications Ltd and CHTC (HengYang) Intelligent EV Company Ltd signed a deal on manufacturing electric vehicles.

The Bangladeshi firm signed another MoU with Ningbo Sun East Solar Co Ltd to set up a solar farm in Sylhet. It also made a deal with HeSheng (Hoshine) Silicon Industry Co Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's renewable energy sector.

Billion10 also signed an MoU with Zhongke Guorui (Zhuhai) New Material Technology Co Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's waste lubricant oil recovery and refining industries.

EB Solution Ltd and Hongji Intelligent Transport Co Ltd signed a deal to invest in the Dhaka City Mobile Project.

The Bangladeshi company signed another deal with Ningbo Shering New Energy Technology Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's smart cold chain logistic solutions sector.

Under an MoU on technical and financial investment collaboration, $20 million will be invested in Bangladesh's waterways and road transport. The deal was signed between Intraco Refueling Station PLC and Shijiazhuang Enric Gas Equipment Co Ltd.

Zibo Jinhuateng Paper Machinery Co Ltd will invest in the paper machinery sector in Bangladesh jointly with Nitol Niloy Group.

Chinese firm Zhengzhou Dongfeng Mid-South Enterprise Company will invest in TBR Tyre projects in Bangladesh in collaboration with Nitol Niloy.

Chinese company Shandong Sunite Machinery and Nitol Niloy signed an MoU to invest in Bangladesh's Aerated Autoclave Concrete (AAC) Block.

Chinese firm Daliam Huahan Rubber and Plastic Machinery will invest in Bangladesh's rubber machinery sector with Nitol Niloy.

ZP Technology (Anhui) Co Ltd will invest in producing lithium batteries and electric vehicles in Bangladesh jointly with Nitol Niloy.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

During a meeting with the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Hasina sought Chinese assistance in repatriating Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Chairman Wang Huning of the CPPCC, who led a delegation in the meeting, said they would discuss the matter with Myanmar and play a role of facilitator.

"We will make our highest efforts to initiate Rohingya repatriation through holding discussions with Myanmar," he said.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said different bilateral issues, including Rohingyas; reducing the trade gap; the celebration of the 50 years of bilateral relations; and the contact between Awami League and Chinese Communist Party came up for discussion.

'CUT INTEREST RATES OF LOAN'

Hasina yesterday asked the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to further cut the interest rates on its loan for Bangladesh.

She made the request when the president of the Beijing-based lender, Jin Liqun, along with high officials of AIIB paid a courtesy call on her.

The AIIB officials said Bangladesh is one of its biggest borrowers and the bank has given Bangladesh a special concession in interest rate.

Financing infrastructure, river dredging, and climate-change resilience came up for discussion.

PM LEAVES FOR HOME TONIGHT

Wrapping up her visit, Hasina will leave Beijing tonight and reach Dhaka in the wee hours of tomorrow, foreign ministry sources said.

She was earlier scheduled to leave Beijing on Thursday morning.

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Govt launches edn portal for curriculum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government launched a new educational portal yesterday, featuring materials for students, teachers, and guardians nationwide, aligned with the newly implemented curriculum.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury inaugurated the website themed "Curriculum Portal, a One-Stop Solution", at the International Mother Language Institute.

Regarding the curriculum's controversies and evaluation process, he stressed the importance of mindset and parental involvement for success.

"We will consider increasing teachers' salaries by adjusting the operational and development budgets," he said.

Director General of the Directorate of Secondary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays tributes at the Monument to the People's Heroes at the Tian'anmen Square in Beijing, China yesterday.

DHAKA-PADMA BRIDGE-JASHORE

Wait for direct rail line gets longer

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

People's wait for direct rail connectivity between Dhaka and Jashore via Padma Bridge is getting longer as the project authority could not complete work within the last month.

Now, the railway authorities are planning to open the line in November, as it would take four more months to complete all physical works, said project officials.

Project authority yesterday placed the new plan before Railways Minister Zillul Hakim, who had announced in May that the line would be opened within two months, they said.

Bangladesh Railway is constructing a 169km broad-gauge single-line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,247 crore.

This is the biggest project for BR in terms of cost, and over half of the cost is being provided by China as a loan.

The original deadline for the project was June 2022 and the latest deadline was June this year.

The Dhaka-Bhanga section of the line was opened in October last year and five trains are being operated

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Cargo village to be cleared finally

CAAB confiscates 12 abandoned aircraft, plans auction

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Civil Aviation Authorities of Bangladesh finally confiscated 12 airplanes that had occupied a large part of the cargo village for around 10 years, disrupting the loading and unloading of goods.

The aircraft include four MD-83s, one A310, two ATR 72s, and one Dash-4 owned by United Airways, two Dash-4s aircraft owned by Regent Airways, one MD-82 aircraft owned by GMG Airlines, and one AN-12 aircraft owned by Angel Airways, CAAB said.

The cargo village area has practically been turned into an aircraft graveyard as those airlines have not been in operation for one to 10 years, CAAB officials said.

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Mafidur Rahman said they will float a tender soon for selling those aircraft through auction.

According to CAAB notification, despite repeated requests to the authorities concerned to remove the planes, no action has been taken so far to remove them. That's why those aircraft were confiscated.

The 12 planes have been lying abandoned, occupying around 1,92,100 square feet of ground support equipment parking area, CAAB also said.

It is causing problems with the parking of regular or irregular flights, loading of goods in aircraft and vehicular movement in the export cargo area.

The aircraft include four MD-83s, one A310, two ATR 72s, and one Dash-4 owned by United Airways, two Dash-4s aircraft owned by Regent Airways, one MD-82 aircraft owned by GMG Airlines, and one AN-12 aircraft owned by Angel Airways.

The CAAB chairman said he now has the jurisdiction to float the auction of those aircraft as per the rules.

Around 12 bay parking will be prepared if those abandoned aircraft can be removed, he added.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director of HSIA, said the de-registration of those aircraft has already been completed.

He also said the respective airlines have failed to repay the dues to CAAB and have failed to renew their licences.

CAAB said they will get around Tk 1,200 crore from the three airlines -- United Air, Regent Air, and GMG Air -- which will be obtained by auctioning off the planes.

United owes Tk 388.97 crore, Regent Air owes Tk 408, and Tk GMG owes Tk 396.45 crore to CAAB.

In February 2016, United Airways ceased suspended flight operations without any announcement.

Afterwards, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission took the initiative to revive its operation and reorganised the board of directors of United Airways, with Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert, as its chairman.

Contacted, ATM Nazrul Islam, an independent director of United Airways, said they tried their best to revive the planes, but couldn't succeed as they didn't get cooperation from any government organisations except for BSEC.

"We even found an investor willing to contribute around Tk 500 crore. However, they gave a condition that CAAB would have to waive the dues," he said, adding

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

COURT CORNER

Why no paternity leave: High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to formulate a paternity leave policy for employees at all institutions. The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque issued the rule following a writ petition.

On July 3, Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan submitted the petition, in which her six-month-old child's name has been included as a petitioner too, saying that the absence of paternity leave made it difficult for new fathers to take care of their wives and newborns.

NID, passport details of Matiur, his family sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has requested Election Commission and Department of Immigration and Passports for the details of the national identity cards and passports of former NBR member Matiur Rahman, his two wives, and two children.

ACC sent the letters yesterday, confirmed an official of the anti-graft body.

"The request is part of an investigation into allegations of illegal wealth accumulation and money laundering against them," he said.

Yunus' petition hearing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for holding hearing on a petition filed by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom, challenging a Dhaka court's order that framed charges against them.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain set the date. Barrister Abdullah-Al-Mamun appeared for Prof Yunus, while Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan and DAG AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the ACC.

HC orders to evict 850 structures from Bangshi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to evict 850 illegal structures from the banks of Bangshi river at Savar in the next two months.

According to a survey report submitted by the National River Conservation Commission to the HC on June 30, there are 850 illegal structures on the banks of the river.

Removing 'Sharifa's Tale' not a solution

Says NHRC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission chairperson Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed yesterday said the commission disagrees with the government decision to remove "Sharifa's Tale" from textbooks.

He said this at a meeting at the NHRC headquarters in the capital.

"This step [to remove the story "Sharifa's Tale" from textbooks] cannot be perceived as a solution. While this action is repressing the issue, it will arise again in the future for natural reasons," he added.

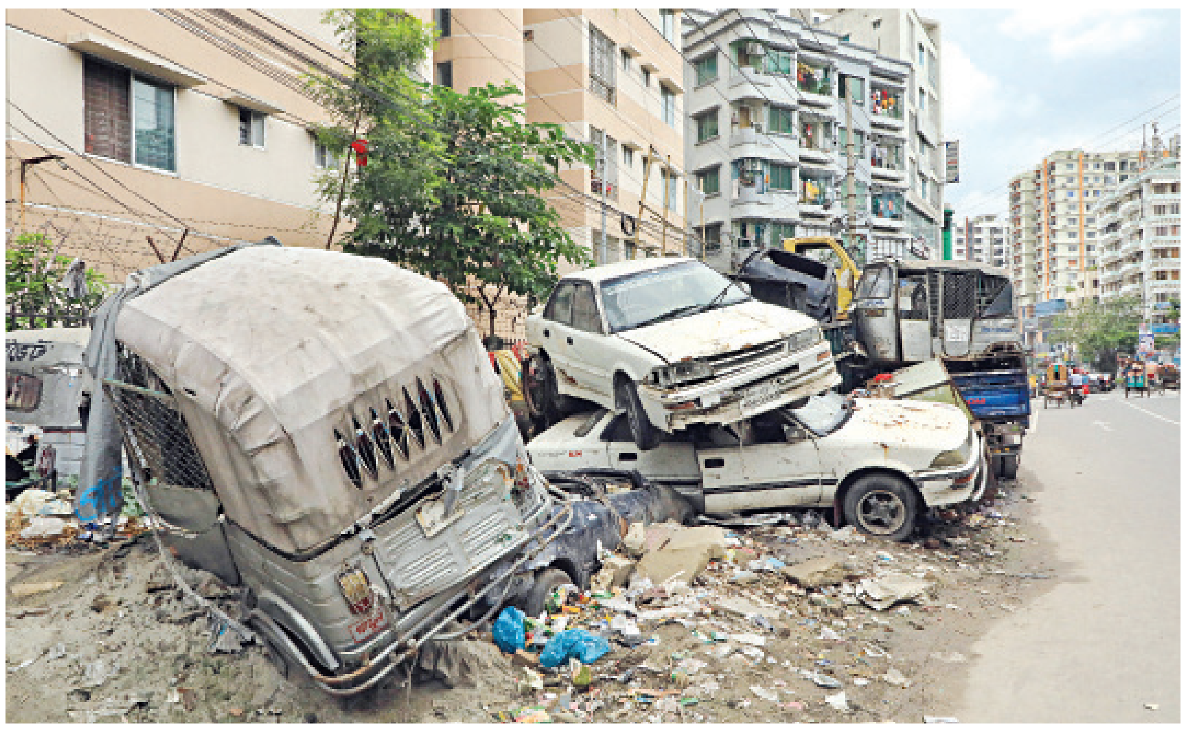
"Therefore, the NHRC finds it logical to disagree with this decision," said Dr Kamal.

Sharifa's story is about a woman ostracised by her family and society. The story highlights the hardships of the "third gender" community, as referred to in the textbook, and the formation of supportive bonds within it.

"We need to change our discriminatory attitudes towards them. Including these topics in our textbooks will help create positive awareness about these communities," Dr Kamal also said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the NHRC chief said, "We

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



This dystopian sight sits right opposite the Adabor Police Station in Mohammadpur. Vehicles, some broken down, sits in this make-shift "impound" on the footpath after being confiscated by cops. As a result, pedestrians are left with no space to walk as vehicles continue to pile up in this space over the years. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Lalmatia field set for a facelift

HELEMUL ALAM

The National Housing Authority has started renovating the 2.25-acre playground near Aarong in Lalmatia, evicting encroachers from the site.

The field, previously used for a kitchen market, is now surrounded by corrugated iron sheets as part of the renovation effort.

An NHA official confirmed that the renovation plan includes the creation of walkways, a playground, a skating zone, a temporary shed, a kids zone, two entrances, a toilet, a parking area, and a Shaheed Minar.

The project, funded by the NHA at a cost of Tk 7.2 crore, began on May 22 and is expected to be completed by December.

However, Adil Mohammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, criticised the design. He argued that the inclusion of a shed in the middle of the park and the establishment of a skating zone would reduce green spaces and increase concrete areas.

This would also increase the project cost and reduce groundwater recharging ability, he added. He also criticised the lack of consultation with locals and professionals before finalising the design.

In response, the NHA official told this correspondent that 3,500 trees, including Kanchan, Ashok, Neem, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Appeal for help

STAR REPORT

The parents of three-year-old Suyaira Akter, who was born with a congenital heart defect, are seeking financial assistance for her treatment, said a press release.

Suyaira needs surgery, which is costly and beyond the means of her family.

Her father, Md Shafikul Islam, a street vendor in Mirzapur Bazar, Tangail, has so far covered her medical expenses from his own income. However, the cost of the surgery is several lakhs of taka, which the family cannot afford.

He appealed to the kind-hearted people in society for donations to help cover the treatment costs.

Funds can be sent to: Md Shafikul Islam, A/C 0200022323477, Agrani Bank, Mirzapur Branch, Tangail. His bKash and Nagad account number is 01743460654.

People cross the busy Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue amid oncoming traffic, throwing caution to the wind. Disaster could strike at a moment's notice. The photo was taken near Karwan Bazar Metro Rail station recently.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

HC upholds death penalty of 'serial killer' Rasu Kha

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday confirmed the death penalty of Rasu Kha, the much-talked about "serial killer" from Chandpur, in the 2019 murder case of Parveen Akhtar, a garment worker.

The bench of Justice Syed Md Ziaul Karim and Justice KM Emrul Kayesh delivered the verdict after holding a hearing on the death reference and appeals, said Deputy Attorney General Md Monirul Islam.

According to a reported confessional statement, Rasu claimed to have killed at least 11 women. Pretending to be in love with his prospective victims, he would lure them into isolated locations and murder them.

Rasu was first arrested in Tongi on September 3, 2009 for stealing fans from a mosque in Chandpur. The police would again come across him following the murder of Parveen. Using her phone records, they tracked Rasu. He was soon arrested and placed on remand on October 7, 2009.

On April 22 in 2015, a Chandpur court sentenced Rasu to death for the rape and murder of another RMG worker Shahida.

Passengers suffer for dilapidated bus terminal

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

The central bus terminal in Patuakhali is in a dilapidated state and in dire need of renovation.

The terminal, constructed by the Local Government Engineering Department in 2003 at a cost of Tk 1.65 crore, was later handed over to the Patuakhali Municipality for operation and maintenance.

Visiting the terminal recently, this correspondent saw local and long-haul buses parked within muddy water as the terminal became waterlogged after rainfall.

Passengers were seen compelled to tread through the muddy water to get on buses or after stepping down from those.

Other amenities at the terminal, including sitting arrangements and restrooms for passengers, were also found in a sorry state.

"The terminal has long been in a poor condition. Even the slightest of rain causes waterlogging at the terminal. Clothes become dirty as we have to tread through muddy water. Travelling in this state is difficult and uncomfortable, especially on long journeys," said Ruhul Amin, a Dhaka-bound passenger from Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

Abul Bashar, a resident of Patuakhali town, and Abul Kalam, another passenger, echoed him.

Md Shaheed, a driver of Rudra-Turya Paribahan on Patuakhali-Barisal-Kuakata route, said transport workers also have to suffer due to the terminal's present condition.

"People from all over the country come to Patuakhali town, mostly to visit Kuakata. They become surprised to witness the bus terminal's state. The terminal needs urgent renovation," said Golam Mawla, vice-president of bus owners' association in Patuakhali.

Jasim Uddin Arzoo, executive engineer of Patuakhali Municipality, said "Since Kuakata is a tourism centre, a new bus terminal with all modern facilities will be constructed soon."

Mass media employee bill to ensure job protection

Says Arafat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All media, including electronic, print, and digital, will be included in the proposed mass media employee bill, said State Minister for Information Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday. He said this law would ensure that all those working in the media will get job protection.

Arafat made the remarks at a meeting with the leaders of the Dhaka Union of Journalists at secretariat.

He said the government wants that the media should highlight its mistakes and failures. "Genuine criticism helps the government correct its mistakes. We don't fear constructive criticism, but we hate when someone misleads people with lies," he said.

Of an empty tiffin box

FROM PAGE 5

a chair.

His eyes were vacant, still the sudden, unbearable pain that engulfed the 45-year-old was quite evident.

Silence hung heavy in the air, punctuated only by the occasional choked sob from a neighbour or relative.

When news of Atoshi's death had reached her elder daughter, Kanika Rani, 19, she rushed from Naogaon to see her mother one last time.

Lankeshar, a mason by trade, battled frequent illness, forcing Atoshi to take on whatever work she could find to keep the household afloat.

Sometimes, that meant sewing clothes for others in the village.

"We were all helpless without Ma," Kanika said.

"None of us knew where anything was kept in the house except her. We can't even imagine a single day without her," she further said.

"How will I take care of my little sister? Will she even survive?" Kanika had more questions than answers.

"I wish Ma was here," she said before starting to cry again.

Lipi Rani, a relative, said, "Due to poverty, Kanika had to get married. They spent nearly Tk 3 lakh, on the dowry and wedding itself, all borrowed from relatives. Atoshi started sewing clothes to help repay the debt."

"Now, with her gone, that burden falls solely on the remaining family members. Atoshi's death has become a nightmare for us," she added.

Lipi Rani then recounted the fateful day at the Ratha Yatra festival.

"We were all barefoot during the procession. Atoshi held onto the chariot with one hand and Dulki with the other. Then, in a blink, everything went wrong."

"A jolt of electricity ripped through us," Lipi continued.

"Atoshi collapsed, a portion of her right hand catching fire. Her back, legs, and lower abdomen were burnt. She was unconscious."

"Dulki, thankfully, remained conscious despite burns on her hands, feet, and back. Seeing her mother lying there, lifeless, the little girl started looking for familiar faces, anyone who could help. When she couldn't find anyone, she broke down in tears. By that time locals intervened and rushed them to the hospital."

"She survived but it was too late for Atoshi," said Lipi.

Meanwhile, the district administration has formed a five-member investigation team while ISKCON a three-member probe body.

An unnatural death case has been filed over the incident.

No pure water

FROM PAGE 5

and rehabilitation officers of the two districts.

HOPE FOR LALMONIRHAT, GRIM REALITY IN SIRAJGANJ

The situation in Lalmonirhat shows signs of improvement, with the Dharla river receding 19cm below danger level.

However, Sirajganj remains heavily affected, with the Jamuna river overflowing.

The river was flowing 30cm above danger level at Kazipur point and 46cm beyond at Sirajganj Hardinge Point at noon yesterday. The water level decreased by 11cm and 4cm respectively.

At least 336 sq km area became inundated by floodwater in the district, affecting 95,000 people, said Md Aktaruzzaman, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Sirajganj.

Removing

FROM PAGE 3

need to understand that these people have constitutionally guaranteed rights."

At the meeting, DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman, said, "People have conceptual limitations about these communities. Incorporating such topics into the curriculum of training institutes will be beneficial."

Visa Processing

Nonimmigrant 5 years multiple USA visa processing, Foreign (UK, USA, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, EUROPE) University/College admission

Admission going on CIMT COLLEGE Canada & Open Hearts Language Academy Miami Florida USA

Ambassador Tours & Travels

: Corporate Office :
317 Configure Bepari Tower (2nd Floor)
GA-64 Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Avenue
Middle Badda, Dhaka -1212
e-mail : iqbalamba@gmail.com

0088(0)1602039527 (Director of Operations)
0088(0)1739072261 (Managing Director)
0088(0)1612228706 (Creative Director)
0088(0)1714100599 (Finance Director)

Govt launches

FROM PAGE 3

and Higher Secondary Education Nehal Ahmed said while younger teachers have adapted the curriculum, it remains challenging for older educators.

Addressing recent leaks of half-yearly question papers, Secretary of the Technical and Madrasa Division Farid Uddin Ahmed said, "We need to prevent such incidents. Necessary measures must be taken."

Prof Md Moshiuzzaman, acting chairman of NCTB, they have identified teachers involved question leak and instructed authorities to take punitive measures.

The curriculum portal https://curriculum.gov.bd/ will contain audio-visual courses for teachers, their experiences, and guides on what and how to teach.

Cargo village

FROM PAGE 3

that CAAB refused to comply.

Among the other two airlines, Regent Air announced a "temporary" shutdown of operations during the pandemic but did not start operations after the pandemic.

Meanwhile, GMG suspended its operations in 2012 due to mismanagement, absence of proper planning, shortage of money, and huge losses, aviation experts said.

Lalmatia

FROM PAGE 3

others, would be planted in the field.

A small portion of the park has been reserved for entries and exits of a metro station planned for the area in the near future.

Manifa Rehnuma, landscape architect and co-founder of And ORDEN, the consulting firm for the project, defended the design.

She said the design has been prepared in a manner so that residents of the area can use it properly. The area, once a recreational hub for football and cricket, had been lost to encroachment over the years, she added.

She said the skating zone was included following demands from local skating clubs as there are no other properly designed skating parks in the area.

Wait for direct rail line gets longer

FROM PAGE 3

through this section.

While launching a commuter train between Dhaka and Rajbari on May 4, the minister said the Bhanga-Jashore section would be opened within two months.

The minister yesterday talked to the officials concerned to know the work progress and when the line could be opened, sources said.

Project Director Afzal Hossain, who was among the participants in the meeting, said they would require two more months to complete installation of the signalling system.

Besides, they would require more time to complete the works at Bhanga junction station and the TT Para underpass.

"We will be able to complete all physical works within October and then the line will be ready to open in the first week of November," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked about the previously set July deadline, he said, "We can now operate trains on the line without a signalling system. But the operation would not be smooth. Besides, we did not get manpower for the new line."

"So, we told the minister that the section should be opened upon completion of the entire works," he added.

Replying to another question, he said the project tenure has already been extended up to June 2025.

Contacted, BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali said the minister wanted to know about the update of the project and the project authorities informed him in detail.

Once the works are completed fully, the prime minister will inaugurate the line, he said.

Once the under-construction rail line becomes functional, the distance between Dhaka and Jashore will decrease by 200km, cutting the travel time in half. Currently, it takes over eight hours to reach Jashore.

The line, which will directly connect the country's two biggest seaports -- Chattogram and Mongla -- is estimated to boost the country's annual GDP by one percent.

CDIP 1st Zero-coupon Bond

This is for the kind information of all concerned that the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) had accorded its consent to issue the Non-Convertible, Fully Redeemable, Unsecured CDIP 1st Zero-coupon Bond of BDT 1,710 million (face value) for 3 years of Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP) through private placement. The proceeds of the bonds will be utilized to extend financial support to its microcredit and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through portfolio expansion via investments in both new and established initiatives. The consent has been accorded subject to compliance with the relevant laws and regulatory requirements.

Approved Information Memorandum (IM) is also available on CDIP's website
Https://cdipbd.org/CDIP_1st_ZCB_IM.pdf

Mifta Naim Huda
Executive Director
Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP)
House No.-22/9, Block-B, Babor Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Department of Textiles
Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute, Sunamganj Project (2nd Revised)
BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor),
7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Corrigendum Notice-2

Dated:09/07/2024

Tender Ref. No : T-4/Textiles Machineries Lab/2023-24 for Supply, Installation ,Testing and Commissioning of Textiles Machineries and Lab Equipment for Institute has been published on 24 June2024 in The Daily Star and The Daliy Jugantor shall be amended as follows:

Serial Number Tender Notice	Description	Written as	Amended as
7	Date	June2024	23 June2024
14	Tender Submission Date and Time	24 July 2024 Time-12:30 PM	29 July 2024 Time-12:30 PM
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	24 July 2024 Time- 2:00 PM	29 July 2024 Time- 2:00 PM
19	Eligibility of Tenderer	(g) Minimum liquid asset 30,00,00,000.00 (Thirty Crore)	g) Minimum liquid asset 29,00,00,000.00 (Twenty Nine Crore)
	ITT Clause29.1 Tender Validity period shall be (Page No-28)	180 days	120 days

All other terms and condition will remain unchanged and this corrigendum notice will be part of the integral part of tender document.

02/07/2024
(Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain)
Project Director
Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute, Sunamganj Project (2nd Revised)

GD- 31

College staffer sent to jail on rape charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Police have arrested a peon of Chittagong Government College on charges of raping an HSC examinee of the institution.

A Chattogram court sent the arrestee -- Mossharraf Hossain Manik, 30, an office assistant of the Physics department -- to jail yesterday, said Wali Uddin Akbar, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police Station.

Earlier, the 19-year-old filed a case with the police station accusing Manik.

On June 29, Manik took the girl to a hotel and raped her, according to the case statement.

88 dengue patients hospitalised

UNB, *Dhaka*

Eighty eight people were hospitalised with dengue fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, 27 patients were hospitalised in Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Currently, 287 patients are receiving treatment at several hospitals.

A total of 4,129 dengue cases and 47 deaths have been reported since January 1, 2024.

Last year, a total of 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record.

The DGHS recorded 321,179 dengue cases and 3,18,749 recoveries last year.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 10

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Lankeshar Sarkar clutches the empty tiffin box that his wife, Atoshi Rani, had taken to the Ratha Yatra festival, before tragedy struck. His daughter Monika, only 9, lies in a hospital floor, fighting for her life with severe burn injuries.

PHOTO: **STAR**

RATHA YATRA TRAGEDY

Of an empty tiffin box and a family in ruins

MOSTAFA SHABUJ, *Bogura*

Celebrations can turn tragic within the blink of an eye. And tragedies leave behind a trail of unimaginable grief, like a girl fighting for her life unaware of her mother's demise and a father-husband whose life has just taken a turn for the worst.

All these, can sometimes be signified with something as small as an empty tiffin box.

Atoshi Rani, 40, of Bogura left home on July 7 holding her 9-year old daughter Monika on one hand and a tiffin box on the other. Their destination was the Bogura ISKCON temple.

Monika did not want to miss out on a joyous celebration, the Ratha Yatra (chariot procession) festival.

Atoshi was in two minds about joining the festivities this year, as that would mean leaving her ailing husband Lankesar back home. But she gave in to her nine-year-old's demands.

She took the tiffin box with them to bring back prasad (offerings) for her husband.

But that evening, the empty tiffin box returned to Lankesar, alongside the body of his beloved wife.

Meanwhile Monika, Dulki as her father calls her, is screaming in pain at the surgery ward of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura with burn injuries.

Five people including Atoshi were electrocuted to death and 41 others injured during Ratha Yatra in Bogura on Sunday.

After visiting the house of Atoshi, this correspondent was met with a scene of suffocating silence.

Atoshi's husband, Lankeshar Sarkar, sat slumped in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

FLOOD IN THE NORTH

No pure water to drink

Child dies in Kurigram, situation unchanged in Sirajganj, improves a bit in Lalmonirhat

STAR REPORT

Submerged homes, unusable toilets, and an acute drinking water crisis, thousands in Kurigram are struggling to meet their basic necessities due to the ongoing flood.

These have raised concerns of a waterborne disease outbreak.

"Everyone in my family of seven is suffering a lot due to a lack of pure drinking water," said Sahera Bewa, 58, of Char Madhya Kadamtala under Kurigram Sadar upazila.

"Since the toilet is unusable now, we are compelled to use banana tree rafts as makeshift toilets in the open. This is embarrassing but we have no alternatives," she added.

Jariman Begum of Char Bhagabatipur village paints a similar picture.

All 65 families in her village are facing the same ordeal. They are forced to use flood water for drinking and daily chores due to a lack of alternatives.

"The water is contaminated, but what can we do?" said Jariman's husband, Suruj Ali. "There is no other source of drinkable water here."

HEALTH RISKS AND RELIEF EFFORTS

Dr Monjur-e-Murshed, Kurigram's civil surgeon, warned of the dangers of consuming contaminated water, including the spread of diarrhoea, abdominal pain, and dysentery.

He said 80 medical teams have been deployed to the affected areas.

While water levels in the Brahmaputra and Dudhkumar rivers have receded slightly, they are still 44cm and 10cm above danger level respectively, said officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Relief efforts are underway, with authorities distributing water-purifying tablets among flood victims.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

The floods have also claimed a life. Eight-year-old Sabbir Ahmed drowned in floodwater in Musallipara village at Ulipur upazila of Kurigram.

Confirming the matter, Ataur Rahman, UNO of Ulipur, said they have urged residents in flood-affected areas to closely supervise children to prevent similar tragedies.

The ongoing flood has affected 1,35,939 people in Kurigram and around 25,000 people in Lalmonirhat, said relief

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

3 killed in M'singh road accident

UNB, *Mymensingh*

Three people were killed and another injured when a truck rammed into a battery-run human haulier on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road at Harua Bus Stand in Ishwarganj upazila of Mymensingh district yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Taslim Mia, 28, the human haulier driver, of Charsihari village and Arifuzzaman Rakib, 20, and Jahanara Begum, 35, of Nashti village in the upazila.

The accident occurred around 2:00pm when the Mymensingh-bound truck hit the battery-run human haulier from Laxmiganj Bazar, leaving two killed on the spot and two others injured, said Majedur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ishwarganj Police Station.

The injured were taken to Ishwarganj Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared one of them dead.

Locals managed to apprehend the truck driver and his helper and handed them over to police.

Government of the peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of the Public Health Engineering
Bagerhat District, Bagerhat
e-mailsee.bagerhat@dphe.gov.bd
টেলিফোন নং-02477751554

Memo No. 46.03.0100.061.16.010.17-704 Date : 07/07/2024.

Invitation for e-Tender Notice No-02 (2024-2025)

1	Ministry/ Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
3	Project/Program Name	Project for Safe Water Supply Throughout the Country.
4	e-Tender IDs	1001169,1001170,1001171,1001172,1001173,1001175,1001176,1001177,1001178,1001179
5	Description of Works	Installation of Deep Tubewell With 06 No. Hand Pump 378 nos & Construction of Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) 522 nos at Different Upazilla In Bagerhat District Under Project for Safe Water Supply Throughout The Country(PSWSC) Fy-2024-2025.
5	This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.Interested DBO Firm/Contractor can see details in the website : (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) Size : 4" x 3	

(Jayanta Mallick)
Executive Engineer
DPHE,Bagerhat District

GD- 25

BFCC
Biman Flight Catering Centre বিমান ফ্লাইট ক্যাটারিং সেন্টার

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ৫৭/২০২৪

০১	এজেন্সি	বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইন্স লিঃ।		
০২	কি জন্য আহ্বান	[illegible] দরপত্র আহ্বান।		
০৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানের সূত্র	[illegible] তারিখ [illegible]		
০৪	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	০৯-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ হতে ২৩-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)।		
০৫	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	২৪-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ	সময় ১২.০০ স্থানীয় সময়	কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো/সকল দরপত্র বাতিল/গ্রহণ, দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ পরিবর্তন করার অধিকার বিএফসিসি কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন। যদি দরপত্র খোলার দিন ছুটি থাকে অথবা অনিবার্য কোনো কারণবশতঃ দরপত্র গ্রহণ/খোলা সম্ভব না হয় তাহলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবস দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার দিন তারিখ হিসেবে গণ্য করা হবে।
০৬	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ	সময় ১৫.০০ স্থানীয় সময়	
০৭	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস সমূহের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ক) ব্যবস্থাপক [illegible], বিমান ফ্লাইট ক্যাটারিং সেন্টার, হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা। খ) ব্যবস্থাপক ক্যাশ এন্ড ব্যাংকিং, বলাকা ভবন, বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইন্স লিঃ ঢাকা।		
০৮	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিস সমূহের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ক) প্রধান গেইট, বিমান ফ্লাইট ক্যাটারিং সেন্টার, হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা। খ) বিমান বলাকা ভবন প্রধান গেইট (নীচতলা), হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা।		
০৯	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	টাকা ২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) মাত্র প্রতি সেট (অফেরতযোগ্য)।		
১০	০১) অবস্থান	০২) দরপত্রের জামানতের পরিমাণ (টাকা)	০৩) চুক্তির মেয়াদ	
	বিএফসিসি, হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা।	টাকা ১,১০,০০০.০০ (এক লক্ষ দশ হাজার) মাত্র (ফেরতযোগ্য)।	০২ (দুই) বছর	
১১	দরপত্র সাহায্যকারী সত্তার নাম ও তহবিল	মহাব্যবস্থাপক, বিএফসিসি, হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা ও বিমানের নিজস্ব তহবিল।		
১২	অফিসিয়াল দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী	উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, বিএফসিসি হযরত শাহজালাল আন্তর্জাতিক বিমানবন্দর, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা ফোন: [illegible] শাখা: [illegible], ফ্যাক্স: [illegible]।		
১৩	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিসহ অন্যান্য আনুষাঙ্গিক সকল তথ্যাদি অফিসিয়ালভাবে বিমান ওয়েবসাইট: www.biman-airlines.com এ পাওয়া যাবে।			

উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, বিএফসিসি

GD-27

আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিঃ
ASHUGANJ POWER STATION COMPANY LTD.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified Management System.

স্মারক নং: ২৭.২৫.১২৩৩.২১১.১১.০০৩.১৮(এড-২).০৪০৩
তারিখঃ ২৫ আষাঢ় ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
০৯ জুলাই ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি (সংশোধনী)

স্মারক নং: ২৭.২৫.১২৩৩.২১১.১১.০০৩.১৮(এড-১).০৩৬৬, তারিখ: ২৭/০৬/২০২৪ মোতাবেক গত ২৮/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখে 'দৈনিক ইত্তেফাক' এবং ২৯/০৬/২০২৪ তারিখে 'The Daily Star' পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত সহকারী প্রকৌশলী পদে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির শর্তাবলীর ক্রমিক নং ১ এর বয়সসীমা: ১৫ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছর হতে হবে (মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটায় তাদের সন্তানদের ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর)। এর পরিবর্তে বয়সসীমা: ১৫ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছর হতে হবে (মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটায় তাদের সন্তানদের ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর) এবং বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স ৪০ বছর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য নির্ধারণ করা হলো। উক্ত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় তথ্য এপিএসসিএল'র ওয়েবসাইট **http://www.apscl.gov.bd** এ পাওয়া যাবে। অনলাইন আবেদন করার লিংক **http://apscl.teletalk.com.bd**। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

S.M. Zakir
০৯.০৭.২০২৪
সালাউদ্দিন মোহাম্মদ জাকির
ব্যবস্থাপক (এইচআর ও প্রশাসন) অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office Of The Executive Engineer
Zone-06, Dhaka.

e-Tender Notice

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.06.001.2024 Dated: 09/07/2024

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal (Http//www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer, Zone-6 Dhaka South City Corporation For the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website form 08/07/2024 at 22.00 PM.

Sl No.	Tender ID, Ref No & package No	Name of works	Last Selling date and Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	1001668	Development work of road from kayetpara Bazar to Raham Ali Member's house (CH-434.00 m. to CH-1090.00 m.) under Zone 6 Ward No. 75 constituency Dhaka-9.	31-Jul-2024 13:30	31-Jul-2024 14:00
2	1001669	Development work of road at Kayetpara Bazar CC Road to Iderakandi Azgar Member's house (Chainage 00 m to 435 m) under ward 75, zone 06 DSCC.	24-Jul-2024 13:30	24-Jul-2024 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e- Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Signed/-
(Md. Parvez Rana)
Executive Engineer
Zone -6
Dhaka South City Corporation

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৮/২০২৪-২০২৫
(5x4)

ANNUAL SUMMIT

Embattled Biden greets Nato allies in Washington

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden welcomed the heads of Nato member states to Washington yesterday for an annual summit that gives the embattled Democrat an international stage to convince allies at home and abroad he can still lead.

Biden, 81, has vowed to press on in his race against Republican Donald Trump, 78, despite concern from Democrats on Capitol Hill and donors that he will lose the November 5 election after a halting debate performance on June 27.

Biden made restoring the United States' traditional alliances abroad to counter the threat of autocracies the centerpiece of his foreign policy after Trump challenged allies as part of an "America First" approach. Who wins in November could have a substantial impact on Nato's and Europe's future.

Trump has suggested that, given a second term, he would not defend Nato members that did not meet the alliance's defense spending target of two percent of their respective GDP if they came under military attack. He has also questioned the amount of aid given to Ukraine.

Aides said Biden's opening speech expected at 5:00 pm Eastern time (2100 GMT) will highlight what his administration sees as a key accomplishment: a stronger and more united Nato, under Washington's leadership, with more members and a resolve to meet their collective security needs.

That brings, they say, tangible results for American voters: a safer country, with a strong international economic position, more alliances and power abroad, and less at risk of conflict with its adversaries.

Rescuers carry the body of a person found under debris at the site where an apartment building was hit by a Russian missile strike in Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday. Targeting hospitals in Ukraine is a "war crime," a senior UN official told an emergency meeting of the Security Council yesterday, called in the wake of deadly strikes that Kyiv blamed on Russia. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Ukrainian drones target Russian military airfield, oil refinery

AFP, *Kyiv*

Ukrainian drones targeted a military airfield, an oil refinery and substation in southern Russia, a defence source in Kyiv said yesterday, after Moscow reported an overnight aerial barrage.

Kyiv has stepped up cross border aerial attacks on Russia in recent months, attempting to damage energy infrastructure and the Kremlin's war chest by hurting oil revenues.

Russia has launched drone and missiles attacks that have crippled Ukrainian power plants and halved the country's generation capacity.

In an operation coordinated by Security Services of Ukraine and the country's military intelligence, drone spurred explosions at the Akhtyubinsk military airfield in Russia's Astrakhan region.

It also said there had been blasts at an electrical substation in the Rostov region and an oil depot in the southern Volgograd region.

The source added that Ukrainian forces would pursue more strikes on "Russian military facilities working for the war against Ukraine."

There was no response in Moscow to the specific claims.

The Russian defence ministry however had earlier said that its air defence systems had destroyed 38 Ukrainian drones in regions near the border between the two countries, including Rostov and Astrakhan.

Rostov's governor Vasily Golubev in comments to state-run agency TASS acknowledged an electric substation had been damaged in a drone attack, saying repairs would take three days.

And Astrakhan's governor Igor Babushkin said Ukraine had launched a "massive attempt to attack targets with drones" in the north of the region, adding that the attack had been "successfully repelled".

Both sides have used drones, including larger self-detonating craft with ranges stretching hundreds of kilometres extensively throughout the conflict, which began in February 2022.

> **"Whether it is war, conflict... any person who believes in humanity, is pained when there is loss of lives."**
>
> Indian PM **Narendra Modi** tells Putin during Moscow visit

A Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

Yatharth Hospital, a private medical facility, reports Indian Express, quoting police.

In the alleged racket, records show, patients from Bangladesh were lured by a network of middlemen, Kumari, and their associates for organ transplantation in major hospitals around the Indian capital.

The Bangladeshis involved in the racket were named in the news report as Rasel, 29, from Kushtia, and his associates Md Sumon Miya, 28, Md Rokon, 26, and Ifti. All except Ifti were arrested.

Together with Tripura-based Ratish Pal, they lured potential donors from Bangladesh to Delhi, where the donors would receive four to five lakh rupees for their kidneys. Recipients were charged 25 to 30 lakh rupees, a source told Indian Express.

Donors and recipients coordinated their stay, treatment and tests through a medical tourism company named Al Shifa, sources said.

Rasel rented a flat in Jasola village, where potential donors stayed and met with recipients.

A source told Indian Express, "Five to six donors were staying at this rented flat. All the tests before the transplant were completed. The recipients would also meet the donors at the flat."

During the arrests, a bag recovered from Rasel's room contained nine passports, two diaries, and a register. These passports belonged to kidney donors and recipients and the diary reportedly had details of monetary transactions between the donor and recipient.

UK appoints

FROM PAGE 12

"the City" after the City of London financial district, since 2021.

Her appointment has not been formally announced by the government.

In May, she told the Financial Times that Labour would push the Financial Conduct Authority, Britain's markets regulator, to do more to remove barriers to competitiveness and growth.

New finance minister Rachel Reeves on Monday launched a new "national mission" to drive economic growth, setting out plans to increase housebuilding, unblock infrastructure projects and attract private investment.

Siddiq would succeed Bim Afolami, a former HSBC banker who held the role under the previous Conservative government.

Road crash

FROM PAGE 12

the lorry, dead. Four passengers of the bus were rescued in a critical state. They were sent to SZMCH. Besides, some injured passengers were admitted to that hospital."

When asked about the accident, Shahidul Islam said quoting witnesses that the lorry strayed from its lane and came to the middle of the road.

The bus passengers also told firefighters the bus had also moved from its lane to the middle of the road.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Dinajpur
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.2700.000.07.59.01.23-2890 Date: 09/07/2024

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (OTM) (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for 01 No. Package of SSWRDP-2 Project, FY. 2024-2025 for this District.

Sl No.	Name of Package	Name of work	Tender ID
1	LGED/SSWRDP-2/BD-P-98/23-24/75137-Structure	(a) Buried Pipe Network System at ch.12+870 km, (b) Construction of Header Tank (L=6.40m, W 4.2m & H=8.0m), (c) Pumping Platform (2Nos-7.5x2m), (d) Bank Protection work (L=24.4m), (e) Small Gully Crossing, (f) Road Crossing (L=90.0m). (g) Barbed Wire Fencing for Header Tank & WMCA Office Building (L= 102.8m), (h) Supply of Accessories for Pump, (i) Supply of Electric Pump and Motor with Power Connection, (j) Construction WMCA Office Building, (k) Electrical Works of WMCA Office, (1) Supplying furniture of WMCA Office Building, (m) Supply of Computer and other related item for WMCA Office, (n) Project Identification signboard, (o) Documentation of Works of Chakrampur Atrai Nadi (SP ID-75137) under Upazila: Sadar, District: Dinajpur.	999698

Last selling date & time 07-08-2024, 15:00, closing & opening date & time 08-08-2024, 11:00.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to **07 August 2024, 16:00.**
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Masudur Rahman
Executive Engineer
LGED Dinajpur
Phone: 02589923381
xen.dinajpur@lged.gov.bd

GD- 29

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ড্যান্ট, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা-এর কার্যালয়
মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন, গেন্ডারিয়া, ঢাকা-১২০৪।

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্মারক নং- ১৩৬০ /ই তারিখ- ০৯/০৭/২০২৪খ্রি।

প্রচলিত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং বিধিমালা-২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) মোতাবেক ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসরে আরআরএফ-ঢাকা পুলিশের নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভিন্ন আইটেমের মালামাল সমূহ ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ কাজের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে পৃথক পৃথক সীলমোহরকৃত মুখবন্ধ খামে কাজের নাম উল্লেখ পূর্বক প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসর

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২.	সংস্থা	আরআরএফ-ঢাকা।
৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	কমান্ড্যান্ট, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা।
৪.	সংগ্রহ সত্তার জেলা	আরআরএফ-ঢাকা।
৫.	দরপত্রের বিষয়	ক্রমিক নং- ১৮-এ উল্লেখ করা হলো।
৬.	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৭.	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ বাজেট এবং ১৮ নং-অনুচ্ছেদে কোড উল্লেখ আছে।
৮.	দরপত্র প্রকাশের/ইস্যুর তারিখ	১১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি।
৯.	দরপত্র সিডিউল সর্বশেষ প্রাপ্তির তারিখ	২১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১০.	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১১.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি তারিখ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা দরপত্র দাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)।
১২.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা, মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন্সে নবনির্মিত ৬ষ্ঠ তলা ভবনের ২য় তলা, গেন্ডারিয়া, ঢাকা।
১৩.	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	১। কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা, মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন্সে নবনির্মিত ৬ষ্ঠ তলা ভবনের ২য় তলা, গেন্ডারিয়া, ঢাকা, ২। কমান্ড্যান্ট, টিএসএস, এর কার্যালয়, মিলব্যারাক, ঢাকা।
১৪.	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা, মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন্সে নবনির্মিত ৬ষ্ঠ তলা ভবনের ২য় তলা, গেন্ডারিয়া, ঢাকা।
১৫.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা, মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন্সে নবনির্মিত ৬ষ্ঠ তলা ভবনের ২য় তলা, গেন্ডারিয়া, ঢাকা।
১৬.	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি তারিখ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা হতে পিপিআর-২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীসহ) এর বিধি অনুযায়ী নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত।
১৭.	দরপত্রদাতার প্রাথমিক যোগ্যতা বা দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজ পত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।	(১) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, (২) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সার্টিফিকেট, (৩) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, (৪) হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট, (৫) নাগরিকত্ব সার্টিফিকেট, (৬) মালিকানার এফিডেভিট, (৭) হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট, (৮) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, (৯) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, (১০) মোবাইল নম্বরসহ দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৮.	কাজের বিস্তারিত বর্ণনা	সিডিউল মোতাবেক।

ক্রম নং	দরপত্রের/কাজের নাম	সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	কার্যকাল
১.	পুলিশ সদস্যগণের পোশাক সেলাই, কোড নং-৩২৫৬১০৬	৭৫০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	(২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসর) (০১ জুলাই/২০২৪খ্রি মাস হতে ৩০ জুন/২০২৫খ্রি মাস পর্যন্ত)

১৯.	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	(ক) নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে। (মূল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শনসহ) (খ) পুলিশ বিভাগের কালো তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নয় মর্মে ঘোষণাপত্র। (গ) তিনি যেকোন/সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। (ঘ) দরপত্র গ্রহণ/খোলার দিন অনিবার্য কারণ বশতঃ অফিস বন্ধ থাকলে পরবর্তী অফিস খোলার দিন দরপত্র গ্রহণ এবং খোলা হবে। (ঙ) সকল কাজের ক্ষেত্রে প্রকৃত অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন ঠিকাদারদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

অতিঃ আইজি
(মহামান্য অ্যাপিলেট ডিভিশন অব সুপ্রীম কোর্টের রায়ের আলোকে)
কমান্ড্যান্ট, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা।

GD- 26

Two killed in Israeli strike on Hezbollah vehicle in Syria

AFP, *Beirut*

A war monitor said two people were killed yesterday in an Israeli strike on a vehicle belonging to Lebanon's Hezbollah group in the Damascus countryside near the Lebanese border.

Hezbollah has traded almost daily cross-border fire from Lebanon with the Israeli army since October in support of Palestinian ally Hamas, with Israel targeting operatives from the group in both Lebanon and neighbouring Syria.

"At least two people were killed and one was wounded in an Israeli drone strike on a Hezbollah car" on the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The car was targeted near a Syrian army checkpoint, the monitor said.

MEDITERRANEAN

Charity warns about migrant 'emergency'

AFP, *Rome*

German charity Sea-Eye yesterday said it had come to the rescue of migrant boats five times in 24 hours, which showed "the state of emergency" in the Mediterranean.

The Sea-Eye 4 responded to the distress calls along with two other rescue charity ships between Sunday and Monday, rescuing some 230 people, including a mother and her baby, it said.

"Five rescues in 24 hours. That shows the state of emergency in the Mediterranean at the moment, and how important it is that we are there to save lives," the charity said in a statement.

After having transferred some migrants to an Italian coast guard vessel, yesterday it was transporting some 170 others to the assigned port in Genoa, in northern Italy, which it said was a six-day round trip.

WATER
1013
unicef
unicef

Palestinians collect water from a Unicef tanker in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Israel pushed on with a major military offensive in Gaza City that the UN said has once again displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Famine has spread throughout Gaza

Say UN experts after recent deaths of several more children from malnutrition

REUTERS, *Geneva*

The recent deaths of several more children from malnutrition in the Gaza Strip indicate that famine has spread throughout the enclave, a group of independent human rights experts mandated by the United Nations said yesterday.

Gaza health authorities say at least 33 children have died of malnutrition, mostly in northern areas which had until recently faced the brunt of the Israeli military campaign.

Since early May, the offensive has spread to southern Gaza, hitting aid flows into the enclave amid restrictions by Israel, which has accused UN agencies of failing to distribute supplies efficiently.

In yesterday's statement, the group of 11 rights experts cited the deaths of three children aged 13, 9-years-old and six months from malnutrition in the southern area of Khan Younis and the central area of Deir Al-Balah since the end of May.

"With the death of these children from starvation despite medical treatment in central Gaza, there is no doubt that famine has spread from northern Gaza into central and southern Gaza," the experts said.

Their statement, signed by experts including the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, condemned "Israel's intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people".

Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva said the statement amounted to "misinformation".

"Israel has continuously scaled up its coordination and assistance in the delivery of humanitarian aid across the Gaza Strip, recently connecting its power line to the Gaza water desalination plant," it added.

India floods swamp nat'l park

Six rhinos killed

AFP, *Guwahati*

Devastating floods in India's northeast that have killed scores of people also swamped a national park drowning six threatened rhinos and other wildlife, government officials said yesterday.

Floods have begun to ease, Assam state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a statement, noting the "water level of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries is below the danger level in most places".

More than 1.8 million people have been affected across 3,000 villages, as well as 72 killed since mid-May, according to state disaster officials.

Urea output plummets

FROM PAGE 1

has to purchase fertiliser at the prevailing rate in the global market from Kafco, a joint venture between the government and private investors from Bangladesh, Japan, Denmark and the Netherlands.

It means the government is getting urea from only GPFPLC out of five state-owned producers at a lower cost.

Currently, there is no fertiliser crisis, according to Md Saidur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

"If we don't get gas from one or two more factories in the near future, there might be a problem," he said, adding that if the energy division were able to supply adequate gas, the factories would have been running in full swing.

The Aman season, which accounts for about 40 percent of Bangladesh's rice production, begins in July-August and ends in November-December. If the gas crisis continues, fertiliser supply may be hampered in the upcoming Aman season, which can go on to fuel food inflation.

In the absence of local urea production, the government is relying more and more on costly imports.

This gives rise to two problems: exhaustion of limited dollar stockpile and ensuring a strict shipment schedule of fertilisers, said Jahangir Alam, an agriculture economist.

As of June 30, foreign currency reserves stood at $21.8 billion, enough to meet about three-and-a-half months' import bills, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"If we rely completely on imports during the farming season, there might be hold-ups in getting steady supply of fertilisers. Rather, it will be beneficial for all if we increase gas supply to the fertiliser plants," Alam added.

Gas supply to the fertiliser plants was reduced to make way for increased supply to the gas-fired power plants for higher electricity generation during the summer months, said a top official of Petrobangla on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the matter.

"The gas crisis has been going on for a long time, so the supply has to be rationed," he added.

Between July last year and April this year, Jamuna Fertiliser could meet just 42 percent of its production target for want of gas, while Shahjalal Fertiliser managed 57 percent, according to the latest report of BCIC.

Chittagong Urea Fertiliser met 74 percent of its production target and Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company 69 percent, the report said.

The four factories are shut now, which means they fell short of their production target for fiscal 2023-24 by a wider margin, according to BCIC officials.

Besides the urea, Bangladesh consumes DAP and TSP fertilisers, both of which are mostly imported.

The lone DAP factory achieved only 36.6 percent of its production target and the TSP factory achieved about 66 percent in April.

Last fiscal year, as much as $5 billion was spent on fertiliser imports, according to data from BCIC. In fiscal 2020-21, fertiliser imports stood at $1.4 billion. In the previous years, imports were even lower.

About 15 years ago, BCIC was producing 70 percent of the fertiliser required, according to Alam, also a director of Dhaka School of Economics. Now, local production accounts for 25 to 30 percent of the demand.

"BCIC became import dependent instead of focusing on scaling up local production, which was the main duty of the organisation. We have the advantage and ability to produce nearly 100 percent of required urea locally, but due to gas shortage, the import dependency has been increasing," Alam added.

If the government purchased fertiliser from local producers, the cost for per metric tonne of urea would be about Tk 25,000, according to BCIC officials. It costs more than Tk 45,000 to bring the same volume of urea from abroad. For urea purchases from Kafco, the rate is about Tk 40,000.

Taliban pledge growing role for morality police

Says UN report

AFP, *Kabul*

The Taliban government's morality police will play an increasing role in enforcing religious law in Afghanistan, according to a UN report published yesterday that accused them of creating a "climate of fear".

The report from the UN assistance mission in Afghanistan said the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice "had negative impacts on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms... with a discriminatory and disproportionate impact on women".

But the report also carried a response from Taliban authorities, who said the vice ministry had a bigger role to play. The ministry implements an austere vision of Islam, which has increasingly dominated Afghanistan since the 2021 Taliban takeover.

Morality police squads are empowered to scold, arrest and deliver punishments to citizens violating edicts which have marginalised women, effectively banned music and outlawed other activity deemed un-Islamic.

The UN report said there was a "a climate of fear and intimidation" owing to the ministry's invasion of Afghans' private lives, ambiguity over its legal powers, and the "disproportionality of punishments".

However, in their written response Taliban authorities said the vice ministry is "dedicated to promoting benefits and averting harm in all spheres of peoples' lives".

"Its official documents, as previously stated, draw from Sharia and Islamic law, and as a result, its role is growing as required by the situation."

The UN report documents the work of the vice ministry between the Taliban's return to power three years ago and March of this year. It said the Taliban government had overseen a ban on women travelling without male escorts, barred them from public parks and shut women-run businesses.

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স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.০৬৫১.৪০৩.১৪.০৪৫.২৩-২৮৭০ তারিখঃ ০৭/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

ফেরিঘাটের ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (৭ম আহবান)

০১।	ইজারা কোটেশন নং	:	০৫ (ইজারা)/বিসাবরি/২০২৩-২০২৪
০২।	ইজারার বিবরণ	:	বরিশাল সড়ক বিভাগাধীন বরিশাল (দিনারেরপুল)-লক্ষ্মীপাশা-দুমকী সড়কের ১৪তম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত গেমা ফেরিঘাটের টোল আদায়ের জন্য ইজারা প্রদান।
০৩।	ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	:	৩ (তিন) অর্থ বৎসর (১০৯৫ দিন)।
০৪।	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য	:	টাঃ ১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)।
০৫।	জামানতের টাকার পরিমাণ	:	উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে।
০৬।	ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	২৩/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৭।	মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	২৪/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৮।	ইজারা ডাকে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	:	জাতি ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারী/বেসরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকানায়।
০৯।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন ক্রয়ের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে	:	বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, বরিশাল/জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল/ভোলা/ঝালকাঠী/পিরোজপুর/প্ল্যানিং বিভাগ-১, সড়ক ভবন, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা।
১০।	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	:	(ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, বরিশাল। (খ) অতিরিক্ত প্রধান প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, বরিশাল জোন, বরিশাল। (গ) তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, বরিশাল। (ঘ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল। (ঙ) জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল।
১১।	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	:	স্থানঃ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল। তারিখঃ ২৪/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ। সময়ঃ বেলা ৩.০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	(ক) ইজারা আহ্বানকারী যে কোন সময় যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। (খ) যদি কোনও অনিবার্য পরিস্থিতিতে নির্দিষ্ট তারিখে ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণ/খোলা না যায়, তাহলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই সময়ে এবং একই স্থানে তা গ্রহণ/খোলা হবে। (গ) ইজারা কোটেশনদাতা কথায় ও অংকে দর উদ্ধৃত করবেন। (ঘ) এই ইজারা কোটেশন বিজ্ঞপ্তি RHD ওয়েবসাইট www.rhd.gov.bd এর মাধ্যমে দেখা যেতে পারে।		

মাসুদ মাহমুদ সুমন
পরিচিতি নং ৬০২১৩৫
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল

GD- 32

EDCL এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া

সূত্র নং-ইডিসিএল/বগুড়া/ক্রয়/২০২৪/০৬ তারিখঃ ০৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং

ইডিসিএল বগুড়া কারখানার CC Kits Building এর উত্তর পার্শ্বে নতুন Incinerator স্থাপনের জন্য একটি Incinerator House নির্মাণ কাজের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড, বগুড়া কারখানার CC Kits Building এর উত্তর পার্শ্বে নতুন Incinerator স্থাপনের জন্য একটি Incinerator House নির্মাণ করার লক্ষ্যে সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের সাথে সম্পৃক্ত অভিজ্ঞ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র ইডিসিএল, হিসাব বিভাগ, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ৩৯৫-৩৯৭ শি/এ, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৮ এবং ইডিসিএল, হিসাব বিভাগ, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়া এর ক্যাশ শাখা হতে নগদ ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) মূল্যে ১০/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ হইতে আগামী ২৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ক্রয় করা যাবে। আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে আগামী ৩০/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়ার ক্রয় বিভাগের রক্ষিত সীলমোহরকৃত টেন্ডার বক্সে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে এবং ঐদিন বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) ইডিসিএল, ঠনঠনিয়া, বগুড়ায় খোলা হবে। ইডিসিএল কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। উল্লেখ্য যে, দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন কোন প্রকার দরপত্র বিক্রয় করা হবে না।

উপ-ব্যবস্থাপক ক্রয়
পক্ষেঃ উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও প্লান্ট প্রধান

GD- 28

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DPHE. STORE DIVISION
CHARERHAT, KHALISHPUR.KHULNA.PHONE # 762159.
E-mail: khulna_store@yahoo.com

Invitation For Tender(Works)

e-Tender Notice Number- 01/ 2024-25

Memo No: 46.03.4700.028.07.001.19- 28 Date:09/07/2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal(http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Office of the Executive Engineer, Store Division, Khulna.

Tender ID No	Tender Package	Description of Goods	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1003095	APP/K/S/0 8	Repairing of Godown shade Roof at DPHE, store Division,Khulna (FY:2024-2025)	23-Jul-2024 Time: 16:00	24-Jul-2024 Time: 11:00	24-Jul-2024 Time: 11:00

This is an online Tender, Where only e-Tender Will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted.

০৯/০৭/২০২৪
(Md. Khairul Hasan)
Executive Engineer,
DPHE, Store Division, Khulna.

GD- 30

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Ensure fairness in civil service tests

News of PSC question paper leaks deeply alarming

We are dismayed by the revelation of a question paper leak racket operating within the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC). According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, six officials of the commission and 11 others have been arrested by law enforcers for allegedly leaking question papers of various exams organised by the PSC. The group, according to Channel24, which broke the news after a sting operation, have sold question papers of at least 30 recruitment tests including Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams for over a decade.

At a time when students across the country are demanding quota reforms in public service recruitment to make it more merit-based, the PSC scandal deals a heavy blow to our objective of having qualified professionals in public institutions. The leak shows how the system is still largely rigged against meritocracy, often allowing candidates to exploit the preferential quota system or use bribery or political influence to secure a government job. Even the lengthy process of the BCS recruitment cycle works against meritorious students. Under such circumstances, how can we expect general students to feel hopeful about their future in the country? How can we expect honest and dedicated public servants when unethical practices and undue barriers haunt the entire recruitment process? And how sincere will those coming out of compromised tests be to rein in the corruption that is plaguing nearly every public sector?

Shedding light into the PSC scandal, investigations have revealed that Tk 2 crore allegedly passed between two racket members, both PSC officials, to obtain and sell the question paper of the Bangladesh Railway recruitment test held on July 5. Furthermore, a former driver at the PSC, who allegedly lost his job for leaking question papers in 2014, has reportedly amassed wealth worth at least Tk 50 crore. This raises the question: how is it possible that the PSC administration was unaware of the operation of this criminal network for so long? Who else were involved? How high up does it go? Where were the institutional checks and balances that are supposed to prevent this kind of scenarios?

The candidates of the July 5 recruitment test have demanded its cancellation—which is only logical—but those who unfairly missed their chances in the previous 30-something recruitment tests can no longer be compensated. Neither can we perhaps expect anything happening to those already recruited through this compromised process. This is as sad as it is alarming. The only way the government can ensure justice to those thousands of deprived candidates is by ensuring that the accused are brought to book, and the entire public service recruitment process is revamped to make it more merit-based.

Continuing flood exposes fault lines

Authorities must prepare better, more wisely

Bangladesh is in the middle of its annual monsoon, so the news of flooding along with the deaths and destructions that come with it is more or less expected, even though the pain of witnessing so much suffering doesn't go away. What's harder to accept, however, is when the suffering is exacerbated by things that are within our control. Two developments that have become synonymous with the flood this year, and natural calamities in general of late, are the crisis of relief supplies, especially for those stranded in remote villages, and the fragility of embankments and polders.

As the floods hit new areas, with as many as 20 districts and two million people affected so far, as per an estimate released on Sunday, the cries for aid are getting louder. Many have complained that they were yet to receive government assistance. This could be partly because of transportation and distribution challenges, with the upazila and union parishads in charge of aid deliveries, and partly because of the quantity of provisions allocated. The local administrations and public representatives have a big task here: they must ensure not only sufficient provisions but also proper distribution. And while at it, they must give special attention to those who could not make it to the temporary shelters.

The other development that caught our attention is how prone to damage many of the embankments and polders are, giving away at the slightest nudge, metaphorically speaking. We have had reports of crude materials like sand-filled geo-bags being dumped to check water flow through some of the collapsed dykes. While the pressure of floodwaters can be intense, especially when rivers flow above danger levels, any structural defence should be designed to withstand the pressure. What's the point of having them then? We must resolve these and other longstanding issues—including the largely ineffective river-dredging programmes that are supposed to help manage water flow and erosions—so that vulnerable communities do not have to suffer so much.

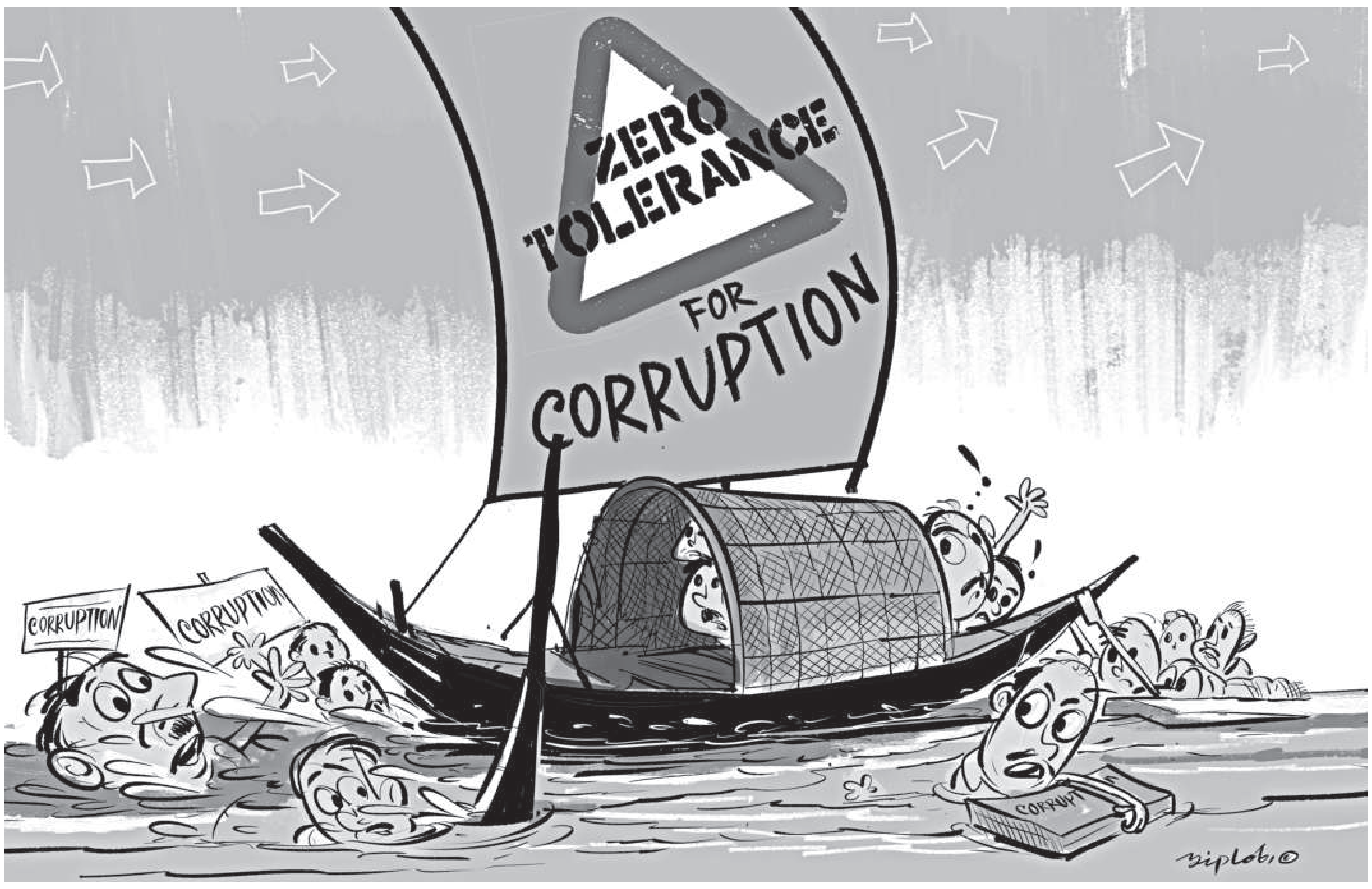
In some of the worst-hit districts, water levels are decreasing but the overall flood situation has not improved yet. In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, over 1.60 lakh people have been marooned. Farmers have suffered significant losses, with around 6,500 hectares of agricultural land including Aman seedbeds and vegetable fields submerged in Kurigram alone. Meanwhile, over 1,000 educational institutions remain closed in Sylhet and Rangpur regions. At least 10 have died, including two in Jamalpur on Monday. The growing human and economic tolls of the flood are becoming clearer as days pass. The least we can do in such a situation is prepare better, and wisely.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Telstar 1 launched

On this day in 1962, Telstar 1, the first communications satellite to transmit live television signals and telephone conversations across the Atlantic Ocean, was launched inaugurating a new age in electronic communications.

Anti-graft drive: How has Awami League fared in first six months?



VISUAL: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee
is planning editor at The Daily Star

The Awami League-led government completes six months of its fourth consecutive term in office today. Generally, six months is not enough time to assess the performance of a government. But for an incumbent government in seat since 2009, whose comeback was accompanied with many promises, it seems a good enough timeframe to evaluate its deeds over the last six months in the context of its 15-year rule.

In the past six months, the issue of corruption has truly come to the fore, and the government has acted in a handful of high-profile cases. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently vowed that no one indulging in corruption will be spared, irrespective of their identity, and that the ongoing drive against graft will continue. At the maiden cabinet meeting on January 15, she also gave strict instructions to not tolerate corruption and irregularity.

However, there are as yet no indications that the government is ready to tackle corruption holistically. No policy reforms have been suggested, no directives have been issued to concerned agencies, nor have law enforcement authorities been bolstered to act against those deemed corrupt. Instead, what seems to be clearer as days go by is that the government is cherry-picking certain individuals who may no longer be in favour, and conducting isolated drives against them, while others go scot-free.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is currently investigating the accumulation of illegal wealth by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members, former National Board of Revenue (NBR) official Matiur Rahman, immediate past NBR first secretary Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal, customs commissioner Enamul Haque, former NBR commissioner Wahida Rahman, former additional inspector general of police Shamsuddoha Khondoker, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) director Mobarak Hossain and his wife, among others.

The amount of assets that the initial investigation by ACC has unearthed is mindboggling. It found illegal assets worth Tk 43.5 crore belonging to Benazir Ahmed, his wife, and two daughters. But the actual price of his wealth is many times higher than the amount shown in the documents.

Meanwhile, former NBR official Faisal has accumulated about Tk 1,000 crore by taking bribes for transferring income tax officials, intimidating taxpayers and resorting to other irregularities, according to ACC documents submitted to the court.

But the question that must be asked is, why is ACC investigating them now, rather than when they were at the helm of power? Does the ACC truly deserve compliments for acting on command, rather than doing its constitutionally mandated duty? While the AL throws its sacrificial offerings to a crowd thirsty for blood, the one prickly issue getting sidelined is whether the AL government can escape responsibility for such unbridled corruption.

There have been innumerable occasions when the party has quite blatantly used the state machineries for political benefits. There has been widespread immunity for overreach of influential individuals and institutions, which has given many the illusion of unbridled power—a perfect breeding ground for corruption and tyranny. The flurry of corruption allegations that have been raised against some former and incumbent government officials in recent times is nothing but an outcome of that situation.

The Awami League, in its manifestos before the last four national elections, vowed to strengthen the ACC, but Bangladesh Public Service Act 2018 essentially limits the anti-graft watchdog's power to arrest corrupt government officials, as it must get prior permission from the authorities concerned to arrest public servants.

Even a portion of AL leaders believe the government has failed to ensure accountability of government bodies, and is predominantly responsible for giving corruption its current institutional shape. On June 25, AL joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told the parliament that corruption is overshadowing all the government's achievements and that despite its policy of zero-tolerance against corruption on paper, corruption remains out of control in reality.

The very next day, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said it isn't just government officials who are corrupt, but politicians too. But then, in the very next minute, he tried to justify corruption in the country by saying it is a common phenomenon across the globe.

Such contradiction, unfortunately, seems to be the very mantra of the party's professed commitment to tackling corruption. The Awami League, in its manifestos before the last four national elections, vowed to strengthen the ACC, but Bangladesh Public Service Act 2018 essentially limits the anti-graft watchdog's power to arrest corrupt government officials, as it must get prior permission from the authorities concerned to arrest public servants.

On June 10, ACC Chairman Moinuddin Abdullah accused ministries of fostering corruption by not including anti-corruption clauses in their regulations. The former bureaucrat also stated that all ministries have opened the floodgates to corruption. Meanwhile, ACC Commissioner (investigation) Md Jahurul Haque said, "Those in power in society are the ones who commit corruption. The CIP and VIP individuals, whom you try to honour, are involved in corruption."

The corrupt, indeed, are running the country, with impunity. Around Tk 92,261 crore has been plundered from the country's banking sector in 24 major scams over the past 15 years, as a result of irregularities, misuse of power, and potential money laundering, according to a report of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The figure can only confirm the ineffectiveness of the Money Laundering Prevention Act and the futility of the government's commitments to safeguard the banking sector.

The AL, in its manifesto, promised to recover default loans through enforcement of laws, but the total defaulted loan in the banking sector stood at Tk 1,82,295 crore as of March, highest in the country's history. But in 2009 when the AL-led government came to office, the figure of total defaulted loan was Tk 22,000 crore.

We see the same impunity in the stock market. Low-performing stocks frequently appear on lists of top gainers or highest traded volumes in the stock market due to manipulations. Even when the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) detects such manipulations, the BSEC's punishments are too lenient, discouraging effective deterrence. For instance, in 2023, the BSEC fined Abul Khayer Hiru and his associates only Tk 5.25 crore for manipulating the stocks of NRB Commercial Bank and Fortune Shoes. This fine pales in comparison to their estimated gains exceeding Tk 68 crore, according to BSEC enforcement records.

Does the ACC truly deserve compliments for acting on command, rather than doing its constitutionally mandated duty? While the AL throws its sacrificial offerings to a crowd thirsty for blood, the one prickly issue getting sidelined is whether the AL government can escape responsibility for such unbridled corruption.

Data suggests this may be a recurring issue. In 2022, the BSEC uncovered manipulation in several stocks, where the perpetrators gained an estimated Tk 253 crore but were only fined Tk 21 crore. In contrast, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) identified 16 individuals involved in a stock manipulation scheme in June 2023 that generated over $35 million in illegal profits. Consequently, the SEC imposed collective fines exceeding $75 million, as reported on their website. This example highlights the significant disparity in how market manipulation is penalised in Bangladesh compared to the US. Instead of strong deterrents, we seem to be encouraging such practices by either turning a blind eye to them or letting perpetrators off the hook with a slap on the wrist.

Meanwhile, the success of every development project in the country is tainted by cost-overruns and innumerable project extensions due to corruption at every level for which no one is ever held to account. All this comes at a tremendous cost—the burden of foreign debt, which has now crossed $100 billion, a nearly four-fold increase compared to $25.3 billion in 2009.

And while the corrupt hoards wealth beyond our wildest imagination, ordinary people are barely surviving the onslaught of rising costs. The AL's top promise before the January 7 national poll was to address inflation and ensure a smooth supply chain to bring down commodity prices. But food inflation stood at 10.76 percent in May, a seven-month high. In June 2009, when the AL formed the government, the point-to-point inflation was 2.25 percent, while the average inflation rate was recorded at 6.66 percent.

The finance minister, while placing the proposed budget for FY 2024-2025, hoped to bring the inflation down to 6.5 percent. But given the country's current economic health and in the absence of any clear policy directives, it appears nothing more than a lofty assurance.

The party also promised to take strict action against illegal wealth acquisition in its election manifesto. The government, however, has taken the opposite position by once again deciding to allow black money holders to legalise undisclosed wealth without any scrutiny by paying a 15 percent tax.

The AL has long promised to establish a humane society by reducing social inequality, but the latest data of Household Income and Expenditure Survey reveals a totally different picture. Income inequality is at an all-time high in the country, with the top 10 percent of the wealthiest households now holding 40.92 percent of its total income.

The above-scenario paints a depressing picture of the first six months of the government's tenure. We can only hope that morning does not show the day. Sheikh Hasina has proven be the strongest leader of the country and we want to have faith in her to clamp down on corruption, regardless of affiliation, with greater vigour and steer her government to prioritise the welfare of the people.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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LESSONS FROM FOUR ELECTIONS

More challenges to democracy ahead

BLACK, WHITE &GREY

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ALI RIAZ

In the year of elections, four recent elections have sent some messages which deserve our attention, particularly considering that we are living at a time when democracy is under threat globally and extremism is on the rise. These apparently disparate elections and their results seem to have some common elements with lessons for liberal democratic forces around the world. The elections I am referring to are the Indian election, the European Parliament election, the UK election, and the election in France. Held between April 19 and July 7, these elections were closely observed for several reasons. And there have been arguments that these may serve as barometers to the future of democracy.

India's election, with the largest number of voters in the world, and with the widespread prediction that Narendra Modi's Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) will continue in power with a larger number of parliamentary seats this time around, ended up with a result which put a brake on Modi's authoritarian tendencies. Defying predictions by pollsters, the opposition alliance INDIA, led by the Indian National Congress, emerged as a formidable opposition after a decade, and BJP failed to secure an absolute majority.

The past decade witnessed a serious erosion of democracy in India. There were and still are concerns about what path the country will take under Modi's third term. The European Parliament election, held between June 6-9, was a gigantic endeavour because of the number of countries involved—27, to be precise. With the growing appeal of rightwing populism in Europe, the question was: will the far-right eclipse the centrists and shape the future trend in Europe?

Do these elections indicate a strategy to beat populist politics? In India, unlike the past two occasions, Modi's populist rhetoric did not work as the opposition made the election a choice of policy more than of personality. France's election, at least in the first round, sends a different message—populism works.

The British election, held on July 4, delivered a shift of power after 14 years from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party, as anticipated. But the results revealed a few disturbing trends. Parliamentary elections in France were held in two rounds, on June 30 and July 7, but were not anticipated to happen so soon before June 9. The early election was a consequence of the dismal electoral performance of President Emmanuel Macron's party in the European Parliament election. In a sense, it was a gamble by Macron, which turned out to be more high-stake than Macron and the French people had anticipated. The elections almost brought the rightwing National Rally (NR) to the gates of power, only to be pushed away by the left alliance—New Popular Front (NPF)—which came into existence only after the first round of voting.

The results of elections in India, France, and Britain demonstrate that voters are unhappy with the incumbents, but most importantly, their economic policies. It is not surprising that elections put incumbents in a difficult spot; elections are often considered as referendum on the incumbents, as they must defend their records. But in these instances, including in part in the Iranian election, it was beyond anti-incumbency.

VISUAL: **STAR**

While economy is not the only reason for unseating the Conservatives in Britain, there are other factors such as the dismal state of the National Health Service (NHS). Nevertheless, the bread-and-butter issue was the driving force. In India, unemployment, falling incomes, and inflation coupled with farmers' discontent became the hurdles which Modi and his party failed to cross. France's debt situation has been a matter of concern for all in the Eurozone, while dissatisfaction has been growing among French citizens. The lesson is clear: "it is the economy, stupid."

The shock victory of France's left alliance has allowed many across Europe to heave a sigh of relief. The victory of the Labour Party in Britain, although predicted ahead of the election, in some measures have engendered similar reactions. The Indian election result gives hope that the downward spiral is stopped, at least for now. These are the results that can be read as rejection of anti-pluralist extremist politics. But a closer look at it shows that the right-wing extremist forces are far from being defeated.

In India, it is still the BJP and Modi in power, and there is no reason to believe that the pernicious politics of division will be shunned. It has taken root in society, and cannot be ignored. In Britain, Labour has secured an historic win, but its support has remained almost the same as 2019, and an almost 20 percent swing from Conservatives did not go to Labour or LibDem, but to the extreme right wing Reform UK party. The Reform UK party has secured more than 14 percent of the popular vote, and has placed itself as the third largest party ahead of the LibDem.

In France, even after the left parties came together and reached an understanding with the centrist parties, the vote share of the NR and its allies stood at 37.6 percent. These figures echo the results of the European Parliament elections, which saw a surge of rightwing parties in Germany, France, Italy, and Austria. Although the European Parliament has limited power for domestic issues, the rise of the rightwing parties was not a complete surprise. Indeed, one can take comfort in the fact that despite rightwing parties performing well, the centre-right and centre-left groupings have retained their dominance in the European Parliament. But what will happen in the future if the present trend continues is an open question. If there is a lesson, it is that the danger to liberal democracy is not over. Instead, the coming years will be more challenging.

Do these elections indicate a strategy to beat populist politics? In India, unlike the past two occasions, Modi's populist rhetoric did not work as the opposition made the election a choice of policy more than of personality. France's election, at least in the first round, sends a different message—populism works. The same is the message from the rise of the Reform UK party. In the European Parliament elections, the right-wing parties which did well are known for their populist rhetoric. Some analysts, for example, Max Boot in the *Washington Post*, suggest that centrist politics is the antidote to populism. He refers to the policy shift of the Labour Party under Keir Starmer vis-à-vis Jeremy Corbyn as an example. Undoubtedly, Starmer has moved the party to the centre, but there has been a price for that too. The Labour Party has secured less popular votes than in 2019.

The argument that moderation and centrism is the way to go does not resonate with the French election results, as the Left alliance has some parties which have somewhat left-extremist positions. The voters have not rejected them. As such, these elections have not made any serious dent to populist politics.

There is a need for soul searching as to how to address the rising appeal of populist demagogues. In the United States, Trump is the personification of such pernicious populist politics. His appeal to the voters has not subsided; instead, with less than five months to go before the election, he is ahead of his opponent Joe Biden.

Both the Indian and French elections demonstrated that in the face of grave threats from undemocratic political forces, it is imperative to close the ranks and build an alliance. The opposition alliance INDIA is a bloc of disparate parties, but their decision to stand together to challenge the Modi regime provided an alternative to Indian voters. Similarly, the NPF in France is not a cohesive alliance. In fact, the partners were engaged in rhetorical battle until the first round of the election. Whether they can work together and work with centrist parties will be tested in the coming days. But for the moment, one must acknowledge, the left has played an historic role.

How a US act revived Sino-Indian confrontation over Tibet

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M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

On June 12, 2024, both houses of US Congress passed a bipartisan bill called "Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act," better known as "Resolve Tibet Act." The act calls on China to find a "peaceful settlement" to the 65-year-old Tibet issue through dialogue with the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who is in exile in Dharamshala, India. The Dalai Lama was rescued from Lhasa to India in March 1959, when Chinese troops were about to take over the Tibetan capital. He still heads a "Tibetan Government in Exile," based in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, despite strong Chinese disapproval.

Almost six decades after the Sino-Indian war over the Tibetan border issue and the Dalai Lama's ambivalent stand on Tibet's sovereignty, the US' Resolve Tibet Act would certainly bring the issue out of historical obscurity. The issue was thought to have been frozen after the China-US rapprochement and the US' acceptance of the One-China policy in 1972, while India is also said to have reconciled with the claim that Tibet is an integral part of China.

The issue was settled to an extent when China reconciled with India's takeover of Sikkim, considered one of the five fingers of Tibet, during the visit of India's late Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1979. But China never gave up its claim over outer Tibet including Aksai Chin, Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh—declared as one of the five fingers of Tibet by Mao Zedong—in the northeast.

Since its creation in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has denied the outcome of the Shimla Convention of 1914, which was attended by representatives of autonomous Tibet and the Republic of China (ROC). Though the ROC attended the meeting, it refused to endorse the border agreement, claiming that the entire Tibet had historically belonged to China and would always remain an integral part of it.

The India-China dispute particularly centred on the western border in Eastern Ladakh, involving Aksai Chin—with there being controversy over the acceptance of the Macartney-MacDonald Line versus the Johnson Line. PRC claimed the Karakoram watershed line to be the correct dividing line, rejecting India's claim based on the Johnson Line further to the east. During his official visit to India in 1960, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai refused to adjust the border along the Karakoram Range in exchange for recognition of the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh. This refusal, despite efforts by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, regarding the Tibet and Dalai Lama issue, dashed hopes for a peaceful settlement between the two governments.

After meeting the Dalai Lama, the US delegation also visited India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fact that the Indian PM decided to meet with the US delegation sends a clear message to China as regards to India's position. Predictably, the delegation's visit drew angry responses from the Chinese authorities, who view the act as interfering with China's internal matters.

The complex relationship soured not only over the border dispute but was compounded by the involvement of CIA, India and Pakistan in the Tibet uprising and the extrication of the Dalai Lama, primarily facilitated by India, which provided him refuge. As a result, what began as an exemplary third-world relationship between China and India soon turned bitter.

These issues were central to the 1962 Sino-Indian war, in which India suffered defeat in both Aksai Chin in the west and Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The events of the war remain ingrained in the Indian psyche and continue to influence its military strategy and geopolitics. China unilaterally withdrew from Arunachal Pradesh but retained control over Aksai Chin. And the Chinese claim over outer Tibet in Arunachal Pradesh remains a contentious issue.

During that war, India faced significant supply and troop deployment issues on the northeast through the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the Chicken's Neck. East Pakistan at that time stood in the way of any alternative supply route to the Chicken's Neck. And it's worth noting that China was increasing its presence at Nathula Pass in Sikkim and the Namka Chu Pass in Tawang region, posing a threat to the Siliguri Corridor between Tetulia, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama exchanges greetings with former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi during their meeting at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India, June 19, 2024.
PHOTO: **REUTERS**

India learned an important lesson about its strategic handicap, vis-à-vis Arunachal Pradesh, which could be a flashpoint in any Sino-Indian conflict. But things have changed drastically since 1962, and both countries are now nuclear powers. And yet, reports indicate that both have heavily militarised along the McMahon Line, especially after the Sino-Indian Doklam standoff on the Sikkim-Bhutan border.

Chinese presence in Doklam makes it easier to threaten the corridor in the event of a wider conflict. Therefore, India's strategic pursuit of alternatives, such as the Kaladan route, is insufficient due to its longer and more perilous journey. And so, the other obvious alternative being talked about in many leading Indian newspapers is through Bangladesh.

While the US was in the process of enacting the Resolve Tibet Act, Chine issued a new official map showing the entire Arunachal Pradesh as being a part of Tibet, changing its name to Xizang. What is interesting is that, within a week of the Act passing on June 18, a bipartisan seven member US Congressional delegation visited Dharamshala and met with the Dalai Lama.

Moreover, the act says that, "claims made by officials of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times are historically inaccurate." And that, "United States public diplomacy efforts should counter disinformation about Tibet from the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, including disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama." It further calls on China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama's government in exile.

After meeting the Dalai Lama, the US delegation also visited India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fact that the Indian PM decided to meet with the US delegation sends a clear message to China as regards to India's position. Predictably, the delegation's visit drew angry responses from the Chinese authorities, who view the act as interfering with China's internal matters.

Given these circumstances, it's important to ask where Bangladesh stands in regards to the geostrategic tensions between China and India. Bangladesh also needs to seriously think about the implications of allowing Indian logistical routes to bypass the critical Chicken's Neck for potential military-logistical buildup, perhaps against China in the future. Thus, it is essential to clarify whether India is seeking transhipment, transit, or a corridor through Bangladesh—which India has been trying to get since the time of Bangabandhu's government.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTOS: **COURTESY**

UTTAM KUMAR ROY'S solo exhibition unveils reality through fiction

Uttam Kumar Roy developed artistic inclinations at a young age, leading him to pursue a five-year diploma in Drawing and Painting at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (Bafa) in Dhaka.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

The Actuality of Fiction, a captivating solo exhibition by acclaimed Bangladeshi artist Uttam Kumar Roy, is currently underway at Alliance Française de Dhaka. Curated by Mustafa Zaman, the exhibition opened its doors on July 5, and will continue until July 16.

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of eminent artist Monirul Islam as the chief guest. Renowned sculptor Alak Roy, Art Bangla Foundation Chairman Professor Mohammad Eunus, and Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts Secretary Md Fazlur Rahman added further distinction as special guests.

The 57 artworks on display delve into the intricate relationship between the dynamism of life and the human mind's interpretation of it. Uttam Kumar explores the constant state of flux we experience and the psychological toll it can take. Through his art, he strives to uncover the root cause of this tension with a keen visual eye. The title itself hints at the interplay between reality and the narratives we construct around it.

Uttam Kumar's artistic process is a fascinating exploration of this dynamic. He begins by absorbing the constant movement and pressures of life. This immersive experience triggers a chain reaction within him – a mental reaction that leads to a deeper realisation. This realisation then finds expression on the canvas, transforming into an artwork. The creative journey does not end there. His artistic choices, particularly his use of colour and technique, further shape the emerging motifs. This introspective process, with its distinct complexities and simplicities, reflects the multifaceted nature of human experience.

"Art is the reflection of the ethos of life and the reality one lives in amid one's actual and imaginary experiences. My art is shaped by life's realities and inner experiences. This ongoing exploration, fueled by the complexities of existence, drives artistic expression," the artist explained.

Upon closer inspection, it can be understood that the artist uses his imagination to make art. He does not focus on myths or stories but allows paint splatters and drips to guide him. These splatters become their own reality, reflecting the artist's physical and mental connection to the world. Unlike traditional paintings, they directly respond to the artist's experiences. Thus, the artworks on display are dreamlike figures that seem to exist in perfect harmony with their surroundings. These rhythmic paintings offer a way to experience life's true nature, not through fantasy, but through the artist's honest expression.

"Uttam Kumar's art challenges the narrow view of art imposed by colonial influence in India, which valued realism over imagination. He defies this limitation by creating abstract paintings that invite interpretation rather than offering a single clear meaning. His complex works demand active engagement from viewers, who are encouraged to be swept away by the experience rather than dissecting the two-dimensional details for a literal message," shared Mustafa Zaman.

Uttam Kumar Roy developed artistic inclinations at a young age, leading him to pursue a five-year diploma in Drawing and Painting at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (Bafa) in Dhaka.

He also holds a Master of Science (MSc) in Botany from Jagannath University. This unique combination of scientific knowledge and artistic expression lends a fascinating depth to his work. He is currently a faculty member at Bafa, and generously shares his vast knowledge and experience with aspiring artists, nurturing the next generation of Bangladeshi art.

The exhibition is open to all till Tuesday, from 3pm to 9pm.

Faruque Ahmed takes on the director's chair

In his four-decade-long career, renowned actor Faruque Ahmed has earned a name for his performances on the theatre stage, television, and in films. Now, the artiste is set to make his directorial debut with the play, ***Rongmohal***, written by Rubaiyat Ahmed.

"I am grateful to the eminent theatre personalities Nasir Uddin Yousuff and Shimul Yusuf for believing in me and giving me such a great responsibility," shared the actor.

The rehearsal of the play is underway and it will be staged in October.

Court orders removal of Aly Hasan's 'Nana Nati' from YouTube

Rapper Aly Hasan, lyricist of the song ***Nana Nati***, received a legal notice for contempt of court, leading to its removal from YouTube.

On June 19, Advocate Fahim Hasnain, assistant public prosecutor of Sherpur District Judge Court, sent the notice. It alleged that the song contained the offensive line, "current court judgments run on money," and demanded its removal within 15 days along with a public apology from Hasan. Failure to comply would result in legal action.

Deputy Attorney General Sheikh Saifuzzaman informed the media that the High Court ordered the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to remove the song. While no longer on YouTube, the song remains on RBT Entertainment's Facebook page.

NEWS

Driving to a fortune!

FROM PAGE 1

after Channel 24 ran a report on question leaks in the exams conducted by the PSC.

The CID arrested at least 16 others, including Abed's son Syed Sohanur Rahman Siam, relief and disaster management secretary of Dhaka North Chhatra League; and six PSC officials.

"Abed Ali recently sold two more flats in the West Shewrapara building. We suspect he has more property ... We are looking into it," the CID official said.

Working as a chauffeur, Abed, who is from West Botla village in Madaripur's Dasar upazila, amassed assets worth millions.

The eldest of three siblings, he left Madaripur for Dhaka after his father's death and began working as a porter. Later, with the help of a childhood friend, he started pulling rickshaws while living in a mess on Indira Road in the capital.

In 1997, he obtained a class-eight certificate from the Open University and managed to secure a job as the driver for the PSC chairman on December 2 that year.

That was when his fate began to change, locals and investigators said.

Within five years of joining, Abed got involved with a syndicate, along with some PSC officials, who were leaking question papers of various PSC recruitment exams to earn money.

He was dismissed from his job in 2014, after the allegations against him of leaking question papers in a recruitment test for first-class posts (non-cadre) were proved.

A departmental case was filed against Abed on April 22, 2014, as his active involvement was found in the leak of question papers for the post of "Assistant Maintenance Engineer" for the then Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in the non-cadre category.

"Abed has earned a bad name for many illegal activities and he is involved in habitual misdeeds," the PSC report said, adding that he got the job using a fake permanent address – Sirajganj instead of Madaripur.

According to the CID investigators, Abed continued to work with the syndicate even after losing his job.

His son Siam, who was relieved from his post in the BCL on Monday, used to abet his father in the crime.

CID officials and locals said that Abed also earned money by lobbying for various candidates to get jobs in many government offices.

Locals said he built a duplex in his ancestral home in West Botla village at a cost of around Tk 3 crore, while his elder and younger brothers continue to live in mud-floored two-room tin-shed houses.

He also has a mango orchard in front of his house and built a mosque at a cost of Tk 1.5 crore, they told our Shariatpur correspondent, adding that he owns at least 25 three-wheelers.

Abed even tried to construct a cattle farm with over 100 cows on the right side of a bridge adjacent to Kamalapur Bazar in Dasar upazila. On the left side, he had put up pillars and laid the foundation for business establishments.

However, as it is government land, the upazila administration stopped both constructions.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Abed's younger brother, Javed Ali, said, "My father was a farmer and my two brothers are also earning their livings by farming. I work as an easy-bike driver to run my family."

About his brother, he said, "If he is guilty, I want him punished."

In Dhaka, Abed has been living with his wife, two sons and a daughter in a flat in the 10-storey "Bismillah Tower" on West Shewrapara's Wasa Road for the past seven years.

Other residents of the building told this newspaper that Abed's family members left the flat after his arrest. They added that he owns three flats in the building and has two cars.

Locals said that he would introduce himself as a car trader and they heard he also owns a six-storey building in Mirpur's Paikpara.

Recently, Abed was vying for the chairman post of Dasar upazila, the polls of which were postponed.

In his Facebook ID, he recently posted videos of campaigning, urging locals to support him in the upcoming election.

In a video post in June, he spoke about owning a seven-story building and an 11-storey building in Dhaka, and about setting up a mosque and cemetery on 71 decimals of land.

"I have now started constructing a house, which already costs Tk 3 crore," the video showed him telling a gathering in the upazila.

Protesters set to resume blockade today

FROM PAGE 1

"Having said that, since the quota system was once abolished through a movement, we believe there is another opportunity for intervention ... this time, we want to settle the quota issue for good. We want a law passed in parliament as a permanent solution.

"So, our movement is now directed towards the government and the executive branch. The "Bangla Blockade" will continue until our demands are met."

EYES ON COURT

Earlier in the day, two DU students filed a petition challenging the High Court verdict, which was later placed at the chamber court for a hearing today.

Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order after senior lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque submitted the petition on behalf of the students.

Two students are Al Sadi Bhuiyan, a student of the anthropology department and president of Dhaka University Journalist Association, and Urdu department student Ahnaf Saeed Khan.

Meanwhile, a full bench of the Appellate Division is scheduled tomorrow to hold a hearing on the government petition challenging the HC verdict.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 declared illegal the government decision that cancelled the 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the civil service for ninth to 13th grades.

Law Minister Anisul Huq welcomed the students' decision to file the petition with the SC against the HC verdict and hoped that the agitators would now call off their movement.

"I think this decision to file the petition is a positive step. They can place their arguments through their lawyers. After hearing the arguments, the court will ensure justice," he said in response to queries from reporters at his ministerial office in the Bangladesh Secretariat.

Students from public universities and colleges, along with job seekers, started demonstrating a week ago, with a four-point demand, including the reinstatement of a 2018 circular that abolished the quota system in government jobs.

On Monday, they launched the "Bangla Blockade" following a one-point demand for scrapping all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service through enactment of a law and keeping a minimum quota for marginalised citizens in line with the constitution.

COUNTRYWIDE PROTEST

As part of the nationwide anti-quota movement, students at Rajshahi University held a sit-in at the university's Paris Road for an hour from 3:00pm.

Mehedi Sajeev, one of the coordinators of the movement, said, "We want all discriminatory quotas to be reformed except the ones for the disadvantaged, disabled, and marginalised communities."

Rajshahi College students blocked a road in front of the college for three hours from 11:00am.

In Chattogram, students of Chittagong University held a mass campaign and formed a human chain at the university's Shaheed Minar premises at 10:30am.

Kaniz Fatima, a student of CU, said, "I'm the daughter of a freedom fighter and I don't want quota in government jobs. I will let my merit speak for itself."

In Savar, hundreds of students of Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway near the campus for 30 minutes from 3:45pm.

In Barishal, students of Brojomohun College, also known as BM College, blocked the Dhaka-Barisal highway in Nathullabad area for two hours from 11:30am.

Economy, trade to be in focus

FROM PAGE 1

for Bangladesh, but it will not be easy," said Sk Tawfique M Haque, director of the South Asian Institute of Policy Governance at North South University.

China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade between the two nations exceeding $25 billion. However, exports from Bangladesh account for less than 3 percent of the sum.

Narrowing the trade gap will be a major focus of this trip.

"We would explore all ways of minimising this gap," Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told reporters on July 7.

The two countries are expected to sign 20-22 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in the areas of trade and investment, digital economy, banking, infrastructure development, disaster management, agriculture and people-to-people connectivity. Yesterday, as many as 18 MoUs were signed.

However, hopes of getting a $5 billion loan in yuan were dashed after Dhaka and Beijing failed to agree on the terms and conditions of interest and grace period of the loan, officials said.

"China will not provide the loan without conditions. Even if they provide the loan and other assistance, it will be a way for China to keep Bangladesh on its fold," said Tawfique, dean of NSU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Western powers will not be happy if such a currency swap happens between Bangladesh and China because this will be part of the de-dollarisation movement that China and Russia really want, especially after the Ukraine war, he added.

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, Mahmud said.

Japan is supporting the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI) and the BIG-B Initiative (The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt). "Similarly, Dhaka wants Beijing to support SIDI," said a foreign ministry official informed with the proceedings.

On July 4, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China stands ready to work with Bangladesh to carry forward the spirit of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

China wants to "deepen political mutual trust, further synergise development strategies, advance high-quality Belt and Road (BRI) cooperation, speed up implementing the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilisation Initiative, and elevate the bilateral relations to a new level", she said.

Bangladesh joined China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative when Xi Jinping visited Dhaka in 2016. Beijing wants Dhaka to join GDI and GSI too. However, Bangladesh is taking time before arriving at a decision.

Recently, there has also been a debate surrounding the Teesta project.

Following a proposal from Bangladesh, China showed interest in funding a part of the $1 billion project in 2021. But the project saw no progress.

India, meanwhile, showed interest, and Hasan Mahmud said Dhaka would consider India's proposal first as it is a common river between the two countries.

China also wants to improve its political relationship with the Awami League and a delegation will be visiting China for signing an MoU in the days to come.

The objective of improving political relationships is to better implement the Chinese agenda in Bangladesh, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives.

"China will work with whichever political party is in power. This is the Chinese approach. If the party in power [in Bangladesh] is strong in safeguarding national interest, there is no problem at all," Imtiaz said.

There is a competition between China and India over Mongla Port in Bagerhat, and it may be an issue in the coming days, according to people with knowledge of the talks.

"Bangladesh remains on the back foot because of its governance challenges. Therefore, the balancing act has become difficult for Bangladesh. We, therefore, should improve our financial governance and political consensus on foreign affairs before we fall into further trouble," Tawfique of NSU said.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Euro 2024 semifinal
England vs Netherlands
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)
Copa America semifinal
Uruguay vs Colombia
Live from 6:00 am
(Thursday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Quarterfinal
Live from 4:00 pm

SONY SPORTS TEN 1
England vs West Indies
1st Test, Day 1
Live from 4:00 pm

Minhajul presents old wine in new bottle at critical crossroad

SPORTS REPORTER

In an impromptu media briefing in front of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) headquarter yesterday, BCB's chief coordinator of programmes Minhajul Abedin Nannu spoke some bitter truths about the current state of the country's cricket, which different people have regurgitated many times before without any significant change afterwards.

The former captain pointed out that having a pool of only 27-30 cricketers to represent Bangladesh across all three formats was a big issue.

"Actually, there is no way to deny that [having a limited pool of cricketers for the national team]. Our cricket is basically Dhaka-centric. We haven't been able to decentralise cricket," Minhajul told the reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

"We are confined to a pool of 27 to 30 players in all three formats. We can only select players from this group. If we can't prepare at least 45 players, we can't create a sense of competition among the players," he added.

He was also upfront about the country not having an established first-class structure and how not having any other T20 tournament other than the BPL is holding back the Tigers in T20s.

"If you look at any other Test playing nation, they have an established first-class structure. Ours is still not established.

"We are far behind in T20 cricket. If you look at our domestic calendar, we play a smaller number of matches in the T20 format. In franchise tournaments like BPL, foreign players play in crucial positions and there is a limited opportunity for the local players," Minhajul said.

The points Minhajul raised all have merit and fixing these issues would certainly improve the country's cricket.

But the million-dollar question remain – who will bell the cat?

It has been 12 years since Nazmul Hassan Papon and Co took over the reins of the richest sports body of the country.

More than once, these matters have come into light and board officials had vowed to work on fixing these issues for the sake of Bangladesh cricket.

However, nothing significant ever gets done afterwards, as the country's cricket continues to stagnate.

> **We are confined to a pool of 27 to 30 players in all three formats. We can only select players from this group. If we can't prepare at least 45 players, we can't create a sense of competition among the players.**
>
> BCB's chief coordinator of programmes
> **Minhajul Abedin Nannu**

The officials wake up from their slumber and start talking about these problems every time after an underwhelming showing in an ICC event, much like the Tiger's performance in the ninth ICC T20 World Cup recently.

In that tournament, Bangladesh won three matches and qualified for the Super Eight and the board was seemingly satisfied with it, even though the team showed a severe lack of intent when a golden opportunity to qualify for the semifinals presented itself.

The board had talked about decentralising cricket many times and made some ad-hoc committees for it. But since forming the committees, the board is yet to take any significant step to develop cricket at the regional level.

As the game remains Dhaka-centric, the selectors are left with a very limited pool of players to form squads. As a result, when a player fails to perform, an underperforming cricketer gets picked in his place, earning a callback without having done anything of note.

Minhajul spoke about a possible way to fix the shortage of players, "We are now thinking of increasing the number of domestic matches so that we can get some players for the T20 format. We also need to identify some players whom we can nurture, prepare for the game."

However, the question remains that if a board is still just talking about possible solutions and not implementing them after being in charge for 12 years, will anything ever get done?

Kings rope in Romanian Tita

SPORTS REPORTER

Five-time Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings have roped in Romanian coach Valeriu Tita for the upcoming season, hoping to produce good results on both the domestic and international stages.

The 58-year-old coach brings vast coaching experience, having worked with the Syrian national football team and various clubs in notably Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iraq. Tita, who last worked with Al-Ain FC of Saudi Arabia in 2023, had guided Al Ittihad SC Aleppo to win the AFC Asian Cup in 2010.

Kings' decision to appoint Tita yesterday came just five days after parting ways with Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon.

"We roped in Tita for his vast knowledge of Asia and AFC competitions ," Kings marketing and media manager Ahmed Shaeek told The Daily Star on Tuesday, adding that Tita's experience of managing national players also worked in his favour.

Shaeek further informed that Tunisian trainer Khalil Chakroun and set piece coach Dorel Stoica from Romania will form the coaching staff next season, which is expected to get underway in mid-September with the Independence Cup.

Stumbling England and Netherlands get shot at redemption

REUTERS, *Dortmund*

The route to the last four of Euro 2024 has been a rocky one for the Netherlands and England, and a few flashes of their best quality in their semifinal showdown might be enough for either side to make the final.

England's shootout win over Switzerland brought momentary euphoria, but it was more relief than redemption and Wednesday's date with the Dutch in Dortmund may require a transformation in attack for them to reach a third major tournament final, against France or Spain.

England have limped into the last four with tepid performances against opponents they should on paper have beaten easily, while the Netherlands have yo-yoed through and were 20 minutes from elimination before their quarterfinal fightback against Turkey.

The Dutch dazzled in their last-eight rout of Romania but have had to scramble too, having fallen behind in three of their four scoring games. Their three wins were all in regulation time, however, compared to one for England, and the Dutch have scored nearly double their number of goals at the tournament.

The Netherlands have the edge in attack, their nine goals at Euro 2024 coming from 20 attempts on target against 15 by an England side spearheaded by the usually lethal but currently subdued Harry Kane, Phil Foden and Jude Bellingham.

England improved against the Swiss but their five expertly struck penalties rescued an attack that again looked frustrated, with Bukayo Saka's 80th-minute equaliser their first shot on target.

Netherlands do not have that problem and will bank on the tournament's joint top scorer Cody Gakpo to and trouble an England defence that has been solid in contract with their jaded attack.

Southgate is again expected to stick to a similar lineup having been impervious to calls to shake things up or make substitutions earlier during the tournament.

The Dutch have blown hot and cold and will need to be stronger at the back to stand any chance of reaching their first final since their 1988 Euros triumph, their only major tournament success.

- This will be the fourth meeting between England and Netherlands at a major tournament. The Oranje and the Three Lions share one win each (in Euro 1988 and 1996 respectively), with the other contest (in the 1990 World Cup) ending in a draw.
- England won only one of their last nine matches against the Netherlands in all competitions (4L 4D), with the solitary win coming in a friendly match in 2018 in Amsterdam.
- This is England's fourth appearance in the semifinal of the Euros. The Three Lions were eliminated in the first two by Yugoslavia (in 1968) and Germany (in 1996) but went on to qualify for the final after beating Denmark in 2020.
- For the Netherlands, it will be a sixth Euro semifinal. They were eliminated from four of their five semis and the solitary win came in 1988 when they went on to lift the trophy.
- England have gone to extra-time in both of their knockout fixtures in this edition.
- Netherlands have won two matches in the ongoing edition after conceding the first goal - beating Poland 2-1 in the group stage and Turkey by the same score in the quarterfinal. Only Czech Republic, at Euro 2004, have ever won three games having conceded first a single edition of the tournament.
- England, under Gareth Southgate, have reached the semifinal of a major tournament on three occasions – in the 2018 World Cup, in Euro 2020 and the ongoing edition. They can become the fourth side to qualify for consecutive finals after USSR, Germany, and Spain.

Gambhir named India head coach

AFP, *New Delhi*

India's cricket board named Gautam Gambhir as head coach on Tuesday, with the former opener taking over from Rahul Dravid, tasked with building on their recent World Cup triumph.

"It is with immense pleasure that I welcome Mr Gautam Gambhir as the new Head Coach of the Indian Cricket Team," Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement.

The 42-year-old Gambhir takes over from batting great Dravid, who finished his stint with the T20 World Cup title in Barbados last month.

Gambhir scored over 10,000 international runs during his 13-year-long international career for India since his ODI debut in 2003.

"Modern-day cricket has evolved rapidly, and Gautam has witnessed this changing landscape up close," Shah added.

Gambhir, a talented left-handed batsman who played a key part in India's ODI World Cup win in 2011, recently coached Kolkata Knight Riders to an IPL crown.

"Having endured the grind and excelled in various roles throughout his career, I am confident that Gautam is the ideal person to steer Indian Cricket forward," Shah added.

"His clear vision for Team India, coupled with his vast experience, positions him perfectly to take on this exciting and most sought-after coaching role."

The usually serious Gambhir later took to commentary and then dabbled in politics, becoming a lawmaker for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He quit politics in March to join IPL's Kolkata, a team he led to two titles in 2012 and 2014.

Gambhir now takes over a team with heightened expectations after their T20 triumph, their fourth World Cup title and first major crown since the 2013 Champions Trophy.

Anderson's farewell dreams face Windies challenge

AGENCIES

It doesn't matter if James Anderson takes a bunch of West Indies wickets for England in the first Test at Lord's from Wednesday.

The series opener will be Anderson's 188th and last Test and he will transition into England's fast-bowling mentor.

He was pensioned off by England managing director Rob Key, coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes. They met him at a Manchester hotel in April to say he wasn't in their plans for the 2025-26 Ashes in Australia.

This was a month after Anderson returned from India, where he took 10 wickets at an average of 33.50. That series was lost 4-1 but on the last morning of the last Test in Dharamsala, Anderson became the first seamer in history to take 700 wickets.

He spoke then of being in the best shape, liking where his game was at, and being really excited for this summer, when he will turn 42 at the end of this month.

This week, he said he was surprised at how calmly he took the news from Key, McCullum and Stokes. He understood their decision, adding, "I've sort of made peace with that."

Anderson warmed up for his last Test by showing his class last week in his first English County appearance for Lancashire. He took 7-35, the best figures in the championship.

His 21-year test career comes full circle at Lord's, where he made his Test debut in 2003 against Zimbabwe. Lord's witnessed Anderson's career-best figures of 7-42 against the West Indies in 2017.

As one era ends, another could start. Surrey seamer Gus Atkinson and wicketkeeper Jamie Smith have been handed Test debuts. Both played white-ball cricket for England last year; Atkinson went to the ODI World Cup.

Chris Woakes returns for his first Test since he was the player of the series in last year's Ashes. Stokes was back as an allrounder, allowing for offspinner Shoaib Bashir to make his home Test debut after taking 17 wickets in India.

The West Indies play their first Test since the extraordinary eight-run victory over Australia in Brisbane in January, after a 10-wicket thrashing in Adelaide.

Allrounder and former captain Jason Holder was recalled to the squad along with fast bowler Jayden Seales. St. Kitts and Nevis opening batter Mikyle Louis and fast bowler Jeremiah Louis are the uncapped players in the 15-man squad. Louis replaced an injured Kemar Roach.

In Roach's absence, Alzarri Joseph will lead the pace attack with Jayden Seales and Shamar Joseph, whose 7-68 scuttled the Australians in Brisbane in the second innings. That earned Shamar Joseph in his second Test the player of the match and short series.

Shamar Joseph called England retiree Anderson "perfect" as a Test player to the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper but "I want to rain on his parade."

Anderson said he was trying hard not to think of his pending forced retirement.

"The big thing for me this week is wanting to play well, bowl well and get a win," he said. "I'm sure the emotions during the week will change, but right now that's what I'm trying to focus on to stop myself crying."

Colombia defender Yerry Mina and forward Miguel Borja chest-bump each other during a training drill yesterday ahead of their Copa America semifinal against Uruguay. The Colombians would want to take a step towards adding to their maiden continental triumph with a win against the 15-time champions.

PHOTO: **INSTAGRAM**

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A Bangladeshi runs transboundary kidney racket

Say Delhi police after arresting 7 including an Indian doctor

STAR REPORT

The "mastermind" behind the kidney transplant racket recently busted in Delhi is a Bangladeshi national and both donors and receivers in the case were also from Bangladesh, according to Deputy Commissioner of Delhi Police's Crime Branch Amit Goel.

Seven persons, including an Indian doctor, have so far been arrested in connection with the racket, he said in a statement yesterday.

All the people in the racket are suspected of having links with Bangladesh, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

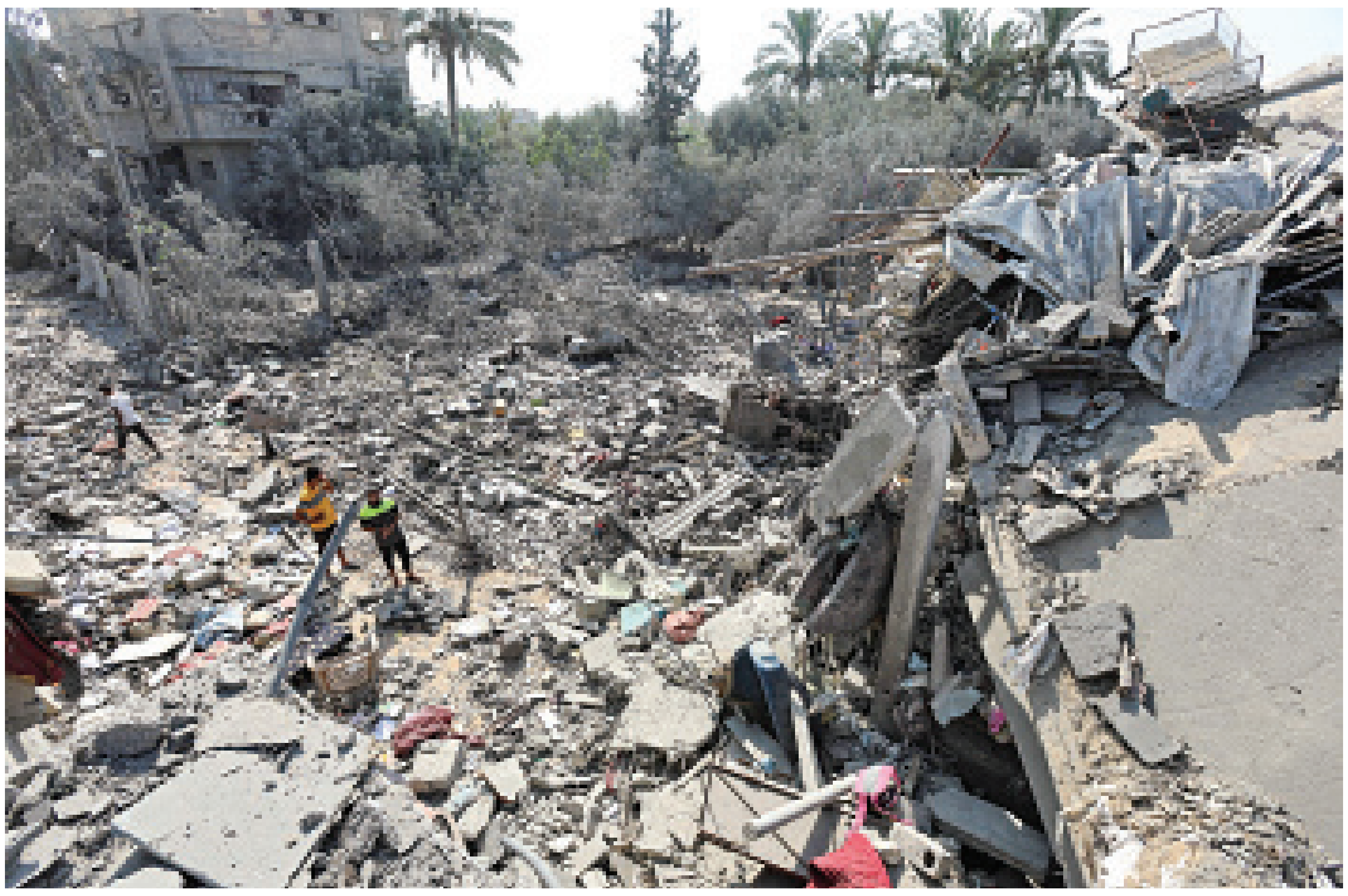
Goel said, "We've arrested a person named Rasel who used to arrange the patients and donors and a female doctor working with the gang has also been arrested."

"Her role in this case was that she was facilitating organ transplants even when she was aware that the donor and receiver were not blood relations [as required by Indian law], making her part of the conspiracy," the DCP said.

The arrested Indian doctor has been identified as Vijaya Kumari, 50, from Delhi-based Indraprastha Apollo Hospital.

Now suspended by Apollo, she was the lone doctor working with the gang and had performed around 15-16 transplants between 2021 and 2023 in Noida-based

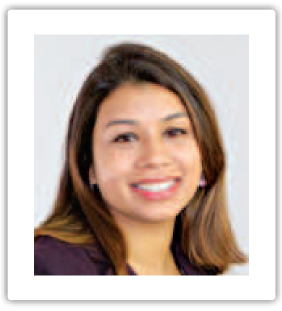
SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Palestinians inspect a house destroyed in an Israeli strike in Nusairat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

UK appoints Tulip as City Minister

Reports Bloomberg



REUTERS, *London*

Tulip Siddiq has been appointed Britain's City Minister, the minister responsible for overseeing the financial services sector, Bloomberg News reported yesterday.

Labour won a thumping election victory last week, propelling Keir Starmer to power as prime minister.

Siddiq, 41, has led Labour's efforts to develop policies for the financial services industry, known as

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Road crash claims 4 lives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogura*

At least four people were killed and seven others injured in a head-on collision between a lorry and a bus in Bogura early yesterday.

The accident occurred in the Banani area under Shajahanpur upazila around 2:30am.

Three of the deceased were identified as Jamal Hossain, from Sirajganj, and Shamim Hossain, 40, and Md Hridoy, 30, from Barishal, said police.

The other victim, a woman, could not be identified immediately.

The injured are Shaon Hossain, 30, Rezaul Karim, 45, Babul Miya, 35, Md Alif, 35, Sujan Miya 35, Md Amit, 10, and Md Saikat, 18.

All the injured were bus passengers, said the fire service personnel who rescued them.

"The victims' bodies have been kept at the morgue of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital. The injured are undergoing treatment at the same hospital," said Lalon Hossen, assistant sub-inspector of the hospital's police outpost.

Shahidul Islam, senior station officer at Bogura Fire Service and Civil Defense Station, who participated in the rescue operation told the Daily Star, "We got information that a bus of Shah Fateh Ali Paribahan and a lorry collided in front of Banani Shah Sultan Filling Station around 2:30 am.

"We went to the spot and found two people, including the driver of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'War cannot solve problems'

Modi tells Putin during Moscow visit

AFP, *Moscow*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday told President Vladimir Putin that "war cannot solve problems" and urged peace on a trip to Moscow over two years into the Ukraine offensive.

On his first visit since Russia launched its campaign in Ukraine in February 2022, Modi said he and Putin had chatted on a range of issues, adding: "I was happy that on Ukraine, we could both express our views openly and in detail."

"When innocent children are murdered, one sees them die, the heart pains and that pain is unbearable," Modi told Putin in comments in Hindi.

"I know that war cannot solve problems, solutions and peace talks can't succeed among bombs, guns, and bullets," the Indian leader added. "And we need to find a way to peace through dialogue."

Putin thanked Modi for "the attention you pay to the most urgent problems" and said "you are trying to find some ways to solve the Ukrainian crisis, too, of course primarily by peaceful means".

Modi landed in Moscow on Monday hours after Russia launched a massive barrage across Ukraine that killed at least 38 people and heavily damaged a children's hospital in Kyiv, sparking condemnation from governments in Europe and North America.

On Monday evening Modi was pictured hugging Putin at the Russian president's country residence, where the leaders spent several hours together, according to the Kremlin.

Such warm contact drew condemnation from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

He wrote on social media: "It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day."

OXYGEN MASK ISSUE

US regulator orders Boeing inspections

AFP, *Washington*

US aviation regulators said Monday that thousands of Boeing 737 airplanes would need to be inspected, amid concerns that passenger oxygen masks could fail in emergencies.

The airworthiness directive by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) comes into effect immediately and affects more than 2,600 US-registered airplanes.

The aim is to ensure that passenger service unit oxygen generators are in the right position on certain Boeing airplanes.

Operators are to check the oxygen generators and "perform corrective actions, if necessary, within 120 to 150 days," the FAA said in a statement.

It added that the directive was prompted by multiple reports of these generators shifting out of position, and called for a general visual inspection to be conducted.

In response to queries, Boeing said that a new adhesive introduced in August 2019 was found to sometimes allow oxygen generator units to shift from their positions.

Palestinians flee heavy Israeli assault

Hamas warns escalation threatens ceasefire talks; 50 more Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Gaza City residents fled under Israeli fire as tanks thrust deeper into the heart of the city yesterday, the second day of a stepped-up military offensive that Hamas said could jeopardise ceasefire talks.

Qatari and Egyptian mediators, backed by the United States, have accelerated their efforts this week to seal a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the Gaza offensive and releasing Israeli hostages in the enclave in return for Palestinian prisoners jailed in Israel.

Yesterday, Israeli tanks deepened their incursion into some Gaza City districts including Shejaia, Sabra and Tel Al-Hawa, where residents reported the previous day some of the most fierce fighting since the start of the offensive.

Footage circulated on social media yesterday showed families packed onto donkey carts and in the backs of trucks piled with mattresses and other belongings racing through the city's streets to flee areas under Israeli evacuation orders.

"Gaza City is being wiped out, this is what is happening. Israel is forcing us to leave homes under fire," Um Tamer, a mother of seven, told Reuters via a chat app.

She said it was the seventh time her family had fled their house in Gaza City, in the north of the enclave and one of Israel's first targets at the start of the offensive in October. "We can't take it anymore, enough of death and humiliation. End the offensive now," she said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said all of its medical clinics were out of service in Gaza City due to the evacuation orders.

At least 38,243 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 87,903 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 50 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

The assault has unfolded as senior US officials were in the region pushing for a ceasefire after Hamas made concessions last week. But the renewed campaign "could bring the negotiation process back to square one," Hamas quoted leader Ismail Haniyeh as saying later on Monday.

- Israeli tanks go deep into Gaza City districts
- Hamas, Islamic Jijad battle Israeli forces in close combat
- Gaza death toll rises to 38,243

Second semi showdown promises a classic

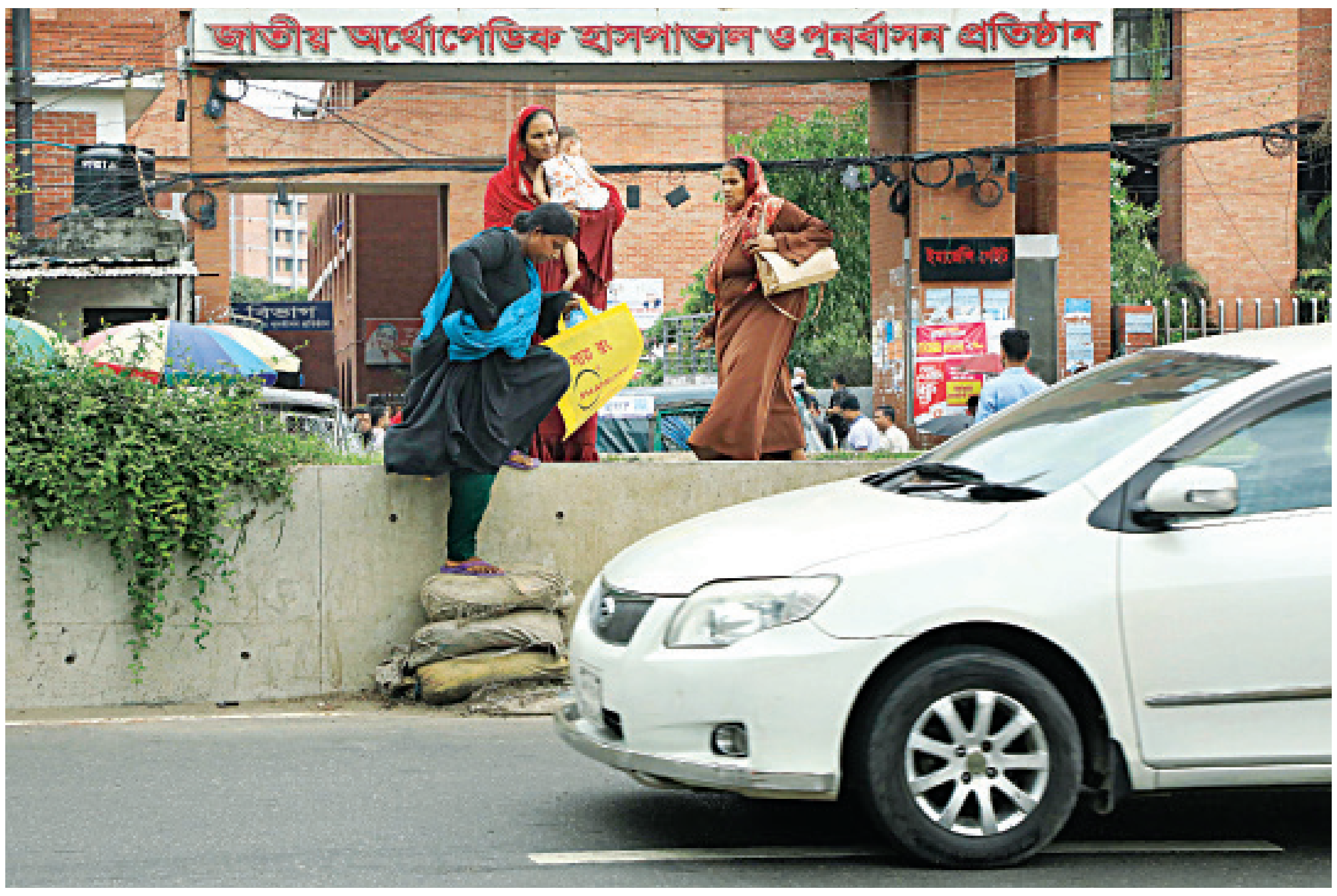
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the quest to establish continental supremacy, two former champions with rich heritage in the sport, Uruguay and Colombia, are set for a face-off in the second semifinal of the Copa America in North Carolina tomorrow (6 am, Bangladesh time) in what could likely be the match of the tournament's 48th instalment.

Both teams have been undefeated so far, with enviable defensive records and goals to back up their feats. Colombia, however, arrive into the clash with a superior goal ratio, having annihilated Panama 5-0 in the Round of 16. On the other hand, the 2011 champions and joint-highest 15-time winners alongside Argentina, edged past powerhouse Brazil in tiebreakers in Las Vegas.

Also, if the tournament's history

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1


জাতীয় অর্থোপেডিক হাসপাতাল ও পুনর্বাসন প্রতিষ্ঠান

Women, including one holding a baby in her arms, climb over a central reservation to cross the road in front of the National Orthopedic Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in the capital's Agargaon yesterday, putting themselves and other road users in harm's way. PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

34,000-year-old termite mounds found in S Africa

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists in South Africa have been stunned to discover that termite mounds that are still inhabited in an arid region of the country are more than 30,000 years old, meaning they are the oldest known active termite hills.

Some of the mounds near the Buffels River in Namaqualand were estimated by radiocarbon dating to be 34,000 years old, according to the researchers from Stellenbosch University.

"We knew they were old, but not that old," said Michele Francis, senior lecturer in the university's department of soil science who led the study. Her paper was published in May.

Francis said the mounds existed while saber-toothed cats and woolly mammoths roamed other parts of the Earth and large swathes of Europe and Asia were covered in ice. They predate some of the earliest cave paintings in Europe.

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Bangla Blockade: Sufferings all around

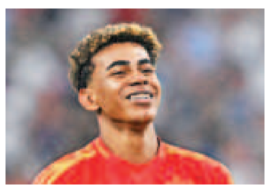
P3

Rain increases flood woes in the north

P5

Ready to help restore peace in Ukraine: Modi

P7



'Spirit of sacrifice' and 'genius' Yamal pave way for Spain

P11

Hasina, Xi pledge to boost strategic ties

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

- Bangladesh, China sign 22 instruments, make 7 announcements
- China assures of grants, soft loans and commercial loans
- Relations elevated to "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership"
- China will provide highest cooperation in solving Rohingya crisis

China has promised to provide economic support to Bangladesh in the form of grants and three types of loans including interest-free ones.

The pledge came yesterday as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wrapped up her China visit, holding talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

China also offered Bangladesh one billion Yuan (about $140 million) as economic assistance, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said at a press briefing in Beijing prior to Hasina's departure for Dhaka last night.

Beijing said it attaches utmost importance to its relationship with Dhaka and assured Bangladesh of continued support for its journey of development.

At the meeting with Hasina, Xi said China wants to invest more in Bangladesh and work with it on the international stage.

"China and Bangladesh will work together to establish global peace and prosperity," Hasan Mahmud said.

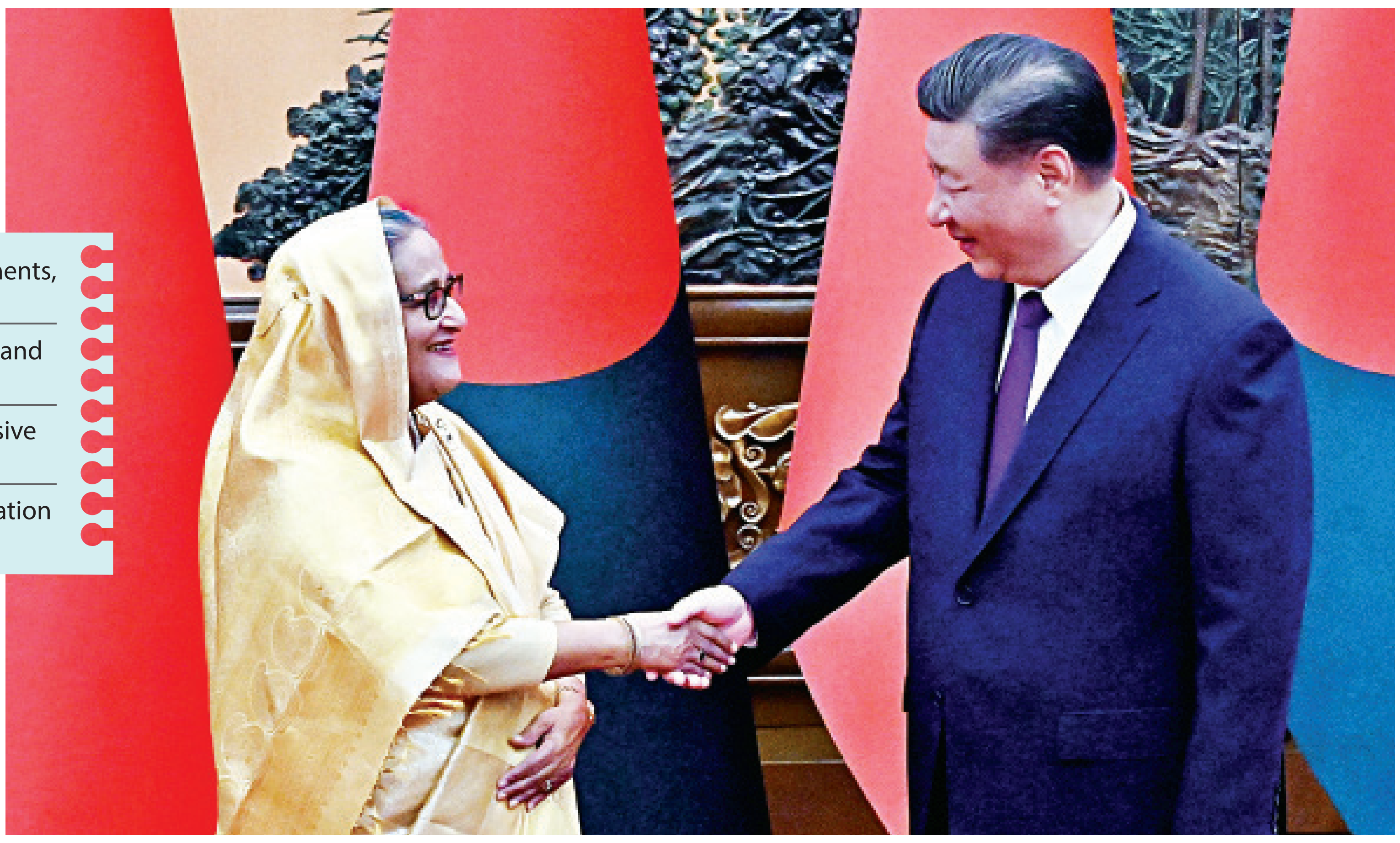
Xi brought up the Rohingya issue, the foreign minister said.

"I know that you have sheltered millions of Rohingyas who were displaced from Myanmar. This is a burning issue for you. We will do our best to help you resolve it," Hasan Mahmud quoted Xi.

China will play an important role towards solving the Rohingya crisis by holding talks with the Myanmar government, and even with the Arakan army if necessary, he mentioned.

Technical committees from both the countries will sit together to decide how

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday, the last day of her tour of China. The two leaders discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest. PHOTO: PID

QUOTAS IN GOVT JOBS

Protesters won't back down despite SC status quo

STAR REPORT

Amid the apex court order for a status quo on the issue of quotas in government jobs, students yesterday vowed to continue their protests against the quota system.

Around 12 noon, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court ordered the status quo for four weeks.

This means the recent High Court verdict that reinstated the quota system in government jobs will not be in force for a month, and the 2018 government circular abolishing the quotas will stand for the said period.

The protesting students, however, announced they will press on with their demonstrations until the government forms a commission to reform the quota system and the parliament passes a law to this effect.

Sargis Alam, an organiser of the anti-quota campaign, said, "We'll relent only if we get word from the highest executive position that the quota system will be reformed through a commission.

"We want the parliament to enact a law reforming the quotas," he told protesters at the Shahbagh intersection last evening.

Asif Mahmud, another organiser, announced that today's blockade will begin at 3:30pm.

"Students from universities and colleges across the country will block major intersections in Dhaka along with highways and railways adjacent to their areas."

After a day's break, the protesters yesterday resumed the "Bangla Blockade" around 10:30am, occupying key intersections, major highways and rail lines in Dhaka and other parts of the country.

Road and rail communications were snapped, leaving commuters in utter distress. The traffic in Dhaka stood still for long hours, while around 30 trains from the capital ran behind schedule.

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, passed the status quo order following two separate petitions, filed by the government and two Dhaka University students, challenging the HC verdict.

The bench also includes Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique, Justice Md Shahinur Islam and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Eight jailed for 7yrs over Ctg girder collapse

All staffers of construction firm; 13 people were killed in the 2012 incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced eight employees of a construction firm to seven years in jail in a case filed over the collapse of Bahaddarhat Flyover girders that killed 13 people and injured 27 others.

The court of Chattogram Fourth Metropolitan Additional Sessions Judge, Shariful Alam Bhuiyan, delivered the verdict of the case lodged with Chandgaon Police Station in 2012.

The court in its observation said the horrible incident took place due to negligence of the construction company and its staffers.

The convicts are constriction firm Mir Akhtar-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

QUESTION LEAK AT PSC

The malady runs deeper than feared

Names of some mid-rank officials come up in probe

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN *and* **MUNTAKIM SAAD**

PREMIER cement

Some more current and former officials of the Public Service Commission are involved in leaking questions for government recruitment tests, police and intelligence officials said.

The Daily Star has details about the involvement of a top PSC official and a mid-ranking official in leaking questions, but it is withholding their names as it could not independently verify the information.

Sources said that the top official was served with a show cause notice at a government office over a corruption allegation. He was later transferred to the PSC.

At least two officials secured Bangladesh Civil Service jobs in collusion with the mid-ranking PSC official. One of them is the son-in-law of the mid-ranking PSC official. He had served as a sub-inspector of police before joining the force as a BCS cadre, sources said.

"It's not possible for one or two people to leak exam questions. A group of people worked like a syndicate. We are hopeful of getting the details during the investigation," a top PSC official told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

The group, involving PSC officials and employees, leaked at least 30 question papers of government recruitment tests, including BCS exams, over the last 12 years. This came to light after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police picked up 17 people, including five PSC officials and employees, from the capital on Sunday and Monday.

The arrests were made after CID got information that the questions for a railway recruitment exam held on July 5 were leaked. A case was filed with Paltan Police Station on Monday night accusing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Star BUSINESS

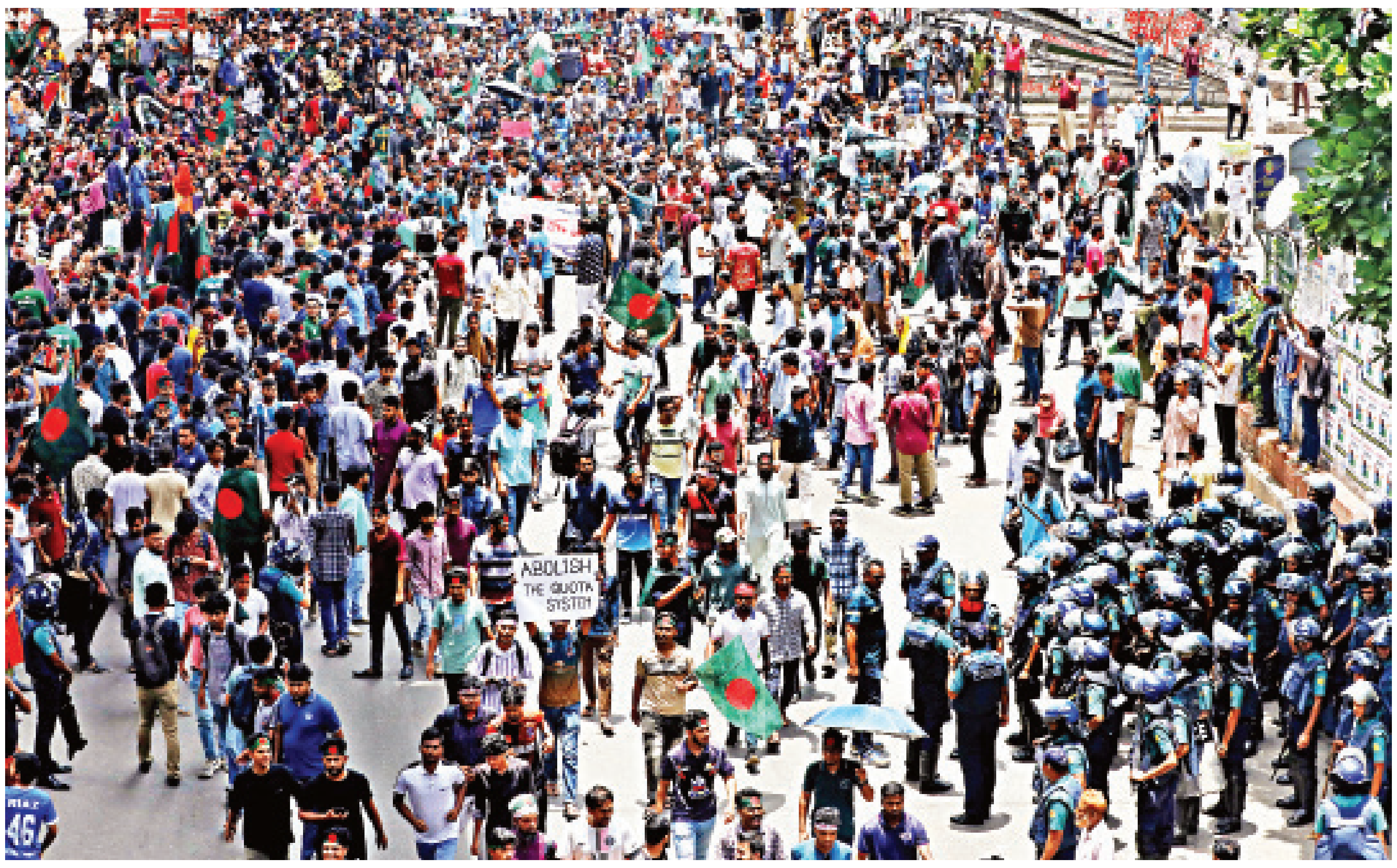
Actual export, NPL data to be available now: BB governor

The actual data on exports and non-performing loans (NPLs) would be available from now onwards as the central bank emphasises releasing of actual figures, Bangladesh Bank governor said yesterday.

"The export data has been corrected. Now the release of accurate export figures will continue," Abdur Rouf Talukder said.

About NPLs, he said there was window dressing on the part of banks, which made attempts to hide the actual bad loans.

STORY ON B1



Students block the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday during a demonstration as part of their "Bangla Blockade" demanding reform of the quota system in government jobs. Students from different public universities and colleges have been staging protests across the country for the last 10 days to press home their demand. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Israeli strikes hit UN agency building in Gaza

29 killed at camp for displaced Palestinians in Khan Younis

AGENCIES

Israeli forces launched more deadly strikes across Gaza yesterday, according to medical sources and the military, which said it targeted Hamas members operating from inside a UN agency building.

The Israeli army also said it was reviewing an attack on Tuesday night in which hospital sources said at least 29 people were killed in a nearby school in the southern Khan Yunis area -- the fourth attack on a school building in four days.

Early yesterday, four people were killed and one critically wounded in the bombing of a house in the central town of Nuseirat, a hospital source said.

And two people were killed and six injured in another strike on a home in Bani Suhaila, near Khan Yunis, according to another hospital source.

Israel has stepped up air and ground attacks in Gaza City and southern Gaza since issuing evacuation orders for tens of thousands of people in the Palestinian territory.

The army yesterday dropped leaflets on Gaza City urging all residents to leave for safe zones.

The thousands of leaflets, addressed to "everyone in Gaza City", set out routes out of the city to the south and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Russia outlaws The Moscow Times news outlet

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia yesterday named The Moscow Times news outlet an "undesirable organisation", outlawing its activities inside Russia and leaving anybody who cooperates with them open to criminal prosecution.

Moscow has escalated a campaign against independent media and reporting since it launched its full-scale military offensive on Ukraine in February 2022.

Correction

In our story headlined "Chinese firms to invest in textile, fintech and EVs" on the front page of yesterday's issue, the word "Chinese" was printed as "Chinse". We regret the inadvertent typo.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Palestinians mourn over the body of a child following Israeli bombardment in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

Militant leader who fled N'ganj raid arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Terrorism Unit (ATU) of police has arrested a leader of banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam who fled before the officials carried out a raid at a militant hideout in Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila on July 2.

A team of ATU arrested Javed alias Abir alias Enamul from Tongi area around 10:30pm on Tuesday, Mahfuzul Alam Rasel, superintendent (media) of ATU, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He fled from the Narayanganj den just before ATU officials carried out the drive, he said.

Parts of South Sudan 'on brink of famine': charity

AFP, *Nairobi*

Parts of South Sudan are on the "brink of famine" as the nation braces for a "horror scenario" ahead of the worst floods in decades, a British charity warned yesterday. Since it gained independence in 2011, the world's newest nation has remained plagued by instability and violence, despite rich oil reserves.

South Sudan is expected to "suffer its worst floods in 60 years that will drive parts of the country to the brink of famine," Save the Children said.

Hasina, Xi pledge to boost strategic ties

FROM PAGE 1

the four types of financial assistance will be given to Bangladesh. A technical committee from China will soon visit Bangladesh, BSS quoted Hasan Mahmud as saying.

Hasina left for China on July 8 following a state visit to India just two weeks before. She returned home from Beijing early today.

Experts say the back-to-back visits are a way of balancing the relationship with the Asian powers that are vying for influence in the Indian Ocean region.

Hasina last visited China in 2019.

Back in 2016, Xi visited Dhaka when Bangladesh joined the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and elevated the relationship to "strategic partnership of cooperation".

Yesterday, the two leaders elevated the relationship to "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership".

Xi said, "We, the two countries, are going to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations next year. Marking the celebration, we want to take the existing strategic relations to the second step."

Hasina invited the Chinese president, the prime minister and others to visit Bangladesh next year to celebrate the 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

"You stood firm against foreign interference. This not only demonstrates your conviction to stand upright against the pressure, but also the courage of the Bangladeshi people as an independent people," Xi told Hasina according to a pool report made available to this newspaper.

He said China consistently opposes interference in other countries' internal affairs under any pretext, and firmly supports Bangladesh in its pursuit for a development path that suits it.

Xi expressed his readiness to work with Hasina to improve bilateral relations based on a strategic and long-term perspectives, deepen political trust, and carry forward the traditional friendship.

He called for joining hands to boost Belt and Road cooperation, collaboration in various fields, and establish the "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" between the two countries.

Xi also expressed his desire to contribute to the development of South Asia and the Global South, according to the pool report.

Hasina reassured Xi about Taiwan -- Beijing's most sensitive issue -- saying "Bangladesh firmly adheres to the one-China principle, supports China's position on the Taiwan issue, and resolutely opposes external forces interfering in China's internal affairs", reported South China Morning Post.

Hasina said she faced many problems in holding elections and that there were some quarters who always try to disrupt the polls.

"...I always enjoy the people's support and with the people's support, we won the election. This is my fourth consecutive term. So, I feel that I have big responsibility for my people," she said thanking Xi for always supporting her.

"And after the elections, your message gives us more enthusiasm," she said.

Hasina thanked the Chinese president for helping Bangladesh build some iconic structures, including the Padma Bridge and Bangabandhu Tunnel.

Xi assured Bangladesh of providing assistance in the development of its southern part as Hasina sought support towards this end.

She raised the issue of trade imbalance between the two countries and called upon China to mitigate the gap. In 2022-23, the bilateral trade was $24 billion, but Bangladesh exported to China goods worth less than $700 million.

In response, Xi said China will import more goods, including mangoes, from Bangladesh.

In response to Hasina's request for Chinese assistance in developing Bangladesh's agriculture sector, Xi assured her of providing technical support and necessary training.

Xi stressed the need for more cultural exchanges and people-to-people contact.

Noting the deepening relations between the Awami League and the Chinese Communist Party, he said, "Good governance needs good party."

Earlier in the day, Hasina had a delegation-level meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

She requested her Chinese counterpart to import leather products, jute products, pharmaceutical goods, and ceramic products from Bangladesh.

Hasina invited more Chinese investments in 100 special economic zones and Bangabandhu Industrial Park, mentioning that Bangladesh has allotted one export processing zone for Chinese investors.

She stressed the need for Bangladesh's inclusion in BRICS in any form. In response, Li Qiang assured her of Chinese support.

Hasina also sought Chinese cooperation so that Bangladesh could enjoy the LDC facilities at least for three more years after it graduates to a middle-income country in 2026. The Chinese prime minister gave a positive response.

Both the leaders put emphasis on celebrating the Golden Jubilee of their diplomatic relationship in a befitting manner.

Bangladesh and China also signed 22 instruments and made seven announcements.

The instruments involve the banking sector, trade and investment, digital economy, infrastructure, disaster management, export of agricultural products from Bangladesh, and people-to-people connectivity.

On Tuesday, Hasina attended a trade and investment summit participated by businesses from both countries.

Bangladeshi and Chinese companies signed 16 MoUs to boost collaboration in textiles, electric vehicles, solar power, financial technology, and other technology.

Four of these MoUs will bring in nearly $500 million in investments.

Hasina also met Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) President Jin Liqun and requested him to cut the interest rates on its loans for Bangladesh and finance infrastructure, river dredging, and climate-resilient houses.

According to former ambassador to China Munshi Faiz Ahmad, elevating the relationship to "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" means the two countries will now cooperate in all sectors and further deepen their bilateral relationship.

People often think there are military components when the word "strategic" is used, which is not correct.

Bangladesh was seeking a loan of $5 billion in Yuan amid foreign currency shortage but the terms and conditions were not agreed upon.

Faiz said China has pledged 1 billion Yuan and more will follow as evident in Xi's words.

INSTRUMENTS

- MoU on strengthening investment cooperation in digital economy
- Chinese NFRA and Bangladesh Bank signed an MoU on banking, insurance regulation
- An MoU on a protocol for exporting Bangladeshi mangoes to China
- A deal on exchange, cooperation on economic development policy
- An MoU on trade, investment cooperation
- A deal on strengthening cooperation on digital economy
- Signing of minutes on discussions on the feasibility study for China-aid National Emergency Operation Centre in Bangladesh project
- An MoU on strengthening cooperation in medical care, public health
- A deal on bolstering infrastructure cooperation
- An MoU on cooperation on green, low-carbon energy development
- Renewal of a deal on hydrological information of Yaluzangbu/Brahmaputra river
- An MoU between Chinese National Radio and Television Administration and Bangladesh information ministry
- A deal between China Media Group and Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha
- Another MoU between China Media Group and BTV
- A deal between Xinhua News and BSS
- Another MoU between Xinhua and BTV
- Renewal of an MoU between the two education ministries
- An MoU signed for public-private partnership in sustainable infrastructure development
- The two nations exchanged letters on the renovation of sixth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge
- Another set of letters exchanged for the 9th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge Project
- Dhaka, Beijing exchanged letters on a feasibility study for building Nateshwar archaeological site park

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Conclusion of a joint feasibility study on China-Bangladesh free trade agreement
- Beginning of negotiations on optimising China-Bangladesh bilateral investment treaty
- Completion of modernisation of telecommunication network for digital connectivity
- Completion of trial runs of single point mooring with double pipeline project
- Start of the Rajshahi Wasa surface water treatment plant
- Construction of Luban Workshop in Bangladesh
- The signing of an MoU between Shandong Agricultural University and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University

The malady runs

FROM PAGE 1

31 named people, including a former assistant director of PSC, and 50 to 60 others unnamed.

The five arrested officials and employees were suspended by the PSC on Tuesday.

"At least 50 people were involved in the question leak of the recruitment test of the railway. Among them are several current and former PSC officials," a high official of the CID told The Daily Star yesterday requesting anonymity.

According to investigators, many people have passed PSC exams after having leaked questions, and they are now working as BCS cadre civil servants.

Those who passed the PSC exams after paying for leaked questions are now in fear of actions against them, sources said.

CID officials said the syndicate leaked questions to at least 10 candidates of the 33rd BCS exam and three of them are currently serving in different cadres of the civil service. Besides, the names of several other cadre officials, including those selected in the 28th and 35th BCS exams, came up during the investigation.

Of the 17 arrestees, six made confessional statements before a Dhaka court on Tuesday.

In his statement, PSC dispatch rider Khalilur Rahman said that he leaked questions to 10 candidates of the 33rd BCS examination. Six of them passed the written test, but three could not pass the viva voce exam, said court sources.

Khalilur also said that he used to introduce the jobseekers to a former top PSC official.

If he was given the go-ahead by that official, the final decision regarding how much the jobseeker would have to pay for getting selected for government jobs.

Khalilur also played a role in the recruitments of some assistant upazila education officers and railway employees, said investigators.

During the 33rd BCS exam in 2012, a case was filed against Khalilur with Shahbagh Police Station over question leak. A departmental case was also filed against him.

At that time, the Rab arrested him. He got out on bail. He was also suspended from the job.

In March 2022, the charges brought against him were withdrawn due to lack of evidence. Since then, Khalilur has been working as a dispatch rider of the PSC.

Investigators said Khalilur was able to get involved in leaking questions due to the backing from the PSC top official.

Touhidul Islam, special superintendent of the CID's cyber investigation and operations, told The Daily Star yesterday, "Legal action will be taken against those found involved in leaking questions."

Meanwhile, the PSC yesterday wrote to the Anti-Corruption Commission asking it to investigate the five arrested PSC officials and employees in connection with amassing illegal wealth.

The five are deputy directors Abu Zafar and Jahangir Alam, assistant director Alamgir Kabir, dispatch rider Khalilur, and office assistant Sajedul Islam.

The PSC also asked the ACC to inform it about their wealth.

Meanwhile, sacked PSC driver Syed Abed Ali and several other accused told investigators during interrogation that jobseekers were brought to the "reading booth" two nights before the July 5 recruitment test.

The jobseekers were kept in a rented house in Savar and a warehouse in the capital's Paltan so that they could memorise the answers to the leaked questions.

Abed rented the house for Tk 40,000 a month in Radio Colony of Savar. He took the leaked questions and answers from Sajedul.

Around 50 jobseekers memorised the answers in the house. Abed took Tk 7 to 8 lakh from each of them, said CID sources.

Before another recruitment test held several months ago, Abed rented another house in the capital's Mirpur and took 44 jobseekers there. The syndicate collected Tk 4 lakh from each of the candidates.

According to investigation sources, Sajedul in his confessional statement before a court said that he got the question papers for the railway recruitment test from a chest of a PSC member. He said he sold the question paper to Abed and Khalilur for Tk 75 lakh.

Protesters won't back down despite SC status quo

FROM PAGE 1

Justice Kashefa Hussain.

The apex court asked the petitioners to file separate leave-to-appeal petitions and fixed August 7 for a hearing on those.

The chief justice asked the agitators to go back to class and focus on studies.

He expressed hope that all vice-chancellors and heads of the educational institutions will take their students back.

"They [protesting students] took to the streets and raised slogans ... What they've done can't be appreciated but I think they've done it out of a misunderstanding. They're our children. On the first day, I said a judgement can't be made based on slogans," he said while passing the order.

"Considering what has happened so far, enough is enough. ... We'll evaluate the High Court judgment properly if it's placed before us.

"Only the Appellate Division has the right to examine whether the High Court verdict is correct or not. Why isn't anyone explaining this to the children? University teachers, who are in prominent positions, [you] tell them [the students] – 'this is not the way, you must go to the court. If you go to court, the court will see to it ... But we can't do anything until the [HC] verdict is placed before us."

He thanked the DU students' lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque for moving a petition before the Appellate Division against the HC verdict.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, after the order was passed, told reporters that the HC verdict, which declared illegal the cancellation of quotas in first and second-class government jobs, will not remain effective.

Writ petitioners' lawyer Md Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the government now cannot implement a quota system as per the SC order.

Following a writ petition challenging the legality of quota cancellation, the HC on June 5 declared illegal the 2018 government circular that scrapped the 30 percent quota for the freedom fighters' children and grandchildren in government jobs.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader also requested protesters to go back to their respective institutions following the status quo and to not cause public sufferings.

BLOCKADE CONTINUED

Several hundred Dhaka University students and jobseekers blocked the Shahbagh intersection around 11:50am. They came to the intersection in a procession from in front of the DU central library and barricaded all nearby roads.

Another group of DU students blocked the Chankharpul intersection around the same time.

Around 11:35, several hundred students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked the Agargaon intersection and were seen taking position near metro rail station there.

All vehicular movement from Farmgate to Mirpur and Agargaon to Mohakhali remained halted for hours.

The capital's Science Lab area remained blocked for at least seven hours by students of Dhaka College and nearby institutions. They started their march from the college campus and took position at the intersection around 10:30am.

They were seen barring buses, private cars and rickshaws from moving on the road and allowed only ambulances to pass through.

Most of the blockades were lifted around 7:00-7:30pm.

Outside the capital, the Dhaka-Aricha Highway was blocked for nearly six hours by a group of Jahangirnagar University students, while Comilla University students blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway for four hours in Cumilla's Kotbari area.

A group of Patuakhali Science and Technology University students blocked the Dhaka-Kuakata Highway at the Payra Bridge point for three hours.

RAIL LINES

Schedules of trains to different destinations from Dhaka were hampered as rail operations remained suspended for five hours due to a blockade at the Karwan Bazar level crossing.

Ferdaous Ahmed Biswas, officer-in-charge of Dhaka Railway Police Station, said rail services were snapped after some students blocked the crossing at 12:00pm. They left around 5:05pm.

The line that goes through Karwan Bazar connects Dhaka with the east, west and even southern parts of the country.

In Chattogram, CU students kept the Dhaka-Chattogram rail line in the Dewanhat area blocked from 11:30am, resulting in at least five trains being stuck at different stations for almost eight hours, the Railways Control Office confirmed.

The Parjatak Express and Cox's Bazar Express, which left for Dhaka from Cox's Bazar, were stranded at the Sholoshohor Station, while the Shonar Bangla Express, Mohanagar Probhati Express and a container-loaded freight train could not commence their journey from the Chattogram Station. CU's shuttle train service was also closed.

The blockades were lifted around 7:00pm.

The protesters later blocked a road in the Tigerpass area, the main thoroughfare of the port city, around 1:00pm.

Meanwhile, students of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (Duet) staged a sit-in and blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh rail tracks in Gazipur's Joydebpur.

The protest began in front of the Duet Central Shaheed Minar and later moved to the Joydebpur Junction Railway Station.

PRO-QUOTA

Meanwhile, leaders and activists of the Muktijoddha Sangsad Santan Command staged a brief sit-in around 9:30am in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh, demanding the reinstatement of the quota system.

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SUFFERINGS ALL AROUND

People, especially patients and the elderly, bear the brunt of nationwide blockades

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The ongoing student protest against the quota system in government jobs caused severe disruptions in Dhaka and other parts of the country, leaving people in severe misery.

Students have taken to the streets in at least eight districts, blocking roads and train routes.

DHAKA

With public transport at a standstill in many areas in the capital, people resorted to walking long distances. Commuters and office-goers faced challenges at key intersections, as buses could not ply through them.

Key intersections, such as Gulistan, Shahbagh, Banglamotor, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Science Lab, Agargaon, and Mohakhali, were blocked, which particularly affected the elderly and patients.

Jahanara Begum, who had just received treatment at a government hospital in Tejgaon, was returning with her mother when they got stuck at the Karwan Bazar rail gate area and had to walk to the intersection.

> **Nusrat Jahan, stuck at Panthapath intersection, said, "I had urgent work. But the jam has extended to Dhanmondi. People are suffering a lot. I've been sitting on the road since 11:00am, and it's now 2:00pm."**

Bus driver Salam Hossain said he got stuck around 11:30am at Farmgate. "All the passengers got off. There's no way to turn the bus around. My day's earnings are lost."

At Kalshi intersection in Mirpur, Soniya Akhter waited over an hour for a bus but couldn't find any public transport. "Even when a bus came after a long time, there were so many passengers that I couldn't get on. I don't know how I'll get to the office," she added.

Nusrat Jahan, stuck at Panthapath intersection, said, "I had urgent work. But the jam has extended to Dhanmondi. People are suffering a lot. I've been sitting on the road since 11:00am, and it's now 2:00pm."

Students of Dhaka College blocked the Science Lab intersection, affecting patients and people on their way to various hospitals at Green Road and Dhanmondi.

Mehedi Hasan was caught in the blockade while taking his mother to Labaid Hospital in Dhanmondi from Old Dhaka. "I was taking my mother to the hospital for her chemotherapy," Mehedi told The Daily Star.

"No one let us through, even though I showed the students the medical papers," he said, adding, "I don't have any problem with the students' protest. However,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN, ANISUR RAHMAN, PALASH KHAN**

People, especially patients and the elderly, suffered immensely as students continued their nationwide "Bangla Blockade" yesterday, protesting quota system in government jobs. Since morning, they blocked major intersections, highways and expressways in the capital, forcing many to walk to their destinations. Protesters also blocked rail lines, mounting sufferings for many who had to wait hours for trains.

বাংলা ব্লকেড
BANGLA BLOCKADE

The court's decision is final. I request students to stop programmes that cause public suffering.

OBAIDUL QUADER
Road transport and bridges minister

Be patient, accept the court's directive. People will suffer if you [students] keep blocking movement of transport.

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN KAMAL
Home Minister

The Supreme Court's Appellate Division ordered status quo maintaining the 2018 government circular on the issue.

MOHAMMAD ALI ARAFAT
State Minister for Information

Govt taking country towards destruction

Says Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the government is "taking the country to destruction with its misrule".

Speaking at a milad mahfil at the Maulana Bhasani Auditorium in the capital, he called upon the country's people to unite and intensify the anti-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Don't change CHT regulations

Speakers tell human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students from the country's indigenous communities and civil society members yesterday formed a human chain demanding an end to conspiracy against the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulations, 1900, also known as CHT manual.

The regulation ensures traditional indigenous institutions and upholds customary laws, conventions and practices relating to lands, territories, resources and the family laws of the indigenous communities.

The programme was held at Raju Memorial sculpture on the Dhaka University campus in the capital.

There are separate systems and development arrangements

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

HC starts hearing on Yunus' petition

Cases may represent misuse of labour laws, says US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started hearing on a petition filed by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom, challenging a Dhaka court's order that framed charges against them.

After concluding yesterday's hearing, the bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain also fixed today for resuming the hearing.

During the hearing, petitioners' lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun told the court that there was no question of embezzlement in running Grameen Telecom, which has been established as a nonprofitable and charitable organisation under Section 28 of the Companies Act, 1994.

All the transactions of the organisation have been done properly under the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

EVICTION IN DSCC

16 hurt as councillor's men, harijans clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 16 people were injured as supporters of the local ward councillor clashed with harijans in Dhaka's Bangshal area yesterday afternoon.

The people of Miranzilla Harijan Colony alleged that Md Awal Hossain, councillor of Dhaka South City Corporation's ward-33, and his supporters went there to evict them violating a court order.

As they were prevented from entering the colony, they threw brick chunks at the colony people, who then retaliated, triggering the clash, said locals.

Sima Datta, president of rights body Nari Mukti Kendra, who was present during the incident, said when the DSCC magistrate entered the colony, the councillor and his supporters tried to get it, but they faced obstruction.

The injured took first aid at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Bacchu Miah, an inspector of the hospital's police outpost.

On June 10, the DSCC tried to evict the harijans from the colony saying that many of them are living there illegally. But the DSCC retreated in the face of protest by the harijan people.

The harijans have been living in the colony for generations, a refuge built by their ancestors during the British era.

The DSCC wants to expand its existing kitchen market in the place.

Community leaders claimed that DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assured them that only 20 families would be evicted. However, they later learnt from DSCC officials that over 87 families would be evicted.

DSCC Executive Magistrate Md Moniruzzaman told The Daily Star on the spot that they did not have any eviction drive yesterday and they did not inform anybody about it.

He along with contractors and engineers of newly constructed buildings in the colony went there to learn about the problem of utility services of the buildings and solve those.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 11

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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245 iron bridges or death traps?

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

A tragic accident led to the death of nine people after an iron bridge collapsed and caused a microbus to fall into the canal in Haldia Bazar area of Barguna's Amtali upazila on June 22.

In the wake of the incident, the authorities of Local Government Engineering Department in Barguna made a list of 245 iron bridges in six upazilas of the district that are in a vulnerable condition and risky for vehicular movement.

The bridges have become dilapidated as those have not been renovated over the years after being constructed by LGED in Barguna under its Light Traffic Movement Project in FY 1997-98.

According to Barguna LGED, the project was operational till 2008, and no initiative was taken to maintain and repair the bridges as the project was not extended.

As such, these bridges have now become death traps.

Accidents happen frequently when pedestrians and vehicle use the bridges. Many of the bridges are unfit for vehicular movement and are only being used by locals to cross by foot, that too after reinforcing their structure with wood and bamboo.

"We have so far identified 245 risky iron bridges in the district -- 99 in Amtali upazila, 61 in Barguna Sadar, 28 in Taltali, 25 in Bamna, and 16 each in Betagi and Patharghata upazilas. However, the number may rise further," said Mehdi Hasan Khan, executive engineer of LGED in Barguna.

"We will further identify how many of these can be repaired and how many have to be replaced, and send the list to the ministry concerned with a budget for allocation to this end," he added.

Contacted, Golam Sarwar Tuku, lawmaker of Barguna-1 constituency, confirmed that the chief engineer of LGED had informed about the risky bridges in the district.

"Hopefully the bridges will be repaired or replaced within a short time," he added.

CONSTRUCTION OF KALURGHAT-CHAKTAI ROAD

Deadline keeps on extending

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Chattogram*

The project to construct Kalurghat-Chaktai road on the bank of Karnaphuli river in Chattogram began in July 2017 with a deadline to be completed by June 2020.

However, eight years on, the project is still incomplete, despite several extensions of deadline as well as increase in cost of the project.

In fact, with 26 percent of the construction work still remaining, the Chattogram Development Authority, which is implementing the project, has applied to the Planning Commission for yet another year's extension.

Rajib Das, director of the project and executive engineer of the CDA, confirmed the development when contacted by this correspondent.

"Due to a shortage of funds for land acquisition, we failed to complete the work on time," he claimed.

According to project documents, the project's deadline has been already extended three times, with the last deadline being June this year. The project's cost also went up from Tk 2,275.52 crore to Tk 2,310.24 crore.

Now, CDA wants to extend the deadline to June 2025 without increasing cost any further.

"This project does not require fresh allocation, but if the allocated funds are received on time, we will be able to complete the work quickly," said Rajib Das.

The project includes construction of the 8.5-kilometre road and embankment with 12 regulators on the mouths of canals, with an aim to reduce traffic congestions and mitigate waterlogging.

Visiting the project area recently, this correspondent saw while 10 of the 12 regulators have already been constructed, however, a major portion of the road work, from Chaktai to Kolpolok Residential Area, remains incomplete.

"Spectra Engineers Limited, the contractor firm, has been stopping work frequently over the past six months citing fund crunch," said Jamal Uddin, a worker of the project.

Rajib Das admitted that they were forced to stop work at times due to a shortage of funds .

Experts blamed CDA for its failure to complete the project on time.

"Lack of proper study ahead of taking up the project in turn extended its duration and increased the cost. The government should identify those responsible and take action against them," said Md Delwar Hossain Mazumdar, an urban planner and executive member of the Forum for Planned Chattogram.

16 hurt

FROM PAGE 3

Aynunnahar Siddique, a Supreme Court lawyer, said when she went to meet the magistrate at the colony around 12:30pm, just after his entrance to the colony, outsiders attacked the colony residents.

Now the police are saying they will ensure security of the colony residents and the magistrate has given an order in this regard, she said.

However, councillor Awal denied the allegation of his supporters' attacking the harijans.

He said the DSCC magistrate went there and asked the 66 allottees of the flats at the new buildings to move to their flats by yesterday, otherwise their allotments will be cancelled.

He said they got 51 of them and when they tried to move to their flats, colony people resisted and got locked into a clash with them.

In another development, the Supreme Court yesterday directed the DSCC to issue a fresh status quo on the eviction proceedings at Miranzilla Harijan Colony until further order.

The DSCC went to the SC after the High Court issued a one-month status quo on the eviction proceedings at the colony on June 13 after a writ petition was filed against the move.

Sufferings all around

FROM PAGE 3

how long will the people suffer?"

This newspaper spoke to 12 other patients with similar experiences.

TRAIN SERVICES DISRUPTED

Train services were also severely affected, with blockades in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna, and Chattogram, causing massive delays and inconvenience.

In Karwan Bazar and Mohakhali, students blocked rail lines, severing Dhaka's rail communication with the rest of the country for five hours. From 12:00pm to 5:05pm, no trains departed from Dhaka.

In Mymensingh, students from Bangladesh Agricultural University blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh rail line for almost six hours, while in Chattogram, students of Chittagong University and other institutions blocked rail tracks from 11:00am to 5:30pm.

Rajib Kumar Barua, a Dhaka-bound Cox's Bazar Express passenger, was stuck at Sholoshahar Junction. "It's unbearable to wait for the train for hours inside a rail coach," he said.

Due to the blockade, air passengers also faced difficulties boarding their flights on time.

NATIONWIDE BLOCKADES

In Savar, students from Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway for over eight hours, leaving around 500 vehicles stuck and forcing thousands to walk.

In Rangpur, students from Begum Rokeya University blocked the Rangpur-Dhaka highway for almost three hours, while in Cumilla, Comilla University students blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram highway for over four hours.

Iqbal Hossain, a bus driver, said, "I left Chattogram with passengers. Now I am stuck in Kotbari. I heard that their movement will continue till evening. If that is the case, then I don't know what to do."

Students also staged blockades in Rajshahi and Barishal for several hours, causing massive suffering to commuters.

Don't change CHT regulations

FROM PAGE 3

for indigenous communities in different countries across the world, even in neighbouring India, speakers told the event.

"The British colonial government framed the CHT Regulations, 1900 respecting the indigenous communities of the region. However, conspiracy is going on against the regulations, which is shameful for this government," said physician Ajay Chakma.

He demanded an end to the conspiracy and also urged the government to restore the quota for indigenous communities.

"If the CHT Regulations, 1900 is repealed, you will no longer be able to claim Bangladesh to be a diverse, multi-ethnic country. Also, the cultural heritage of CHT region will be lost," said Falguni Tripura, general secretary of the Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network.

Mentioning that the spirit of the CHT Regulations, 1900 is behind the CHT Accord, the speakers urged the government to take necessary steps towards ensuring fair benefits to the country's indigenous communities.

HC starts hearing

FROM PAGE 3

settlement agreement, he argued. He said his clients have paid the money to their workers in accordance with law and they were involved in any offence.

He said the case has been filed against the petitioners to harass them.

The six other petitioners are Nurjahan Begum, Md Shahjahan, Nazneen Sultana, Hizzatul Islam, Nazmul Islam and Ashraful Hasan.

Senior Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan, and Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the Anti-Corruption Commission and the state respectively during the proceedings.

Meanwhile, the United States has said it is closely monitoring the developments in the case against Prof Yunus.

"We continue to monitor closely developments in the case against him. We have expressed for some time our concern that these cases may represent a misuse of Bangladesh's labour laws to harass and intimidate Dr Yunus," said Mathew Miller, spokesperson for the US Department of State during a regular briefing on Tuesday.

"As a key economic partner to Bangladesh, we also worry that perceived misuse of labour and anti-corruption laws could raise questions about rule of law and dissuade future foreign direct investment," Miller said while replying to a question.

Govt taking country

FROM PAGE 3

government movement to remove Awami League from power. "Awami League established one-party Baksal rule in 1975. They have now destroyed democracy in a different way," he said.

The BNP leader alleged that the ruling party has destroyed the electoral system and the country's economy, and politicised the administration and state institutions. "The country is now going towards destruction. As long as this Awami League government is in power, Bangladesh will go to the abyss faster," Fakhrul said.

He warned that the country's independence and sovereignty will be at stake and the economy, education and all other sectors will be completely ruined.

"What we need now is to build unity among all. To accelerate the street movement through that unity to defeat them [AL]," the BNP leader said.

BNP's Dhaka south and north city units arranged the programme.

Fakhrul also said a strong movement is imperative to have Khaleda Zia freed from jail without any condition for ensuring her advanced treatment abroad.

Execute arrest

FROM PAGE 5

Chowdhury, a lawyer for Padma Bank, said, "The accused willfully defaulted on a loan from the then Farmers Bank [now Padma Bank]."

Bench Assistant of the court Rezaul Karim said, "A copy of the order will be sent to the police station concerned."

Jasim did not respond to the phone calls made by this correspondent.

Fodder crisis hits cattle farmers

FROM PAGE 5

are my only earning source. I got a packet of food relief for my family but nothing for my cattle," he said.

Sirajganj is one of the biggest dairy hubs in the country, with 37,000 farmers engaged in it, rearing around 17 lakh animals, said Dr Md Omor Faruk, district livestock officer.

"The flood has affected at least 40,000 animals and inundated around 200 hectares of pasture land in different areas over the last couple of weeks," he said.

"To address the fodder crisis, we have taken preparation to provide dry feed to cattle farmers," he added.

While commercial dairy farms are hardly affected, the farm owners, however, claimed their cost of production will rise as they have to depend on dry feed for their cattle amid the flood.

"I have 50 cows, mostly milk producing ones. Those need to be fed grass every day to produce milk, but due to the flood I have been unable to manage grass over the last two weeks. I am now feeding the animals straw and rice bran, which is raising my cost while lowering my milk production," said Md Raju Ahmed, a dairy farmer of Ramkharua village under Shahzadpur upazila.

Many small-scale farmers are also opting to sell their animals at low prices amid the ongoing crisis.

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নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

GD-35

বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস)
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GD-38

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

After their home in Phulchhai upazila of Gaibandha got inundated in the ongoing flood, Rafiq and his wife Rabeya had no other option but move to a higher ground. They were seen waiting for a boat to rescue them yesterday.

Fodder crisis hits cattle farmers

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *back from Sirajganj*

Cattle farmers in Sirajganj are in dire straits due to an acute crisis of fodder for around 40,000 animals amid the ongoing flood in the district.

While people are finding it tough to find shelter in the flood-hit areas, the situation is worse for the animals.

"When flood water entered my house 10 days ago, I took my family members along with my two cows and three goats to a nearby mosque for shelter. Since then, we have been struggling to manage feed for my animals," said Mazeda Begum of Dogasi Kwakola area under Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

"With all pasture lands being inundated by floodwaters, I am compelled to feed them catkin and banana leaves," she added.

Md Sharif Hossain of Choto Koyra village echoed her.

"The floodwater washed away the straws I had kept at my house to feed my cattle. Now I am finding it difficult to feed my cattle, which

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

AL leader held in loan default case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakali*

Police yesterday arrested a local Awami League leader in a loan default case filed by Sonali Bank in Patuakhali.

Zakia Sultana Baby, general secretary of the district unit of Mahila Awami League, was held in the town's Fire Service area around noon.

Patuakhali Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Md Asad said earlier a court issued an arrest warrant against Zakia who owes Tk 9 crore to the bank's Patuakhali branch, according to the case.

The branch Manager, Md Zillur Rahman, said in the name of Patuakhali Textile Mill jointly owned by Zakia and her now deceased husband Sirajul Islam Khan, the couple took a loan of Tk 2.23 crore in 1985 from the bank.

Although the bank approved 100 percent interest waiver, the couple did not repay the loan.

Now the recoverable amount of that money stands at Tk 88.89 crore, bank sources said.

The bank authorities declared Zakia and Sirajul as defaulter and filed a loan default case with a Patuakhali court in 2004.

Rain increases flood woes in the north

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

With the ongoing flood already making the lives of Kurigram residents miserable, more downpour further added to their woes.

"As floodwater inundated our house, five of us in the family left for the embankment on Tuesday with our belongings, two cattle, three goats and some hens to seek shelter there. Since then, we have been living under this polythene wrapped shanty. The rains make it very hard for us to live in this condition," said Amena Bewa, 68, of Rajarvita village on Brahmaputra's shoal in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila.

"The floodwater is not receding, so we cannot return to our house. We have to struggle to find pure water for drinking, sometimes treading the floodwater for miles to find a source. We have no food. There is no work in the area. No one has come to us with any assistance or relief yet. Who knows how long our miseries will continue," she added.

Amena's neighbour Kohinoor Bewa, 70, echoed her.

Amena and Kohinoor are not alone. Several hundred families had to take shelter on BWDB dam in Chilmari upazila and are going through a similar ordeal.

Amid the flood and rains, there is an acute lack of work for labourers, leaving many of them unemployed and struggling to remain afloat with their families.

"Our house is submerged under four feet of water. There is no work in the area, no food in our house, and no assistance came from government or private initiatives. We are in dire straits," said Ayub Ali, 60, a day-labourer from Putimari village of Raniganj union.

"I took a loan of Tk 3,000 from a local, but how long can we survive with such a meagre amount?" he added.

Golam Ashek, chairman of Ramna Union Parishad, informed that of the 4,000 flood-affected families in his union, only 600 got relief assistance of 10kg rice from the government.

Manjurul Islam, chairman of Raniganj union parishad, said only 300 of the 5,500 flood-hit families in his union received government relief.

Contacted, Minhazul Islam, UNO of Chilmari, said they are trying to tackle the flood situation with the government's relief allocation.

Vast stretches of croplands, along with houses and educational institutions remain submerged in the district, affecting at least 1,35,939 people in nine upazilas.

So far, 397 tonnes of rice, Tk 21,85,000 cash, and 21,330 packets of dry food have been distributed among flood victims in the district, according to officials.

Joydeb, 40, carries a variety of summer fruits and vegetables on this small boat along a canal. He paddles towards the market, hoping to sell all his produce and earn enough to support his family. The photo was taken in the Bhimruli area of Jhalakathi district recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

TK 115CR GRAFT

Execute arrest warrant against UZ chairman Jasim: court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Chattogram court yesterday ordered the deputy inspector general of police, superintendent of police and local police station to execute arrest warrant against Chattogram's Chandanaish Upazila Parishad chairman Jasim Uddin Ahmed.

On April 30 this year, the court issued the warrant against Jasim for embezzling Tk 115 crore from Padma Bank.

Raihanul Wazed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dhaleshwari erodes bridge approach road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

The erosion by Dhaleshwari river caused the approach road of Charabari Bridge in Tangail Sadar upazila to collapse on one side, snapping the road link between five unions in the shoal areas and the upazila headquarters.

As such, thousands of people from the shoal areas are suffering with their commute.

According to locals, around 50 metres of the approach road collapsed within a short time due to erosion early on Tuesday, halting movement of all vehicles through the bridge.

The Local Government Engineering Department constructed the 170.64-metre-long bridge in 2006 connecting Tangail-Torabganj road.

The road is the only route for about one lakh people from five unions in shoal areas -- Katuli, Hugra, Kakua, and Mahmud Nagar unions in Sadar upazila and Bharra union in Nagarpur upazila -- to reach the district town, said Tofazzal Hossain Tofa, chairman of Tangail Sadar upazila parishad.

Many students of Mawlana Bhashani University of Science and Technology in Santosh area also use the route to reach their campus, he said, adding that agricultural products, raw materials of textile industry, and daily necessities are also transported using the route.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, executive engineer of LGED in Tangail, said the bridge and the connecting road became vulnerable as the river's course had changed due to illegal sand extraction and its flow through Charabari area became stronger over time.

Preparations are underway to address the issue, he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Sarak Bhaban, Boyra, Khulna
&
Project Director
Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of
Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project
Phone: 02477701378
Email: acerhdkhulna@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.4751.014.01.038.24-176 Date: 10-07-2024

Request for Expression of Interest (FIRM)

1	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges/Road Transport and Highways Division
2	Agency	:	Roads and Highways Department
3	Procuring Entity Name	:	Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Khulna Zone, Khulna & Project Director, Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project.
4	Procuring Entity Code	:	khuz001
5	Procuring Entity District	:	Khulna
6	Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of	:	Land acquisition and utility relocation related services
7	EOI Reference No.	:	01/EOI/NGO/ACE Khu/2024-2025
8	Date	:	11 July 2024
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement Sub-Method	:	Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS)
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and Source of Funds	:	Development Budget (GoB)
11	Development Partner (if applicable)	:	N/A
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
12	Project/Program Code (if applicable)	:	224398500
13	Project/Program Name (if applicable)	:	Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project.
14	EOI Closing Date and Time	:	12 August 2024
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT			
15	**Brief Description of the Assignment** The Non-Government Organization (NGO) shall primarily assist the PIU of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in land acquisition. The general scope of work and key tasks of the NGO shall include but not limited to: 1. Conduct a full census survey in project area (according to Feasibility Study the amount of Land Acquisition is estimated about 392.45 hectares which may vary as per final design) to collect data on land acquisition, to assist in Utility Shifting Process, Land Acquisition Consultation and Participation activities, Data Management and Monitoring process. 2. Assist in revising of LAPs and preparing necessary numbers of new LAPs in consultation with the project Director, if required. 3. Hire surveyors and all other support staffs. 4. Assist in collecting latest Mouza Maps, Parcha/Khatian. Provide logistic support during the survey/ field verification conducted by DC, UNO, AC Land, PWD, Forest Department, Water Development Board and RHD etc. 5. Close Liaison with Deputy Commissioner (DC) and PD, RHD to expedite the land acquisition and compensation process and assisting in demarking the Right of Way. If necessary, they will revise the LA Plan as per actual requirement. 6. Arrange monthly and periodic co-ordination meeting through RHD involving the Representatives of the Executing Agencies/Departments and others concerned on a regular basis. 7. Arrange Transport, Transport Fuel and provide other relevant support for the Joint Verification Survey 8. Assist and provide all other logistic support in Utility Shifting Process also assist RHD in making correspondence with the concern utility agencies. 9. Conduct information and communication campaigns regarding land acquisition, required legal documentation and procedures also establish A2i. 10. Assist RHD in maintaining record of land acquisition and keeping compensation and payment related records. Design and develop a Computerized Management Information System (CMIS) to manage data and generate reports as instructed by the Project Director. 11. Prepare a LA schedule, Utility Shifting Schedule and Monitor all land acquisition and utility shifting related activities also prepare monthly and periodic progress report. 12. Assist in publishing Gazette for acquired land and provide necessary support in settling litigations, if any. 13. Monitor all acquisition related activities and prepare progress reports on behalf of RHD highlighting monthly progress in all areas as well as implementation issues/constraints that require decisions by RHD, and other agencies involved. 14. Assist RHD in Land Acquisition and Land Taking-over from Deputy Commissioners and handing over of land to the Contractor.			
16	**Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required** The NGO must have experience in land related survey, Land Acquisition, Utility shifting and implementation of resettlement action plan in large-scale completed development projects. The sole applicant NGO or the lead firm of a JV applicant NGO must be registered in Bangladesh under the NGO Affairs Bureau and the Department of Social Welfare. The NGO shall have the experience in implementing preferably 02 (two) Land acquisition and Utility shifting programs in Bridge/Highway/Railway development Projects in the last 10 (ten) years in Bangladesh. Experience of working in Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting under Roads and Highways Department or in any other government agency will get preference.			
17	**Other Details** **The EOI shall include:** 1. Profile of the NGO (e.g., representatives, address, number of staff, history, and other information to introduce itself). 2. General experience of the NGO in brief. 3. Copy of updated/renewed registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau and Department of Social Welfare. Also copy of updated trade license. 4. Copy of audited financial reports of NGO for last three years. 5. Provide information on each assignment completed for which the firm and each associate (JV member only) for this assignment, was legally contracted either individually as a corporate entity or as one of the major companies within an association for carrying out consulting services (i.e. land survey, land acquisition, resettlement plan and monitoring) similar to the ones requested under this assignment. The EOI will include such similar experience information which has been completed within the last 10 (Ten) years. The information shall be supported by the copy of experience certificate (Completion Certificate) issued by the respective client and contract document (with salient features for identification only). 6. Summary of permanent professional and technical employees with key qualifications (in tabular form). 7. Interested NGO may obtain additional information from the office of the undersigned. EOI with all supporting documents must be submitted at or before 4:00 pm by 12 August, 2024 in sealed envelope, marked with "NGO Services for Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project and delivered to the address of the undersigned. 8. The EOI shall be submitted in one (1) original, two (2) copies, and one soft copy in USB in a sealed envelope. 9. The final selection of NGO shall follow Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) procedure in accordance with the Public Procurement Rules 2008. 10. Interested applicants/firms are advised to visit the site at their own cost before submitting the EOI.			
18	Association with foreign firm (s)		N/A
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
19	Name of the Official Inviting EOI	:	Syed Aslam Ali
20	Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	:	Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Khulna Zone, Khulna & Project Director, Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project.
21	Address of the Official Inviting EOI	:	Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Khulna Zone, Khulna & Project Director, Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting for Improvement of Bhanga-Jashore-Benapole Highway to 4-Lane project. Sarak Bhaban, Boyra, Khulna
22	Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	:	Phone: 02477701378 E-mail: acerhdkhulna@gmail.com
23	The PE reserves the right to shortlist or not to shortlist any or all the applicant(s) without mentioning any reason whatsoever.		

The costs and expenses incurred by the NGO in connection with the preparation and delivery of the EOI shall be borne solely by the NGO and will not be recovered from the Procuring Entity whatever the outcome of the procurement process of NGO selection.
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

10.07.2024
(Syed Aslam Ali)
Project Director
&
Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Khulna Zone, Khulna

GD-36

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SY HUQ
Bangladeshi origin producer making it big in Japan

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL

Sy Huq, despite his films earning critical acclaim and festival awards, encountered challenges while directing his debut film 'Things That Fall'. The project faced setbacks twice before coming to fruition.

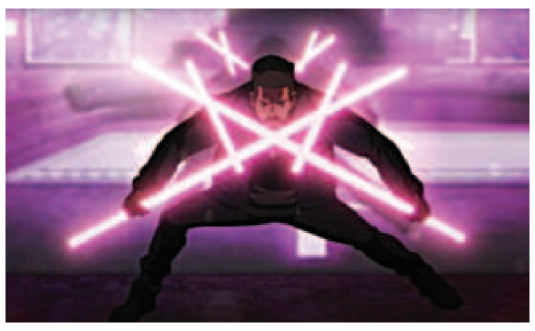
RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Sy Huq, a young filmmaker, has become the first Bangladeshi-American creative executive in Japan's anime industry. He secured a prestigious role at D'ART Shtajio, Japan's first Black-owned anime studio, and boasts a reputation as a four-time Oscar-qualified director and producer. Intrigued by his backstory and what inspired him to pursue filmmaking, I wanted to learn more about his journey.

A traveler at heart and filmmaker by passion, he discovered his love for Japanese films at a young age. He frequented public libraries to watch VHS tapes, drawing inspiration from Kurosawa's live-action movies and Hayao Miyazaki's animations. His imagination and creativity were further fueled by writing and drawing comics.

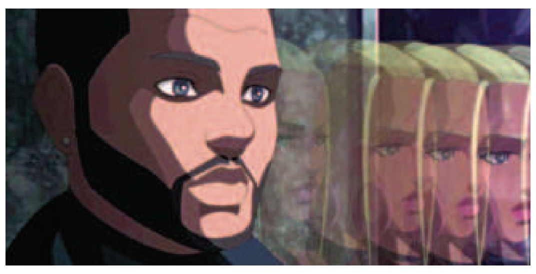
"Production was never something I thought was within reach for someone like me, especially at the Hollywood level. While backpacking overseas, I realised the profound impact and community-building power of bringing people together through storytelling. After completing my first few screenplays during my travels and receiving positive feedback from those around me, I sensed it was time to take a leap forward. I decided to immerse myself in Hollywood, learn the film business through UCLA's Professionals Program in Producing, and approach production with dedication," said Sy.

Recently, Animation Magazine announced Sy Huq's new role at D'ART Shtajio, known for their work on notable animated projects such as ***Star Wars: Visions – The Pit, The Boys Presents: Diabolical,*** and ***The Weeknd-Snowchild*** (Animated video).



Their collaboration was destined. While immersed in various creative anime projects in Tokyo, Sy began collaborating with D'ART Shtajio on several ventures.

"It was during these collaborations, especially with D'ART Shtajio's incredibly talented CEO, Arthell Isom, that we realised not only our natural inclination to collaborate and enjoy the process of developing and structuring stories that innovate and challenge the anime industry, but it was also our potential to create something truly remarkable. It was this realisation that led to discussions with D'ART about joining as lead executive producer. At D'ART Shtajio, I will focus on developing, creating, and writing large-scale anime projects, expanding their portfolio to impact animation enthusiasts worldwide with our unique storytelling style that blends Eastern and Western influences," shared the young producer.



While he has roots in Bangladesh, he has not had much exposure to the Bangladeshi animation industry. He is eager to learn more about it from industry professionals in the country to deepen his understanding of its production.

"There is a project I've been creating and developing since I filmed the primary story in documentary form in Bangladesh in 2022, based on my father's experiences during the Liberation War as a child in 1971, in the countryside. It's been an exciting journey, gaining attention within my trusted circles. We're taking our time to ensure the project is as impactful as possible while allowing it to creatively evolve. I look forward to seeing it come to life to represent the beauty of Bangladesh, frame by frame, in the future." said Sy.

An anime enthusiast, he is also a four-time Oscar-qualified director and producer. His debut as a director, ***Things That Fall***, was eligible for the 92nd Academy Awards for Best Live Action Short Film. He served as executive producer for ***The Boys:Diabolical***, which qualified for the 94th Academy Awards in the same category. Sy also produced two short films, ***The Stranger*** and ***Panorama***, both qualifying for the 95th Academy Awards for Best Live Action Short Film.

Sy Huq, despite his films earning critical acclaim and festival awards, encountered challenges while directing his debut film ***Things That Fall***. The project faced setbacks twice before coming to fruition.

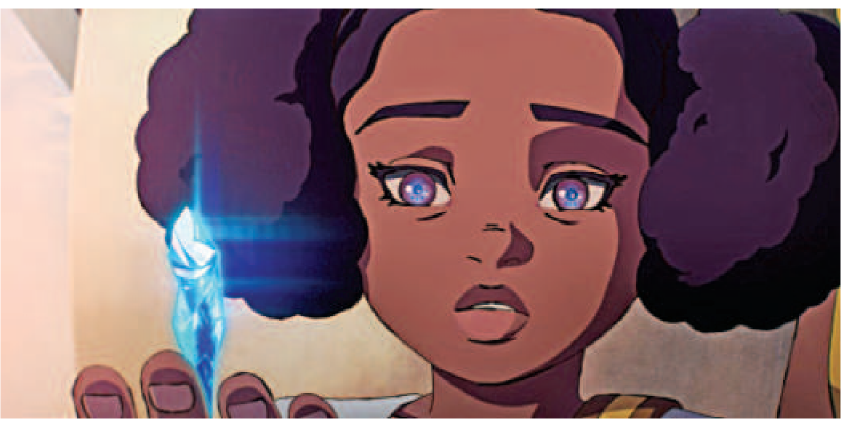
"Through that film, I learned the power of empathy and the importance of championing meaningful causes, such as hiring with authenticity and representation in mind. We incorporated sign language, cast deaf talent for deaf roles, collaborated with mental health organisations for authentic portrayal, and experimented with new sound technology. It was a bold approach that underscored the impact of innovative storytelling and dedication, particularly as we navigated the journey from festivals to the Oscars," explained the director.

After ***Things That Fall*** qualified for the Academy Awards, Sy Huq realised his responsibility to address real issues through his narratives. He aimed to create films that would impact audiences and provoke reflection.

"My goal was to contribute to improving lives in some way. After four qualifications, I realised that the next step in my career was to scale up and significantly increase the impact I could make in my community," shared the filmmaker.

"My short films, like ***Things That Fall***, draw inspiration from animated shorts such as ***Paperman***. They utilise silent film principles to resonate with audiences, focusing on actions over dialogue and the power of non-verbal storytelling. Short films provided a rich education in bringing stories to life, and animation allows imagination to flourish with fewer limitations," Sy explained.

Currently, he's involved in undisclosed larger projects. However, he mentioned collaborating with Arthell Isom on D'ART's first Congolese anime feature, ***MFINDA***.



PHOTOS: **COURTESY**

NEWS

Pakistan's ISI

FROM PAGE 12

Omar Ayub Khan, said the agency would wield its powers even against government lawmakers, and vowed that his party would mount a court challenge.

The army's Inter-Services Public Relations Wing (ISPR) did not respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

"Is what is `legal` also constitutional or right?" Farieha Aziz of rights advocacy group Bolo Bhi asked on X.

Scaloni hails grit of Messi & Co

FROM PAGE 12

This edition of the Copa America is likely to represent the last chance for many senior squad members to add to their trophy collection with the national team.

Angel di Maria, 36, said last year he would retire from international football after the Copa America, while Messi, 37, and Nicolas Otamendi, 36, are both nearing the end of their careers.

"You know how I feel about Angel. We don't want to retire him earlier than needed," Scaloni said.

"We don't want to feel melancholy. We have to let him play, and then we'll see if we can convince him or not to stay with us. But so far, he's here, and he has to be allowed to enjoy this moment.

"For Leo (Messi), it's similar to Angel. We have to let him be and we will never be the ones to close the door. He can be with our team for as long as he wants to be. And if he wants to retire but still come and hang around, it would be great."

In Sunday's final, Argentina could face either Uruguay, who beat them in a World Cup qualifier in November, or Colombia, who are on a 27-match unbeaten run under coach Nestor Lorenzo.

"These two potential opponents are top-notch national teams, but it would be reckless to say that I prefer one or the other," Scaloni said.

"One of them already beat us. It was a very tough match. We have not played against Colombia with this coach, but we know it could be very difficult as well."

Govt stock nearing exhaustion

FROM PAGE 12

DGFP Director General ANM Al Firoz declined to make any comment on the issue.

"We have taken initiatives to procure contraception so that a crisis does not arise," Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen told The Daily Star.

Of the total population of 16.98 crore, the number of eligible couples is 2.81 crore, according to DGFP data.

At present, 37 percent of eligible couples receive contraceptives from the government and 3 percent from non-governmental organisations, according to government data. The remaining 60 percent get their contraception from the private sector.

Since there is a shortage of contraceptives, poor couples will find it difficult to take service from the private sector because of their high price, said Mohammad Mainul Islam, a professor and former chairman of the Dhaka University's population sciences department.

"Unintended pregnancies will also go up, which will scale up the mother and infant mortality rates. Pregnancy termination will also increase. Therefore, there is a risk to reproductive health."

At present, the rate of unmet need for family planning is 10 percent and the government wants to bring it down to zero by 2030.

Unmet need for family planning is defined as the percentage of women of reproductive age, either married or in a union, who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception.

If the supply is not uninterrupted, it will be difficult to meet that target, Mainul said.

"If unmet needs increase, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, maternal deaths -- all will rise."

Besides, achieving the total fertility rate of 2.1 will be difficult too, Mainul added.

Assuming there are no migration flows and that mortality rates remain unchanged, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman generates broad stability of the population. It is also referred to as the "replacement fertility rate" as it ensures replacement of the woman and her partner with another 0.1 children per woman to counteract infant mortality.

Israeli strikes hit UN agency building in Gaza

FROM PAGE 1

warned it would "remain a dangerous combat zone", an AFP journalist said.

The heightened military strikes come as Israeli officials started talks in Qatar yesterday on reaching a truce.

The Israeli military said that one overnight attack in Gaza City targeted Hamas and Islamic Jihad targets operating from inside the headquarters of the UN agency for Palestinians UNRWA.

UNRWA had no immediate comment on the attack, but has said it has "no way to verify" claims that its facilities are being used by Hamas and its allies.

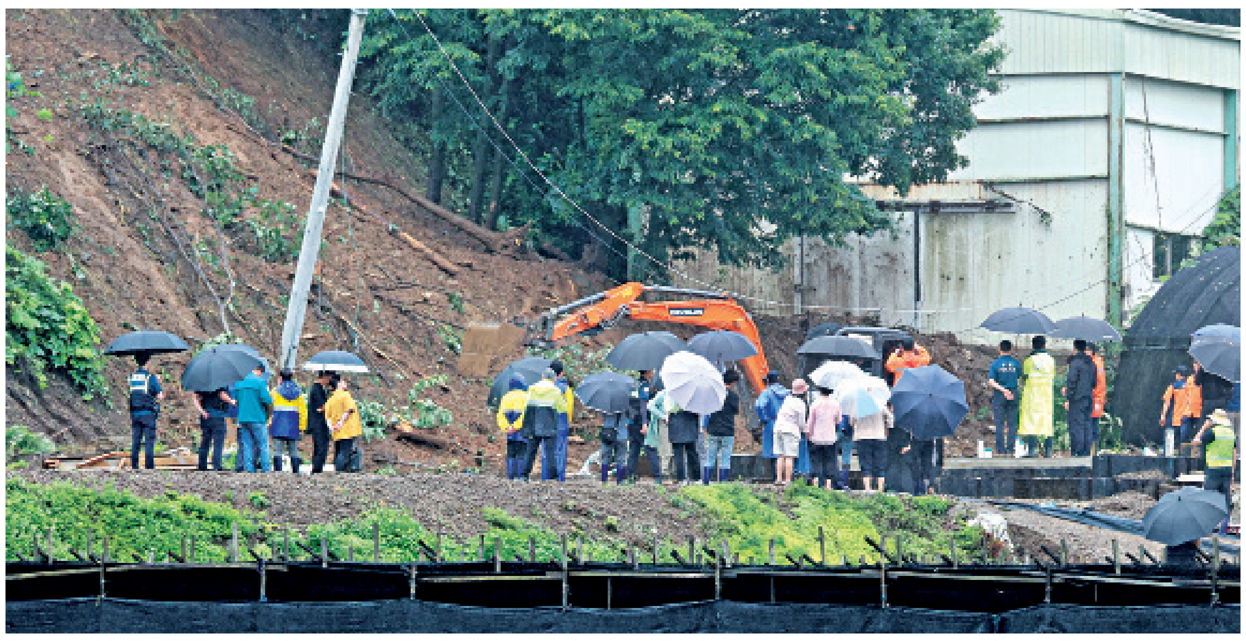
Meanwhile Tuesday's deadly strike near the Al-Awda school in Abasan, near Khan Yunis, brought new condemnation from Hamas over the Israeli military tactics.

The Hamas government said a "majority" of the dead were women and children.

At least 38,295 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 88,241 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 52 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said it had received dozens of desperate calls from residents in Gaza City trapped in their homes but their teams were unable to reach them because of the intensity of the bombing, reports Reuters.

"The information coming from Gaza City shows residents are living through tragic conditions. (Israeli) occupation forces continue to hit residential districts, and displace people from their homes and refuge shelters," it said in a statement.



Rescue workers search for missing persons after a landslide occurred due to heavy rain in Geumsan, South Korea yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Eight jailed for 7yrs over Ctg girder collapse

FROM PAGE 1

Parisa's Project Manager Gias Uddin, engineer Abdul Jalil, Quality Control Engineer Aminur Rahman, and employees Abdul Hai, Mosharraf Hossain, Manjurul Islam, Shahjahan Ali, and Rafiqul Islam.

The court sentenced the eight to five years' imprisonment and fined Tk 3 lakh each, in default, they have to suffer six months more in jail under section 304 (A) of the Penal Code. They were jailed for another two years under section 338/34 of the Penal Code.

The sentences will be executed one after another, and the money will be distributed to the victims' families who were killed and injured in the incident, said Public Prosecutor Abdur Rashid.

"The eight were present in the courtroom during the verdict delivery, and all were sent to jail after cancellation of their bail," said Omar Fuad, bench assistant of the court.

Twenty-two out of 28 prosecution witnesses testified before the court during the trial, he added.

Convict Rafiqul's lawyer SUM Nurul Islam said, "We expressed our dissatisfaction over the judgment and will appeal to the higher court."

Omar Faruk, son of Elias who was killed in the incident, said they were not satisfied as the accused did not get the punishment they deserve.

In its observations, the court stated that the Chattogram Development Authority gave the victims Tk 50,000 each as compensation, which the court considers inadequate. By paying the compensation, the CDA indirectly accepted its responsibility for the incident.

The judge said the accused told the court that the names of high officials of the CDA and consultancy agencies were in the FIR, but those were not included in the charge sheet.

But neither the prosecution nor any victim lodged a no-confidence petition with the magistrate court at that time.

The court added that the prosecution witnesses did not mention anything about the dropped names.

If the court sent back the case for further investigation to include their names in the case, it would delay disposal of the case.

On November 24, 2012, three girders of under-construction Bahaddarhat flyover collapsed and fell on an adjacent kitchen market, leaving 13 people dead and over 27 others injured.

UNHRC adopts resolution

FROM PAGE 12

She emphasised on the start of sustainable and voluntary repatriation of the Rohingyas by creating a congenial environment in Rakhine

The UN in the resolution expressed deep concern over recent violence against the Rohingyas in Rakhine, their displacements, and forceful inclusion in Myanmar's armed forces, says the statement.

It also called on all parties in conflict in Myanmar to ensure protection and safety of Rohingyas.

It further expressed concern over the damage to property and people in neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, due to ongoing conflict in Myanmar, and called on Myanmar to take necessary steps to maintain stability along its borders.

Nato begins sending F-16 jets to Ukraine

Says US top diplomat

AGENCIES

Nato allies have begun the promised transfer of F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine to bolster defenses against Russia, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday.

"As we speak, the transfer of F-16 jets is underway, coming form Denmark, coming from the Netherlands," Blinken said at a Nato 75th anniversary summit in Washington.

Meanwhile, Nato allies have reached agreement on the summit declaration that includes a pledge by the alliance to continue to support Ukraine "on its irreversible path to full Euro-atlantic integration, including Nato membership", a source told Reuters yesterday.

The declaration goes on to reaffirm that Nato will "be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the alliance when allies agree and conditions are met", according to the source in the alliance.

On the eve of the summit, Russia fired a barrage of missiles on Ukraine, killing dozens.

US President Joe Biden, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Polish President Andrzej Duda, Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Czech Republic's President Petr Pavel, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and other officials pose for a photo as they attend a Nato event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the alliance, in Washington DC, US on Tuesday evening. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

POST-POLLS FRANCE

Macron urges MPs to agree broad coalition

AFP, *Paris*

President Emmanuel Macron put the onus on the French parliament yesterday to negotiate a broad-based coalition, after snap elections failed to give a majority to any one party.

Macron said he would name a new prime minister after MPs have had "a little time" to negotiate a governing programme, and that the current government would remain in place for the meantime.

French centrists were looking for an alliance with the right yesterday.

French leftists, however, believe that as the largest bloc in the new National Assembly with some 190 seats they are entitled to suggest a new prime minister.

But many in Macron's centrist camp, which holds around 160 seats, would refuse to support a new government that includes figures from the hard left.

The president's Renaissance outfit yesterday sought to find allies in the lower chamber, but appeared divided, with some seeking to include forces ranging from the centre left to the right in a broad coalition, and others only wishing to join forces with conservatives.

Ready to help restore peace in Ukraine

Modi tells Austrian Chancellor Nehammer

AFP, *Vienna*

India stands ready to give all possible support to restoring peace to war-torn Ukraine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday in Vienna after a Kremlin visit criticised by Kyiv.

Modi arrived in Vienna late Tuesday after talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, where the Indian leader urged "peace through dialogue", saying that "war cannot solve problems".

"This is not an age of war. Problems cannot be solved on the battlefield," Modi told reporters in Vienna alongside Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer.

Modi said India and Austria stand "ready to provide all possible support" to "rapidly restore peace and stability". Nehammer said both countries shared "common goal" to achieve a "comprehensive and lasting peace, in accordance with UN Charter".

ARUNACHAL PRADESH STATE

India has no right to develop contested region: China

REUTERS, *Beijing*

India has no right to carry out development in the area China calls South Tibet, China's Foreign Ministry said yesterday in response to a Reuters report on New Delhi's plans to speed up hydropower projects in the border state.

"South Tibet is China's territory," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement. It said India had no right to carry out development there and the establishment of what India calls Arunachal Pradesh on Chinese territory is "illegal and invalid".

Reuters reported on Tuesday that India plans to spend $1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in the northeastern Himalayan state.

India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on China's statement.

India says its remote state of Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country, but China says it is a part of southern Tibet, and has objected to Indian infrastructure projects there.

Last week, India Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to intensify efforts to resolve issues along their border.

India plans to spend $1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in Arunachal Pradesh, two government sources said.

The federal finance ministry under Nirmala Sitharaman recently approved up to 7.5 billion rupees ($89.85 million) in financial assistance to each hydropower project in the northeastern region, the sources said.

Under the scheme, about 90 billion rupees will likely be allotted for the 12 hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh, said the sources, who have direct knowledge of the matter.

The scheme is likely to support northeastern states and help them finance equity holdings in the projects they host. Having state governments on board generally helps in expediting regulatory clearances, locals rehabilitation and negotiations on sharing electricity with the host state.

The plans for the hydropower stations are expected to be announced in the 2024/2025 federal budget that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government will unveil on July 23, the sources said.

Time short for Biden decision on 2024 bid: Pelosi

AFP, *Washington*

Democratic Party heavyweight Nancy Pelosi said yesterday that time is running out for US President Joe Biden to make a final decision on his reelection bid, but stressed the call was his to make.

Despite Biden insisting he is staying in the race, Pelosi -- the former speaker of the House of Representatives and an influential voice in the party -- suggested the president still could step aside amid a Democratic divide over his candidacy.

"It's up to the president to decide if he is going to run," she told MSNBC. "We're all encouraging him to make that decision because the time is running short."

Pelosi stopped short of advocating either way on the Biden question. "I want him to do whatever he decides to do, and that's the way it is," she said. "Whatever he decides, we go with."

Biden, 81, has corralled much-needed support from some top Democrats, but several lawmakers in the party have publicly expressed concerns about his mental fitness after his disastrous debate performance last month against White House challenger Donald Trump.

A Palestinian woman holds her daughter as she walks past the rubble of houses destroyed during the Israeli military offensive in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

37 Chinese aircraft skirt Taiwan on way to drill

AFP, *Taipei*

Taiwan's defence ministry said 37 Chinese aircraft were detected around the self-ruled island yesterday as they headed to exercises with an aircraft carrier in the western Pacific.

China claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and maintains a near-daily presence of fighter jets, drones and warships around the island, which is 180 kilometres (110 miles) from the southern Chinese coast.

Taiwan is also a crucial part of a chain of islands that military strategists say serve as a gateway from the South China Sea -- which China claims in nearly its entirety -- to the Pacific Ocean.

At around 9:30 am (0130 GMT) yesterday, Taipei said that "since 0520 today, the Ministry of National Defence detected a total of 37 Chinese aircraft", including fighter jets, bombers and drones.

Thirty-six of the aircraft crossed the sensitive median line of the Taiwan Strait -- which bisects the narrow waterway separating the island from China.

"(The aircraft) headed to the Western Pacific via our southern and southeastern airspace to cooperate with the aircraft carrier the Shandong in conducting 'joint sea and air training'," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Defence Minister Wellington Koo told reporters the Shandong "did not pass through the Bashi Channel", the area off Taiwan's southern tip where Chinese ships typically transit en route to the Pacific Ocean.

Instead, it "went further south through the Balingtang Channel towards the Western Pacific," he said, referring to a waterway just north of the Philippines' Babuyan Island -- about 250 kilometres south of Bashi.

12 children killed in South Africa blaze

AFP, *Johannesburg*

Twelve children were killed in South Africa yesterday when a minibus taking them to school near Johannesburg overturned and burst into flames after being hit by another vehicle, authorities said.

The driver of the minibus was also killed and seven other children were rushed to hospital, according to officials in Johannesburg's Gauteng province.

Television images showed that the minibus was totally destroyed by the fire in the early morning crash in Merafong, more than 70 kilometres (45 miles) west of the city.

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INVITATION FOR TENDER – OTM (International Competition)

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Science and Technology	
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR)	
3.	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR), Dr. Qudrat-I-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh.	
4.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka	
5.	Invitation for	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Scientific Equipments [Name of equipments: Item no.(01) Simultaneous TG-DTA-DSC, (02) Simultaneous ICP-OES spectrometer, Item no.(03) FT-IR Spectrometer with Universal Sampling Module & Item no.(04) Surface area analyzer / physical adsorption analyzer (Details will be found in the Tender Document)].	
6.	Invitation ref. no.	39.02.0000.022.35.319.24	
7.	Date	10.07.2024	
KEY INFORMATION			
8.	Procuring method	Open Tendering Method (International Competition)	
9.	Budget and source of fund	GoB	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
10.	Tender last selling date	27.08.2024 during office hour	
11.	Tender closing date & time	28.08.2024 at 1.00 PM.	
12.	Tender opening date and time	28.08.2024 at 2.00 PM.	
13.	Name & address of the office(s) selling tender document	Cashier, BCSIR, Secretariat building (3rd floor), Dr. Qudrat-I-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205.	
14.	Name & address of the office(s) receiving tender document	Office of the Secretary, Secretariat building (4th floor) BCSIR, Dr.Qudrat-I-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205.	
15.	Name & address of the office(s) Opening tender document	Office of the Secretary, Secretariat building (4th floor) BCSIR, Dr.Qudrat-I-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205.	
INFORMATION ON AWARD			
16.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Science and Technology.	
17.	Eligibility of tenderer	* The tenderer shall have a minimum of 5 (five) years of overall experience in the supply of similar type of goods. * The satisfactory completion of supply of similar scientific equipements/ instruments of minimum 100% (Hundred percent) of the total value of the item(s) quoted by the Tenderer under maximum 5 (five) contracts in the last 5 (five) years. * Details will be found in the Tender Data Sheet (TDS) of the Tender Document.	
18.	Brief description of goods	As per attached specification in the tender document.	
19.	Brief description of related services		
20.	Price of tender document	Tk. 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) (Non -refundable).	
21.	Evaluation will be done "**Item by Item**" basis.		
22.	**Description of goods**	**Tender security (Tk.)**	**Completion time in months/days**
	Scientific Equipment (As per attached specification in the tender document)	The amount of Tender Security shall be at least 2.0% (Two percent) of the total value of the item(s) quoted by the Tenderer in favour of secretary, BCSIR by a tender security.	140 (One hundred forty) days from the date of contract signing.
PROCUREMENT ENTITY DETAILS			
23.	Name of official inviting tender	Most. Sultana Parvin	
24.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Secretary (Addl. Charge), BCSIR, Dhaka.	
25.	Contract details of official inviting Tender	Secretary, Secretariat building (4th Floor), BCSIR, Dr. Qudrat-i-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205, Tel: 58610717	
26.	**The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.**		

10/7/24
(Most. Sultana Parvin)
Secretary(Addl. Charge)

GD- 37

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Develop a patient referral system

Ease pressure on tertiary facilities, re-imagine healthcare system

It is unfortunate that 53 years since independence, we have failed to develop a functional referral system, with a staggering three out of five patients directly referring themselves to specialists and tertiary hospitals, according to a recent study. This inevitably overwhelms tertiary facilities, leads to long waits, and deprives critically-ill patients of due attention and care. Unlike in countries such as the UK, where patients are required to see a general practitioner before being referred to a specialist, it is common practice in Bangladesh for patients to directly visit specialists even for minor ailments. This has created a lop-sided system, where the tertiary hospitals bear an overwhelming brunt of the pressure, while primary and secondary facilities remain underutilised and underdeveloped.

A well-designed referral system can help streamline the healthcare network, and create an effective linkage among three tiers of healthcare services. Primary healthcare facilities, which should be the first point of contact for any patient, should be fully equipped to take care of basic cases, referring only the complex cases to specialists. A 2023 study found that a referral system can filter as many as 65 percent of patients at primary and secondary healthcare facilities at upazila and district levels, freeing up tertiary facilities to focus on their core functions. Given the obvious advantages of such a system, the question is: why have we not implemented this system so far?

There have been various discussions over the decades about instituting such a system, but previous attempts to implement it have stumbled for various reasons. A referral system for Rangpur was announced in 2014 by the then health minister Mohammad Nasim, but it failed as a result of inadequate logistical support and unavailability of qualified physicians and auxiliary workforce at primary healthcare centres. Attempts to get the system going in 2016 and 2019 also fizzled out in the end. What is obvious is that ad hoc attempts at implementation will not work without a radical reimagining of the healthcare system and appropriate investments and capacity-building to ensure a successful transition.

The good news is that Bangladesh already has primary healthcare infrastructure in rural areas, with community hospitals and community clinics, but their systemic issues—shortage of staff, equipment and inefficiencies in operations—need to be addressed if they are to play their due role within the referral system. Meanwhile, tertiary facilities have mushroomed in urban areas at the cost of primary and secondary facilities—an imbalance that must first be addressed.

If we are to move forward, we need political will and a well-defined policy about how to implement a well-designed referral system. The system must be built on a strong foundation of well-equipped primary healthcare facilities, a sufficient number of trained specialists at all levels, and a public that trusts and understands the system.

Punish kidney racket mastermind

Arrest of Bangladeshis involved in illegal transplants a wake-up call

We are horrified to learn of a cross-border racket of illegal kidney transplant in India that has been sourcing the organ from Bangladesh for years. According to a report by *The Indian Express*, police recently arrested seven individuals in Delhi, including three Bangladeshis and an Indian doctor, in connection with this racket. Delhi Police also said the mastermind of the racket is a Bangladeshi national, and those involved with this illegal operation are all suspected to have links with Bangladesh. This racket is a part of a larger interstate network in India involving Bangladeshi patients in Rajasthan and Haryana, sources at Delhi Police say.

The racket, according to Delhi Police, targeted kidney patients by visiting dialysis centres in Bangladesh. They found donors from poor and marginalised backgrounds, luring them to India under the pretence of employment. It also arranged to falsify documents under the name of Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi to show that the donors and recipients were related by blood—a requirement for kidney transplant per the Indian law. Dr Vijaya Kumari, who was employed at the Delhi-based Indraprastha Apollo Hospital (IHS), facilitated the transplants even when she knew about the donors and recipients not being blood-related. The now suspended doctor performed 15-16 such illegal transplants between 2021 and 2023 at the Noida-based Yatharth Hospital.

Police also found documents carrying records of transactions that took place for the transplants from one of the Bangladeshi accused. Donors were paid four to five lakh rupees for their kidneys, while recipients were charged 25-30 lakh rupees.

While we are glad that police nabbed the culprits, we are disturbed that so many illegal transplants took place with no one being the wiser. The Bangladeshi trio who were arrested in Delhi had been arrested on the same charges last month. How did they get out and continue their nefarious activities? We urge both the Bangladesh and Indian authorities to coordinate and delve deeper into the matter and uproot the entire network. On the Bangladesh side, a thorough investigation must be conducted to find the mastermind of the racket and all its members, and bring them all to book.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

2010 FIFA World Cup Final

On this day, The Netherlands and Spain fought for the prestigious football trophy in Johannesburg, South Africa. Spain won the match 1-0 and the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Has poverty-alleviation spending made any difference?

Dr Selim Jahan
is the former director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office at UNDP in New York.

SELIM JAHAN

FILE PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

Protection of the ultra-poor and the marginalised groups require increasing resources for direct expenditures for poverty reduction.

One critical question raised in the context of poverty alleviation in Bangladesh is whether poverty reduction spendings have made any dent on poverty in the country. Sometimes, we generalise the responses to this question. Sometimes, the responses are based more on rhetoric, rather than hard facts. And sometimes, the responses are partial, rather than comprehensive. But an objective response to the question requires an understanding of the dynamics of poverty in Bangladesh, the nature of poverty alleviation spendings. It requires familiarity with poverty and inequality data, and a sense of the magnitude of the poverty alleviation expenditures.

Poverty in Bangladesh has many dimensions. At one level, it can be structural, rooted in the structure of the economy. It can also be transient, which has more of a seasonal nature. Thus, people can be permanently trapped in poverty, or they can get in and out of the poverty trap, depending on the seasonality of the economic outcome. The sources of impoverishment may also vary, ranging from socio-economic shocks (for example, recession or Covid-19) to environmental degradation, giving rise to the environmental poor. Poverty can be absolute, or relative, which is nothing other than inequality. And inequalities occur not only in income, but also in non-income dimensions. Furthermore, inequalities are not always explained in terms of outcomes like educational achievements, but also in opportunities such as access to health services.

Even though a correlation is not easy to establish between the huge amounts of resources going to poverty reduction in Bangladesh and its impressive achievements in poverty reduction, a possibility of a strong association between the two cannot be overruled.

Looking at the poverty alleviating expenditures, there are two dimensions to them—poverty impacting expenditures and targeted expenditures for poverty alleviation. The first set of expenditures are not exclusively directed to poverty alleviation, rather they impact poverty through various channels. Thus, expenditures on social services like health, education, and access to clean drinking water help reduce impoverishment. In societies where poverty is significantly wide-spread, poverty reducing strategies at the macro and sectoral levels are essential. In fact, in such instances, macroeconomic policies must be geared towards poverty reducing measures—expenditures which indirectly impact poverty work through channels like economic growth, employment generation, and expansion of social services, etc. Yet, even with such policies, a significant number of people will remain outside of the macroeconomic policy net. And those people will need direct targeted poverty reducing interventions. Extreme poor, people with disabilities, people who live on ecologically fragile lands need targeted interventions, such as social protection.

A careful review of the poverty data of Bangladesh clearly indicates that over the years, the incidence of poverty has come down significantly. The 2022 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics puts the income poverty rate in Bangladesh at 19 percent, down from 58 percent in 1990—down by more than two-thirds. The extreme poverty in the country stands at about 6 percent. There is no doubt that these are impressive achievements.

But the same thing cannot be said about relative poverty, or inequality. In fact, the income Gini-coefficient (the economic measure of inequality) of Bangladesh is alarmingly high—it was 0.50 in 2022. In theory, the value of the Gini-coefficient ranges between 0 to 1. Higher values within the range indicate higher inequality. A Gini-coefficient value close to 0.5 would mean high inequality. Inequality is also manifested in Bangladesh in other non-income dimensions. For example, in the area of child malnutrition, while 38 percent of the children in the poorest households are stunted, the comparable figure for the richest households is 20 percent.

Over the years, more than half of the public expenditures in Bangladesh was directed towards poverty alleviation. For example, in the fiscal year of 2020-21, 55 percent of the public expenditures were allocated for poverty alleviation. The figure has gone up to 58 percent in the fiscal year of 2024-25. In the intermittent years, the figure stood at more than 55 percent. However, direct expenditures for poverty alleviation show a declining trend—in the fiscal year of 2020-21, more than four-fifths of the public expenditures on poverty alleviation were allocated towards directly fighting poverty. In the fiscal year of 2024-25, the relevant share has come down to two-thirds.

In the context of all these figures, the two relevant observations are that firstly, even though a correlation is not easy to establish between the huge amounts of resources going to poverty reduction in Bangladesh and its impressive achievements in poverty reduction, a possibility of a strong association between the two cannot be overruled. In fact, a significant part of the poverty reduction has to be accounted for by the public expenditures on poverty alleviation. However, the issue is how the allocated public resources to poverty reduction can be made more efficient and effective. Secondly, a declining share of direct expenditures on poverty reduction make the poorest and the most marginalised people more vulnerable. What can be done about it?

In order to make public expenditures on poverty reduction more efficient, macroeconomic and sectoral poverty reduction programmes and projects should be formulated with a concrete focus. A sensible implementation plan with an achievable timeline will safeguard against resource leakages. The effectiveness of such programmes and projects in alleviating poverty can also be enhanced if they are solidly anchored in Bangladesh's overall development plans aligned with its overall goals and objectives, and if the macroeconomic framework and sectoral policies are poverty-sensitive. Linking poverty alleviating measures with employment generation, social services, and pro-poor economic growth would make public resources for poverty reduction more effective.

Protection of the ultra-poor and the marginalised groups require increasing resources for direct expenditures for poverty reduction, not reducing them. It would require intensifying various existing social protection measures and exploring new innovative mechanisms. The need for all these measures has become even more important given that Bangladesh faces high inflation and there can be more external and internal shocks. The second phase of the National Social Security Strategy can be solidified. The Rural Employment Opportunities for Pubic Assets Programme (REOPA) can also be an effective instrument for poverty reduction among the poorest and the marginalised groups.

Was Iran's election a smokescreen?

Noora Shamsi Bahar
is senior lecturer at the Department of English and Modern Languages, North South University (NSU), and a published researcher and translator.

NOORA SHAMSI BAHAR

During Iran's latest presidential elections, the hashtag #electioncircus was trending among the Iranian community on X. This may be due to the illusion of a political competition that is encouraged by the Velāyat-e faqīh, or Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in an established theocratic system, where presidential elections are mostly a facade because ultimately, the decision-making power rests with the Supreme Leader.

So, how do presidential elections work in Iran? The Shourā-ye Negahbān (Guardian Council) handpicks the most suitable candidates from a pool of presidential candidates, who then compete against one another. To secure victory, a candidate needs more than 50 percent of the people's vote. If no candidate achieves this majority, a run-off ensues a week later between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in the initial round.

And what is the Guardian Council? It constitutes 12 members who are directly/indirectly appointed by the Supreme Leader, who hold power to vet/veto legislation, and oversee elections. The Guardian Council can bar candidates from standing in elections to parliament, the presidency and the Majles-e Xobregân-e Rahbari (Assembly of Experts). For example, Ali Larijani, an ex-parliamentary speaker and former Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was disqualified during the 2021 presidential elections by the Guardian Council, possibly owing to his center-right ideology. Noteworthy to mention, disqualified candidates are disallowed from protesting the council's rejection.

Among the seven candidates who were selected by the Guardian Council for the 2021 presidential elections was the to-be president, Ebrahim Raisi, a far-right hardliner, known as the "Butcher of Tehran" for his role in allegedly carrying out mass executions of up to as many as 30,000 political prisoners in 1988, as the-then Deputy Prosecutor General of Tehran. Following Raisi's death after a helicopter crash on May 19, 2024, new presidential elections took place shortly after, which culminated on July 5, 2024.

This time, out of 80 candidates, 74 were disqualified by the Guardian Council, which included four female candidates, as has been the case for all presidential elections since the Islamic revolution—a testament to the accusation that Iran is a gender apartheid state. According to Iran's Ministry of Interior, there was a record-low turnout since the inception of the Islamic Republic, where only 40 percent of the more than 61 million eligible Iranians voted during the first round, which evidences that most do not support clerical rule. I will skip any comment on the speculation that even these embarrassing numbers are fabricated, as has been the claim, given the staggering majority's decision to abstain from voting.

Among the six selected candidates this time around, Dr Masoud Pezeshkian was the only so-called "reformist"—a widely circulated theory that has thrown dust in the eyes of many non-Iranians. It won't be too absurd to assume that Pezeshkian's approved candidacy by the Khamenei-controlled Guardian Council was a ploy to increase political participation. Pezeshkian won against ultra-conservative Saeed Jalili, but one wonders what moderate reforms he will he bring about without challenging the state's theocratic system, especially when he himself has given a public statement declaring that confronting Iran's power elite of clerics will never be part of his agenda.

Anyone who understands Farsi can easily find Pezeshkian's stance on women's rights. In an interview, an elderly Pezeshkian proudly states that even before the first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, established the mandatory hijab law in 1979, Pezeshkian enforced women to wear long trousers, the long-sleeved manteau (a long overcoat), and the hijab at the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (where he was pursuing an MBBS) as well as at the hospital across the medical college. One alumna of the university recounts incidents from 1979, when Pezeshkian and his comrades, whom she dubs as "terrorists," attacked and harassed women who didn't comply, and even carried weapons, such as knives and chains, as scare tactics.

Should a reasonable skeptic, who relies on the independent investigation of the truth, believe that the same man who didn't believe in women's right to freedom of choice is now a changed "reformist" under the same regime that has committed human rights violations in relation to the Zan, Zendegi, Azadi (Woman, Life, Freedom) movement in Iran? Should I, a Bangladeshi citizen belonging to the Iranian diaspora, believe that Pezeshkian will, for instance, make any legislative amendments to dismantle gender apartheid? Or will he be able to ensure a stop to persecutions against non-Shiite religious minorities such as the Baha'is, who are barred from having tertiary education and government jobs, whose properties are confiscated, whose dead are denied the right to dignified burials?

Even if Pezeshkian is given the benefit of the doubt, what power does he hold at the end of the day? None, really. It is therefore disappointing to see every international news portal misleadingly labeling the new president as "reformist" or "moderate" or to see clickbait titles such as the BBC's "Iran's new president gives hope to some women and younger voters," when the content of the article itself goes on to say: "...with Ayatollah Khamenei having final say over government policy - there is little chance of real change," and "... regardless of Dr Pezeshkian's win, the supreme leader remains the 'puppeteer' in Iran."

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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WORLD POPULATION DAY

Bangladesh needs inclusive data for an equitable future

Dr Mohammad Mainul Islam
is professor & former chairman of the Department of Population Sciences at the University of Dhaka.

DR MOHAMMAD MAINUL ISLAM

Today is World Population Day (WPD), and this year's theme is "Embracing the power of inclusive data towards a resilient and equitable future for all." Inclusive data means collecting data for all people, regardless of location, ethnicity, gender, or age. It involves representation, disaggregation, intersectionality of identities, multiple sources, privacy, and support of human resources and technical capacity. It is about closing the data gaps required for a fair and equitable society, and it is more than numbers where every person is seen, heard, and counted.

The key messages for the WPD 2024 as circulated by the United Nations are: (i) in a world of uncertainty and upheaval, we can achieve a peaceful and prosperous future by building resilient systems and societies using evidence-based solutions and reliable, inclusive data; (ii) data collection and analysis tools have vastly improved; yet these changes have also exposed significant information gaps and potential risks, including the misrepresentation or misuse of data; and (iii) countries and societies must champion data collection that counts people as they are, in all their complexity.

This year the world will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Since adopting the ICPD Programme of Actions (PoA) in 1994 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, countries worldwide have been developing the necessary statistical data to track the goals and indicators developed by the United Nations. To measure progress of SDGs, inclusive data is crucial to enables us to see where change is required, allowing us to reach everyone and support them in realising their rights. The SDG progress report demonstrates where a country currently stands on inclusive data collection.

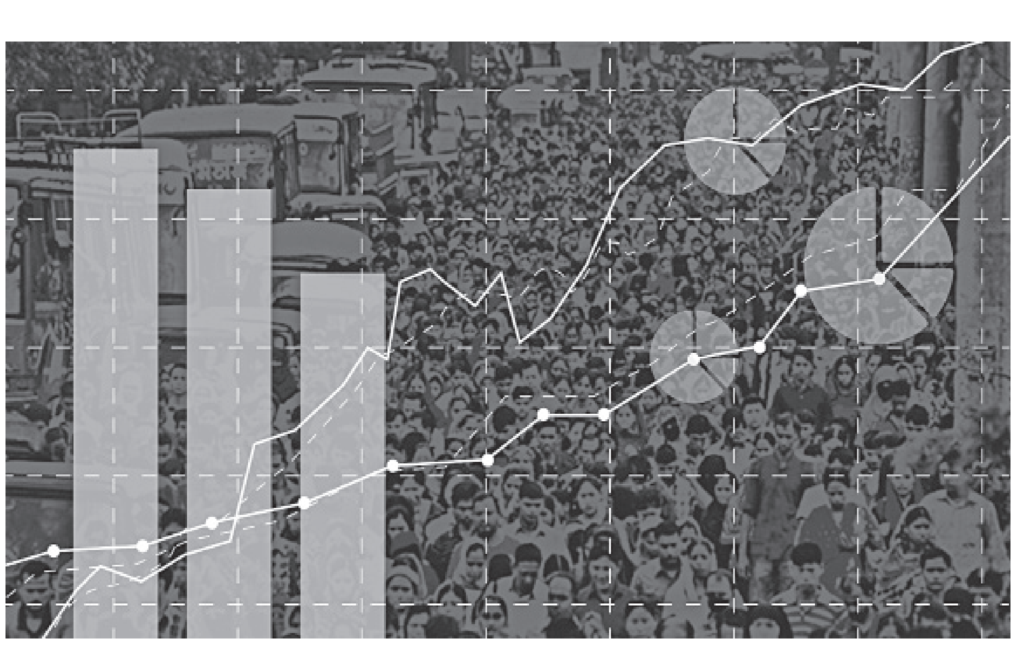
The SDG tracker of Bangladesh shows that almost two-third of all indicators used to monitor the 17 SDGs currently should be made available, but only one-third are updated or readily available. It will take less than six years to reach the SDGs benchmark, but more data will be needed—especially disaggregated data for development. More than half of the data are unavailable for specific goals like SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 14 (life below water). The number of updated data was reduced in 2023 but increased in 2024, which needs a causal explanation from the government. The Bangladesh government is implementing the SDGs at the district and upazila levels. The cabinet approved 39+1 priority indicators in 2018 to localise the SDGs because 39 were deemed necessary at the local level in the nation and had reinforcing effects on other targets. Another priority indicator was left in place to ensure that "no one is left behind," aligning with the requirements of a particular district or upazila and considering the specific circumstances of that geographic area. About five of these 39 priority indicators still need to be updated in the tracker. Another issue with this online tracker is that reviewing the data availability status of each goal's indicator can be confusing because the information is not synchronised. Many of the indicators are only partially mentioned. All these problems must be addressed and resolved immediately for this SDG tracker to function correctly.

While improvements in data collection have been made, data gaps have also been exposed. Significant gaps persist in the availability, quality, accessibility, and use of data in Bangladesh. For example, marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, are not counted accurately in the latest population and housing census in 2022 leading to the possibility that more people will remain invisible to decision-makers. Inclusive data on disability means collecting data primarily on disability, sex, and age and incorporating other dimensions, such as income, ethnicity, location, and other factors. We need to analyse and critically use the data to develop policies to reach those who are most marginalised or are being left behind. The urgency of addressing these data gaps cannot be overstated, as it is crucial for the future of our society.

Another example can be given regarding the accuracy of the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in Bangladesh, an essential indicator of SDG-3 (good health and well-being). There has been no large-scale maternal mortality and health care survey after 2016. The MMR data, reported from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' (BBS) Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) that records vital events such as births, deaths, and causes of death, does not truly reflect the figure due to a shortage of the required sample size. As a result, reporting the MMR and its disaggregated figure from there for policy design and interventions is not appropriate. Thus, urgent efforts must be made to make quality data for all indicators available through effective multisectoral partnerships, coordination, and integration among stakeholders to strengthen and improve the country's data capacity. Decision-making depends heavily on data; obtaining high quality data is crucial for reaching the SDGs. Bangladesh needs more investment in inclusive data for a resilient and equitable future. Our country faces enormous challenges, but we can tackle them. Strong political commitment and the effective and timely implementation of such commitment are essential. Significant policies related to population and development need to be reformed and updated using the SDGs framework. We should pursue the SDGs and our common agenda, keeping the population and its sub-groups at the development centre. For example, Bangladesh should prioritise data on the most vulnerable communities, like adolescent mothers (ages 15-19), as adolescent childbirth is common in practice (24 percent, Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey, BDHS 2022).

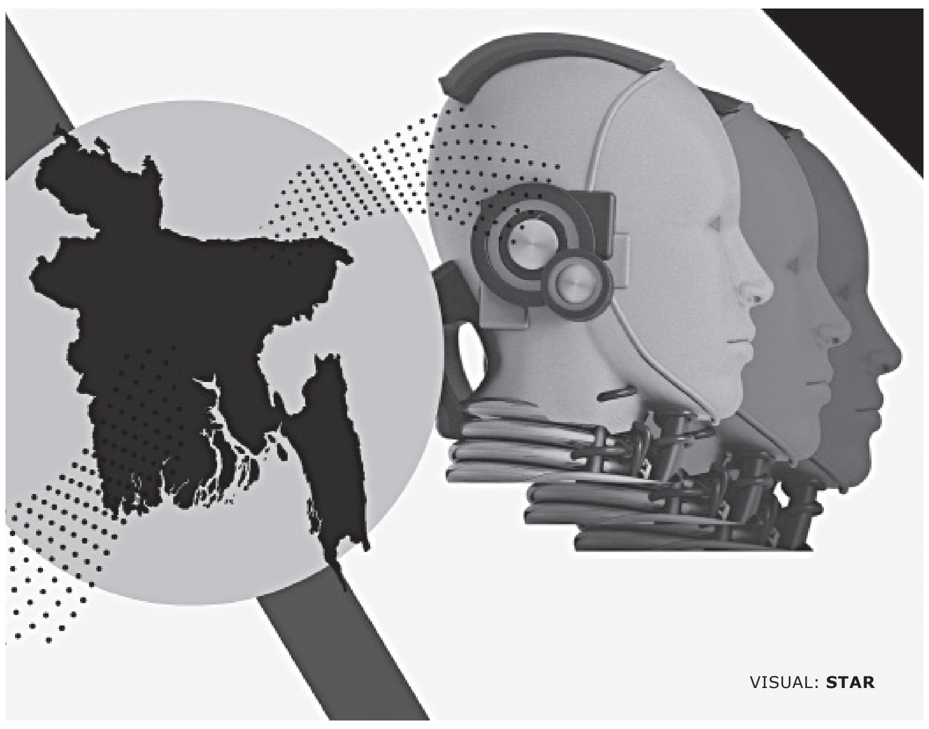
More robust data systems drive diverse benefits, improving quality of life and livelihoods and leading to greater efficiencies in social programmes. An analysis published in September 2022 by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data states that every dollar invested in strengthening data systems generates $32 in economic benefits. This underscores the potential for significant positive change achieved through strategic investment in data systems. Thus, the United Nations (UN) recommends increasing domestic funding for data and statistics by 50 percent by 2030, along with urging donor agencies to raise the share of official development assistance for data to at least 0.7 percent by 2030.

Although several SDG targets have been partially met, achieving full realisation is essential for expediting overall progress in Bangladesh. A few significant challenges to achieving the SDGs in Bangladesh are the unavailability of baseline data, lack of monitoring, and lack of coordination among the national targets stated in the national policies and the SDG target. Thus, establishing a national data repository or information bank that consolidates relevant data from each concerned organisation is necessary, and it can be linked with the SDGs tracker.



VISUAL: **TEENI AND TUNI**

Bangladesh has a population of more than 173 million (SVRS, 2023, BBS). This is a big number with big opportunities, and big challenges. A population of 173 million means there are over 173 million opportunities for a healthier Bangladesh empowered by rights and choices. Adequate and updated population data based on gender, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, etc, are necessary for inclusive development. There is evidence of adopting an inclusive approach to data collection in Bangladesh—data on transgender or Hijra were included in the 2022 Population and Housing Census. The key is to ensure equal access to opportunities and removing barriers to opportunities to harness the potential of all Bangladeshis, including marginalised or disadvantaged populations like women, young people, older people, people with disabilities, and migrants. The best way to cultivate demographic resilience is to support human rights, including individuals' rights and choices—that is the ultimate development.



VISUAL: **STAR**

Vision for an AI law in Bangladesh

Warda Ruheen Bristi *and* **Shafin Haque Omlan**
are research associates at Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM).

WARDA RUHEEN BRISTI AND SHAFIN HAQUE OMLAN

We may not notice it at first glance, but the world is going through a technological renaissance in the form of Artificial Intelligence. In the bustling heart of South Asia, Bangladesh also stands on the cusp of this technological renaissance. As artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming industries worldwide, the nation is facing an urgent call to draft forward-thinking AI policy guidelines. Imagine a future where Dhaka's traffic is managed by smart systems, farmers use AI to boost crop yields, and healthcare is revolutionised by predictive analytics. In the current situation, this thought might be farfetched, but this promising horizon can come sooner rather than later if Bangladesh can establish a policy guideline that can navigate its set of challenges and responsibilities. Bangladesh must utilise the AI wave with a blend of ambition and caution, ensuring that innovation does not eclipse ethics and inclusivity.

Crafting Bangladesh's AI policy is a bit like preparing the perfect biriyani: it requires just the right mix of ingredients to create something truly remarkable. The focus should be on blending robust international cooperation to ensure trustworthy AI, with a generous helping of digital infrastructure to provide the computing power needed for innovation. Stir in public awareness and civic engagement to keep society informed and involved, sprinkle generously with investments in public research capabilities, and don't forget to season with education and skill development to prepare the workforce for future challenges. Finally, top it off with initiatives to boost connectivity and digitalisation, and a strategic vision aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) to ensure sustainable growth. When these elements come together, Bangladesh can set up a tech policy that's not only cutting-edge, but also inclusive and forward-thinking. So, what elements should be on the radar of policymakers when crafting this pivotal piece of legislation?

First of all, AI's transformative potential can only be fully realised if there's a skilled workforce to harness it. Thus, the AI Act must prioritise comprehensive education and training programmes. Integrating AI into school curriculum, establishing vocational training programmes, and offering scholarships for AI-related fields are essential steps. This not only prepares the next generation for AI-driven jobs but also ensures that the current workforce is not left behind.

To position Bangladesh as a leader in AI innovation, substantial investments in AI research and development (R&D) are crucial. This involves funding interdisciplinary research collaborations between universities, research institutions, and private industries. The goal should be to advance AI capabilities in key sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing. Think about AI research centres and innovation hubs sprouting across the country, nurturing a vibrant ecosystem of startups and entrepreneurs. We need to build a digital infrastructure. For example, we can talk about the recent policy on AI that was adopted by Vietnam. Within 2030, they want to build an "AI ecosystem." It means a fluid incorporation of AI in the commercial and research sectors. This ecosystem may include various components that work together to foster innovation, ensure ethical standards, and drive the economic and societal benefits in the country. Most importantly, to foster AI innovation in Vietnam, the government is taking a comprehensive strategy focusing on human resource development, organisational construction, research and development, and investment in AI enterprises. This includes deploying basic AI and data science skills through short and medium-term training courses for students and career-changing workers, attracting both domestic and foreign resources to build training centres, and establishing key research hubs at leading universities. Ultimately, the Vietnamese government wants to promote and attract investment capital for the growth of AI enterprises and brands in Vietnam.

Similarly, for AI to flourish, Bangladesh needs to prioritise investment in high-speed internet connectivity, cloud computing services, and data centres. This infrastructure will provide the necessary computing power and data storage capabilities for AI applications across various sectors. Building this infrastructure is another difficult but manageable task with the right collaborative efforts. If the government can encourage collaborations between itself, the private sector, and academia then Bangladesh can create a fertile ground for AI advancements tailored to local needs. And not only through local collaboration, but Bangladesh should also establish partnerships with other countries, international organisations, and tech companies to develop shared principles and standards for trustworthy AI. This can also position the country as a trustworthy player in the global AI landscape, attracting international investments and collaborations.

We have to remember that, in the current AI-driven world, data is the new oil. However, with great data comes great responsibility. Ensuring a robust data security infrastructure is paramount. The AI Act should mandate the use of cutting-edge encryption technologies, continuous monitoring systems, and regular security audits to protect sensitive information from cyber threats. This is not just about safeguarding individual privacy but also about building trust in AI systems. A data breach in a healthcare system powered by AI could have catastrophic consequences, undermining public confidence. Therefore, a comprehensive focus on data security is non-negotiable.

Another thing to note is that AI is a double-edged sword. While it has the potential to drive unprecedented progress, it also poses significant ethical challenges. The AI Act should establish clear guidelines for ethical AI deployment, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness. It is very easy to misuse AI and promote misinformation or biases. Nowadays, AI can create realistic but fake images, videos, and audio (deepfakes), which can be used to spread misinformation, manipulate public opinion, or damage reputations. It also increases fraud and scams because there are no established guidelines to use of AI systems. AI can perpetuate and amplify biases present in their training data, leading to discriminatory practices in hiring, lending, law enforcement, and more. So, establishing data protection laws to safeguard personal information and fostering transparency in AI decision-making processes are critical steps toward ethical AI.

All in all, crafting an AI Act for Bangladesh goes beyond technicalities, it centres on people and public engagement. Essential initiatives include public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on AI's benefits and risks, and involving diverse stakeholders—civil society, academia, and industry—in policymaking to ensure transparency and accountability. The Act should also align with Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) principles which emphasises innovation, digitalisation, and interconnectedness. By balancing innovation with regulation and addressing local needs while adhering to global standards, Bangladesh can harness AI's transformative power for an inclusive, ethical, and sustainable digital future.

This is Part II of a two-part series. The first part was published in page 9 of The Daily Star on June 23, 2024.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Guinness of film
5 Get naked
10 Costa —
11 Option
12 Love, Latin-style
13 Forest worker
14 Genuine
16 Something for nothing
20 Benders
23 Knight's title
24 Seaport setting
25 Hue
27 IRS employee
28 Dead ducks
29 Site of some diners
32 Christmas season
36 Wan
39 Concept
40 German subs
41 Castle circler
42 Chili need
43 Building wings

DOWN
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2 Long ride
3 Bus. sch. course
4 Wine bottles
5 Hue
6 Copier need
7 Equip
8 Water cooler
9 Pricing word
11 Calls out
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17 Cruise stop
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19 Goes astray
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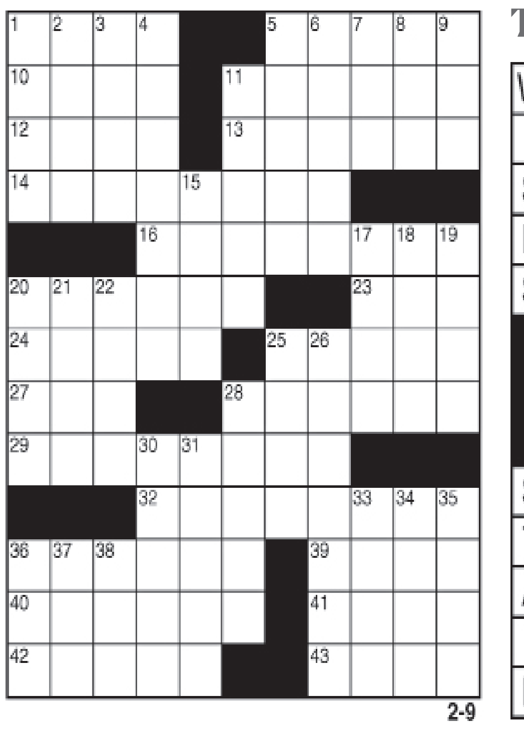
38 Mauna —



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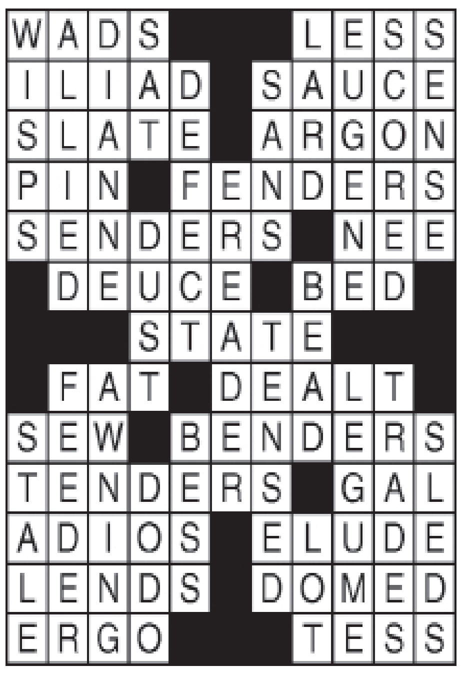
TUESDAY'S ANSWERS



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Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

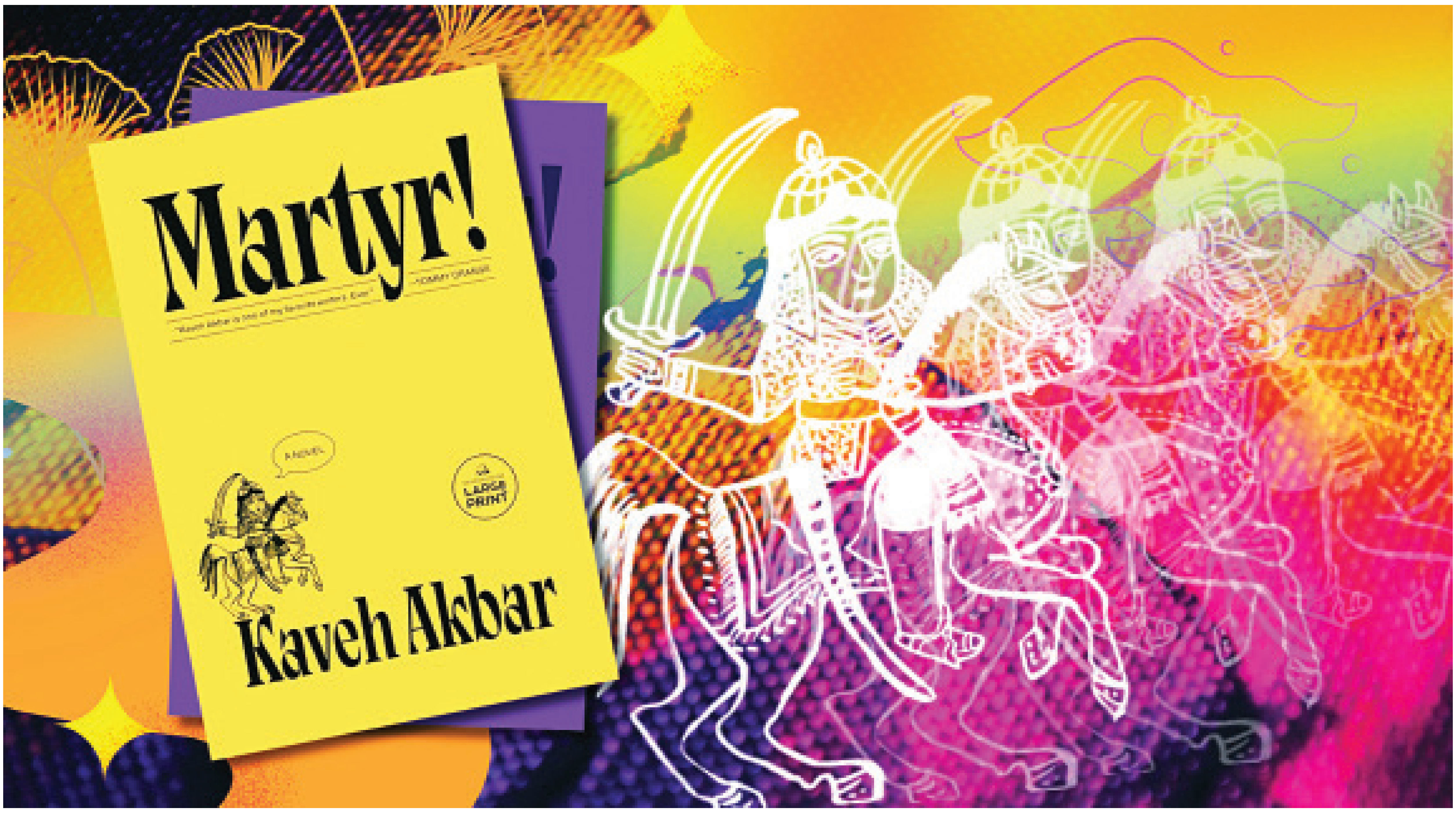

ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

When death is a performance

A review of Kaveh Akbar's 'Martyr!' (Knopf, 2024)

SHAHRIAR SHAAMS

The reader realises soon that 'Martyr!' becomes vibrant and unforgettable only when the story rewinds to Tehran and Arash.

Kaveh Akbar's *Martyr!* is unruly and endearing. Akbar's years as a poet has given his debut novel an honesty that shines through the book's arduous structure. And for all of *Martyr!*'s exhilarating tone and emotional trek, the difficulties of writing a novel on addiction, martyrdom, death, and meaning is evident when one reads it.

Cyrus Shams, the main character of *Martyr!*, is not a complete stand-in for Akbar, but the author lends much of his personality to his creation. They both have moved to the USA from Iran as a toddler, both have suffered from addiction and subsequently found in poetry a strength that aids their recovery.

Yet the strongest moments of *Martyr!* are those set in an Iran Cyrus would have no recollection of, where his uncle Arash, a soldier during the Iran-Iraq war, rode a horse through the battlefield with a flashlight at night. "He was meant to look like an angel. He was meant to inspire the dying men to die with dignity, conviction. To keep them from suicide."

By comparison, the America where Cyrus is raised and goes to university is unremarkable. Here Cyrus dreams of a suicide that would be meaningful. He plans to write a book of martyrs (snatches of poetry from this work-in-progress pepper throughout *Martyr!* and often tend to outshine the novel proper). Akbar spends pages to paint Cyrus's university life as one of jolly bohemia full of open-mics at college-town cafes and casual experimentation of drugs and literary styles, yet it is those images of Arash before, comforting soldiers as an angel of death that I could not shake away long after finishing the book.

Briefly after Cyrus is born in Tehran, the Americans missile down an Iranian passenger flight, killing 290 people on board. Cyrus loses his mother Roya, who was to visit Arash in Dubai. Cyrus's father, overwhelmed with grief, soon immigrates to the very country that has killed his wife—an America where the father works at a chicken farm day in and out, where the library launches Cyrus into a world of imagination and creativity. "You're the most American kid I know," his sponsor, Gabe, tells him after an AA meeting. His only connection to Iran now being an annual birthday phone-call to his uncle back home.

The reader realises soon that *Martyr!* becomes vibrant and unforgettable only when the story rewinds to Tehran and Arash. Much of *Martyr!* however takes place over four days in Brooklyn, New York, where Cyrus is enamoured with an Iranian performance artist documenting herself dying from cancer in the form of an art exhibition. Cyrus believes she holds some needed insight into his obsession with martyrs, one that would surely benefit his book.

Though in my experience, poets often tend to write mediocre novels, Kaveh Akbar's *Martyr!* is too heartfelt to be brushed aside. His prose reminds one of Turgenev, where absences of a tighter plot cannot subdue the intelligence and magnanimity of the all too real characters. As Cyrus and Orkideh, the dying artist, confer on the nature of a meaningful death, Kaveh Akbar cites Hamlet, the ambassador of death himself.

"He felt like Hamlet," Cyrus thinks, "just moping around waiting for the world to assuage his grief…" but as Orkideh prepares to die after shocking Cyrus to his core, one sees that Cyrus may feel like Hamlet, but as he eagerly and passively witnesses the performance of dying, he really is Horatio. He lives to tell the tale.

Shahriar Shaams *has written for* Dhaka Tribune, The Business Standard, *and* The Daily Star. *Find him on instagram: @shahriar.shaams.*

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Every Trump voter is certainly not a white supremacist, just as every white person in the Jim Crow South was not a white supremacist. But every Trump voter felt it was acceptable to hand the fate of the country over to one."

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy*

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

When fiction and nonfiction create a literary supernova

Review of 'The House of Doors' (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023) by Tan Twan Eng

ZERTAB QUADERI

When a book mentions one of my favourite authors, W. Somerset Maugham, and the short description suggests betrayal, intrigue, secret affairs, political uprisings, failed marriages, and a whodunnit, there's little I can do but take it. Longlisted for The Booker Prize 2023, *The House of Doors* by the Malaysian author, Tan Twan Eng, is a masterfully crafted literary work of fictional and nonfictional characters in a smudged sphere of fact and fiction. It shows Eng's length and depth of research and his imaginative prowess. Besides having Maugham somewhat in the centre stage, the author uses other real characters, real events, and characters from Maugham's novels and plays to create a story that spans over 30-odd years. Flashbacks of flashbacks with parallel plots, sprinkled with suspense and thrill are the ingredients for this unputdownable read. Immaculately structured with neat chapter divisions that mention the character from whose point of view the story is told, the year, and the location, the book ensures we don't get lost in the temporal and spatial maze.

Maugham, in the book, is the catalyst that leads the main character, Lesley Hamlyn, to spill the beans from her past and present, forming the bulk of the novel. The story begins and ends with Lesley in two different countries and continents. Maugham plays second fiddle and shares glimpses of his life—his sexual orientation, financial and marital straits, emotional dependence on an exploitative "secretary" who travels the world with him, and his special knack for sniffing out dark secrets and scandals which he turns into popular novels, short stories, and plays that keep him from falling into financial ruin.

Reeking of British colonialism, we see the white society in Malaya in the earlier decades of the 20th century living in the lap of luxury. Lesley and her lawyer husband, Robert, live in a mansion and are waited upon hand and foot by the natives. The short but powerful sketches of the nanny, rickshaw pullers, gardeners, and other house staff and those working in Penang sharply contrast their white masters and shed light on the vivid difference between the coloniser and the colonised. However, there is an undercurrent of rising consciousness against imperialism when Chinese revolutionary, Sun Yat Sen, is introduced. Lesley joins a clandestine group and lends help to the cause of breaking free from the current dynasty, signalling a desire to minimise class differences. During these meetings, she falls for Arthur, a fellow member and a Chinese, and carries on her affair in the eponymous house. The doors in *The House of Doors* lead Lesley to find peace, love, and refuge from her farcical marriage.

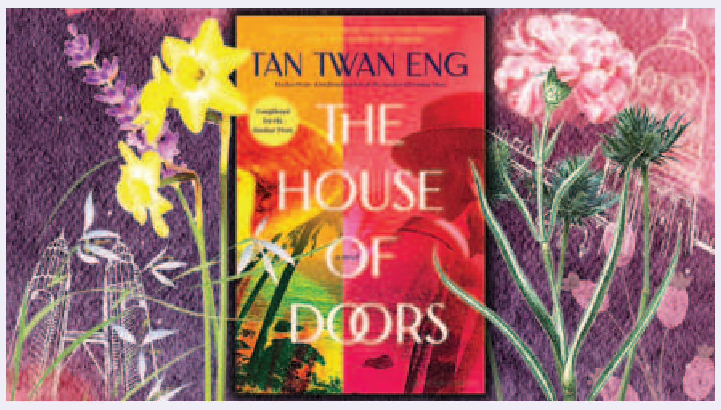

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

The theme of masks is explored through the characters and objects, most notably the doors. A door is synonymous with a mask and shows the outside world something that may be the opposite of what is concealed beyond it. In *The House of Doors*, we see it in the failed marriages of both Maugham and Robert. Both men are homosexuals, yet, they and their wives wear masks and are forced to pretend everything is fine to avoid societal judgments and ostracisation. Similarly, under the cover of The Philomatic Society, Sun Yat Sen carried on his revolutionary meetings and activities at a place with nondescript doors. And, finally, the slightly modified Chinese ideogram of a door inscribed on a Maugham book cover comes to Lesley in the guise of a letter and sets her on her path to reuniting with Arthur in Penang after 40 long years.

Letters also play a big role in *The House of Doors*. Through Lesley, Maugham gets the fodder and inspiration to write 'The Letter', a short story and play based on the true events of a murder case against Ethel Proudlock in 1911.

Among other things, the book explores the fragility and strength of relationships, human resilience and frailties, and the duality within us and the larger society. The atmospheric novel depicts the multicultural heritage of Malaya and its tropical and coastal landscape. It's loaded with Eastern symbolism and social, cultural, political, historical, and personal events, making it a fascinating read. A cerebral exercise in connecting the dots, I immensely enjoyed straddling the blurred boundaries of fact and fiction.

Zertab Quaderi *is an SEO English content writer and social media marketing consultant by day and a reader of fiction and nonfiction books by night. In between, she travels and dabbles in watercolour painting.*

Star
DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 11, 2024, ASHAR 27, 1431 BS
SPORT

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1
England vs
West Indies
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Live from
4:00 pm

‘Spirit of sacrifice’ & ‘genius’ Yamal pave way for Spain

- At the age of 16 years and 362 days, Spain’s Lamine Yamal became the youngest goalscorer at a major tournament (World Cup/Euros), a record previously held by Brazil’s Pele against Wales at the 1958 World Cup (17y 239d).
- Spain are the first side to win six games at a single edition of the UEFA European Championship finals.
- This is the first time France have been eliminated at the semifinal stage of a major tournament (World Cup/Euros) since Euro 1996.
- Spain are only the second side to reach as many as five finals of the UEFA European Championship after Germany (6).
- Randal Kolo Muani’s opening goal in the eighth minute of the game was France’s first goal from open play at Euro 2024, while it was their 87th non-penalty attempt of the tournament.

AGENCIES

A touch of ‘genius’ from wunderkind Lamine Yamal and a testament to what can be done by improvising on a proven style of play -- both of these were on display when Spain dispatched France 2-1 in the Euro 2024 semifinal in Munich on Tuesday night.

Keeping a majority of possession and frustrating opponents by denying them opportunities to be creative -- this had been the style of play for Spain for over a decade, during which they won the 2010 World Cup and triumphed in the 2008 and 2012 editions of the Euros.

However, since their last Euro success 12 years ago, that typical Spanish style of play had somewhat been neutralised with their national team unable to win any major silverware after that.

But Spain coach Luis de la Fuente developed on that possession-based football, nurturing a team of youngsters he had overseen from the age level, and the 63-year-old coach is now enjoying the fruits of it as his team is just one step away from winning the Euro 2024.

De la Fuente hailed his team’s quality and cohesion in coming from a goal down to beat France and reach the Euro 2024 final, a feat he took no credit for and said was all about his players’ insatiable hunger for success.

De la Fuente said his team had versatility and outstanding individual qualities, which when put together created a special brand of football that would be on show in Sunday’s final, regardless of whether the opponent is England or Netherlands.

De la Fuente also hailed his young side who, according to the coach, has not been afraid of sacrificing their dominance over the ball in return for being more aggressive, especially offensively.

“They are very generous in their efforts and work rate. This is just one more sign that this is an insatiable team, that they want to keep improving with the spirit of sacrifice,” he said.

Spain went behind to an early goal from France’s Randal Kolo Muani before teenager Yamal levelled with a brilliant strike in the 21st minute, then Dani Olmo added a second just a few minutes after.

De la Fuente said seeing 16-year-old winger Yamal’s performance against France was like watching “a genius”.

Named player of the match, Yamal became the youngest-ever male Euros goalscorer.

“We have seen a genius, the product of a genius,” De la Fuente told reporters.

“He’s a player we have to take care of -- I have to give him the advice to keep working with the same humility and keep his feet on the floor.

“He would keep growing but this maturity and attitude at such a young age is like that of a more experienced player.

“We are lucky he is Spanish and we can enjoy him for many more years.”

Yamal became the competition’s youngest player in Spain’s first match against Croatia and also provided three assists on his team’s run to the final.

De la Fuente reserved praise for the rest of his team, including Olmo.

“We’ve been talking about Lamine but I have 26 great players,” continued the coach.

“I know (Olmo) very well and the potential he has... I am grateful to him too.”

This new-look Spain of De la Fuente has already garnered a lot of praise from experts and fans alike, but for the Spanish coach, the circle will only be completed if he can inspire his team to land the elusive major tournament silverware come Sunday night in Berlin against either England or the Netherlands.

MESSI ENJOYING ‘last battles’ for Argentina

AFP, *East Rutherford*

Lionel Messi said he was enjoying his “last battles” with Argentina after the 37-year-old found the net in a 2-0 win over Canada on Tuesday to book a place in the Copa America final.

After a lacklustre display against Ecuador in the quarterfinals, Messi looked back to himself again, connecting with Angel Di Maria and strike partner Julian Alvarez, who also scored.

“I’m living it like I lived it in the last Copa America, in the last World Cup....these are the last battles and I’m enjoying them to the maximum,” he told TyC Sports after the win set up a meeting with Uruguay or Colombia in the final.

Messi, now playing with Inter Miami in Major League Soccer, has yet to indicate whether he will continue to play with Argentina in the 2026 World Cup.

But asked about Messi’s “last battles” comment, Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni asked for calm.

“We have to leave him alone, he knows that we will not be the ones to close the door on him. He can stay with us as long as he wants, even when he retires...Let him decide what he wants,” he said.

Messi has chance to win a third straight major title with his national side following their 2022 World Cup triumph and their 2021 Copa America win.

The eight-time Ballon d’Or winner referenced veteran team-mates Di Maria and Nicolas Otamendi and said that the success was validation for the difficult barren years the team had suffered.

“The truth is that it’s crazy what this group has done, what the Argentina national team has been doing,” Messi said on TyC Sports.

“It’s not easy for us to be in a final again, for us to compete again to be champions,” he added.

Messi also added that it has been a difficult tournament for Argentina.

“It’s a difficult Copa, evenly matched, with very bad pitches, with high temperatures, very tough teams, and for us to be in a final again is something to enjoy,” he said.

HP squad formed with eye on future Australia Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named a few Test cricketers in their four-day High Performance (HP) squad for the upcoming tour in Australia, keeping in mind their 2027 Future Tours Programme (FTP) schedule.

Shadman Islam, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, and Shahadat Hossain Dipu, all part of the current Test setup, are set to tour Australia for their maiden outing in the Oceania region.

The national team is not accustomed to touring Australia regularly, with their last and only Test tour occurring in 2003 which featured two Tests and three ODIs. In 2008, Bangladesh toured Australia again, but only for a three-match ODI series. Since then, the Tigers have fared in Australia for two global tournaments: 2015 ODI World Cup and 2022 T20 World Cup.

As HP team are also scheduled to play a 50-over series and a T20 tournament involving Big Bash teams and a Pakistani side, the selectors included several white-ball cricketers in their squads: Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Afif Hossain, and Shamim Hossain, alongside some budding cricketers fit for the formats.

Although BCB’s plan to send some of their Test cricketers to gain experience on Australian soil is receiving applause from different corners, questions remain on whether their selection for the white-ball matches is justified. Afif, who was a traveling reserve during Bangladesh’s recent T20 World Cup campaign, hasn’t played a game for Bangladesh since December last year, while Shamim’s last outing in national colours came during last year’s New Zealand tour.

A 28-year-old pacer, Abu Hider Rony, also found his place in both white-ball squads despite his last international match for Bangladesh being in 2018. National selector Hannan Sarkar claimed they formed the squads prioritising players for specific formats and picking some players who could go on to represent them at top level.

“We have a few Test cricketers in our four-day team. As we are scheduled to play Tests in Australia in 2027 according to our FTP schedule, we want to prioritise these players,” Hannan was quoted in a BCB video released yesterday.

“Similar goes for one-day and T20 teams. I think it’s a very good stage where the players can express themselves and gather experience,” he added.

HP chairman Naimur Rahman Durjoy earlier insisted that they have arranged the tour for pipeline cricketers’ betterment to “give game-time opportunities”, and now it’s up to them to “utilise the opportunity and take themselves to next level”.

“We want to continue the process and increase the facilities from the board,” he added.

Whether the series will have a significant impact on Bangladesh cricket in the future remains to be seen.

Krejcikova sets up Rybakina clash

REUTERS, *London*

Barbora Krejcikova reached her first Wimbledon semifinal on Wednesday with a 6-4, 7-6(4) win over Latvian 13th seed Jelena Ostapenko in the battle of former French Open champions.

The Czech 31st seed kept her composure from the back of the court to force her opponent into 35 unforced errors across the match as Ostapenko’s bid for a second Grand Slam title since her first in 2017 unravelled on Court One.

The 27-year-old Ostapenko had power in her serve but struggled to place it, landing less than 50% of her first serve during the opening set. Krejcikova, French Open champion in 2021, broke in the third game and went on to clinch the opener.

Ostapenko rallied to break her opponent in the second set and open a 4-1 lead. However, mistakes once again dogged her game and Krejcikova put together a run of four winning games to go 5-4 up.

The match went to a tiebreak and a brilliant crosscourt forehand from Krejcikova found the far line to give her a mini-break from which she went on to close out the match, sealing her first win over the Latvian in their four most recent encounters.

The Czech will face 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, who beat Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-2, in the other quarterfinal.

Over the course of the last five days, the grasscourt major had started to resemble an indoor tournament with matches on the two main showcourts taking place under cover.

The retractable roof on Centre Court was finally open under a clear blue sky on Wednesday as Rybakina produced a majestic performance in front of Britain’s Queen Camilla to reach the last four for the second time in three years.

The Russian-born Kazakh, the only women’s champion left in the draw, sealed the first set with a 115mph thunderbolt and fired down another ace - her seventh of the match - to complete the one-sided victory.

England pacer Gus Atkinson celebrates after castling West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite on Day 1 of the first Test at Lord’s yesterday. On his debut, the 26-year-old right-arm pacer was the destroyer-in-chief for his side as he returned seven wickets for 45 to help bundle out the visitors for 121.

PHOTO: **AFP**

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UNHRC adopts resolution for Rohingya return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Human Rights Council yesterday unanimously adopted a resolution emphasising on sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis through their repatriation by creating a congenial environment in Myanmar's Rakhine and ensuring justice and accountability for them.

The resolution was adopted during the ongoing 56th session of the council in Geneva, according to a statement issued by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN Office and other international organisations in Geneva.

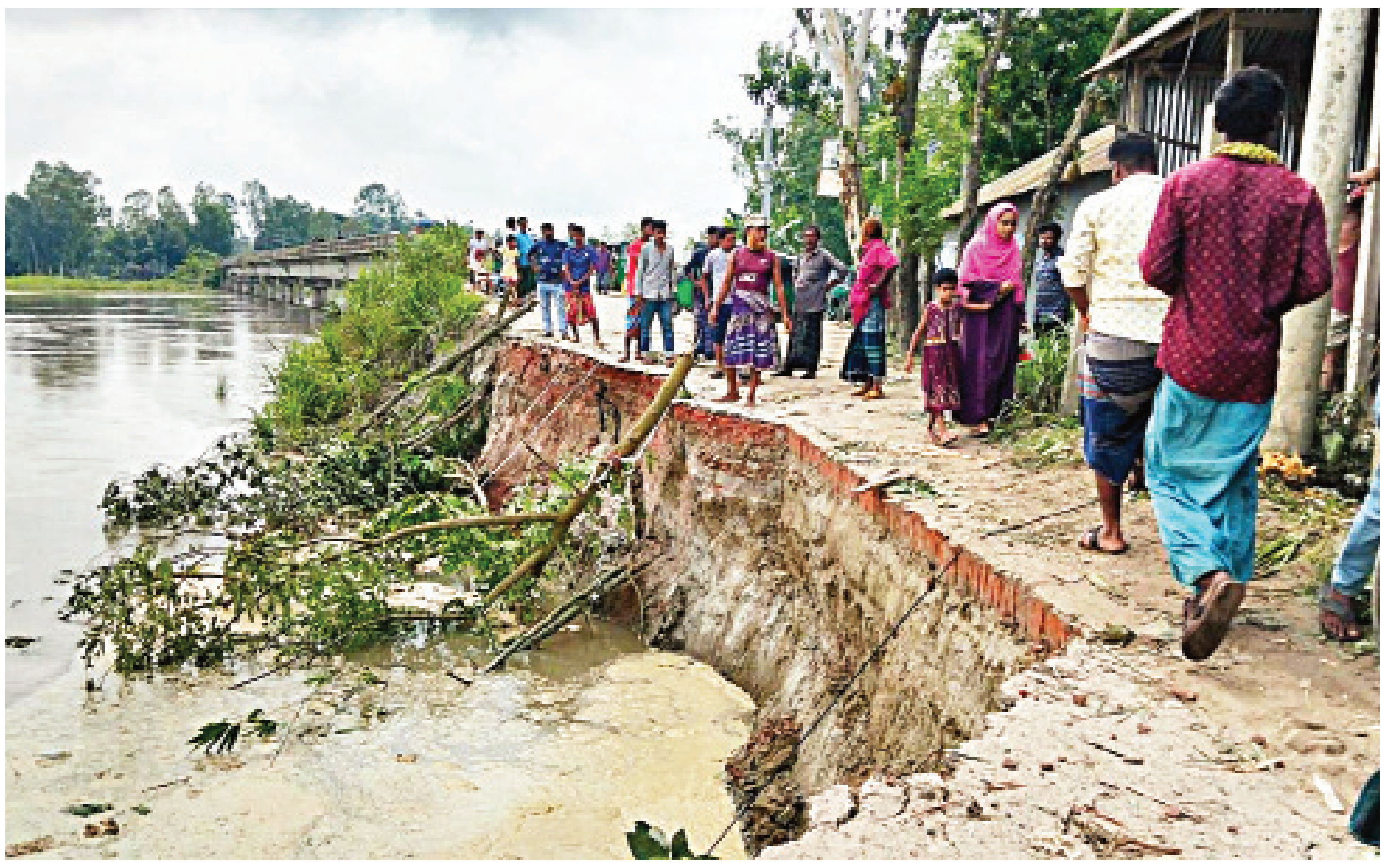
The statement says Bangladesh took the initiative for the resolution titled "The situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" and it was placed on behalf of all member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The resolution was adopted following intense and long discussion.

Shanchita Haque, acting permanent representative of the Bangladesh mission, said with limited resources and different challenges, it is not possible for Bangladesh to give shelter to the huge number of Rohingyas for an indefinite period.

"The international community should support Bangladesh in the repatriation by realising the importance of the causes of Bangladesh's concerns," she added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A side of the approach road of the Charabari bridge in Tangail Sadar has been devoured by the Dhaleshwari due to strong currents. Road communications between the district town and five unions have been disrupted, causing sufferings to thousands in the char areas. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on Page 5. PHOTO: **MIRZA SHAKIL**

Pakistan's ISI gets power to intercept calls

REUTERS, *Islamabad*

Pakiled to tracking criminal and terrorist activities and the government would ensure it did not infringe people's lives and privacy.

"The federal government in the interest of national security and in the apprehension of any offence, is pleased to authorise officers ... to intercept calls and messages or to trace calls through any telecoms system," said the notice, seen by Reuters.

The move was opposed in parliament by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

Khan had previously backed the ISI's surveillance of politicians' telephone calls, or even his own, in the absence of legal authorisation.

A leader of the party,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BIRTH CONTROL ITEMS

Govt stock nearing exhaustion

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government's family planning efforts are likely to be seriously hindered as supplies of contraceptives at the field-level offices are running dangerously low.

At present, there is no injectable contraceptive in any upazila and the stock of birth control pills will run out in a few months, according to officials of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). The stock of implants has also run out.

The reason for the supply running low is a halt in procurement for months due to a legal battle at the High Court.

Although the legal battle has ended recently and the procurement process has resumed, the DGFP officials cannot give a timeline for when the birth prevention materials, which are distributed for free, will be available at the field level.

Subsequently, the DGFP has started rationing and redistributing the current stock, they added.

The eligible couples in Bangladesh are provided seven options for contraception: permanent system for male and female, intrauterine devices, implants, oral pills, condoms and injectables.

At the end of May, there is no stock of the oral contraceptive pill Sukhi (3rd gen) in 287 upazilas, according to the DGFP stock status report. There is no stock of Sukhi (2nd Gen) in 414 upazilas.

The stock of the other oral contraceptive pill Apon is 13.33 million cycles and was projected to run out in June, according to the report.

While procurement of 45 million cycles of Sukhi (3rd gen) is under process, it will take several months to get the supplies in hand, according to DGFP officials.

There are no injectables in 462 upazilas. The stock of 0.151 million vials was supposed to run out soon, too.

The current stock of condoms is 20.32 million, and this stock can be used up to November.

Population experts fear that the scarcity of birth control materials will increase mother and child mortality rates as eligible couples might go for an unintended pregnancy causing abortion.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

WORLD POPULATION DAY

STATE OF FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME

- 2.81 eligible couples
- No injections at any upazila
- DGFP started rationing contraceptive materials
- 37pc of eligible couples receive contraceptives from govt
- Shortage likely to increase mother and child mortality

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Armed group claims control of town in Shan state

AFP, *Yangon*

Myanmar ethnic minority fighters said yesterday they have seized a town along a key trade highway to China following days of clashes with junta troops.

The town of Naungcho "is totally ours," General Tar Bhone Kyaw of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) told AFP.

Earlier yesterday a military source told AFP that ethnic minority fighters were in control of "most" of Naungcho.

Myanmar's northern Shan state has been rocked by clashes since late last month when an alliance of ethnic armed groups renewed an offensive along the highway that runs from second city Mandalay to China's Yunnan province.

Naungcho is around 50 kilometres (30 miles) along the highway from the former British hill station of Pyin Oo Lwin, home to the military's elite officer training academy.

Another road from the town leads to Taunggyi, the capital of Shan state. AFP was unable to reach a junta spokesman for comment.

Myanmar's borderlands are home to myriad ethnic armed groups who have battled the military since independence from Britain in 1948 for autonomy and control of lucrative resources.

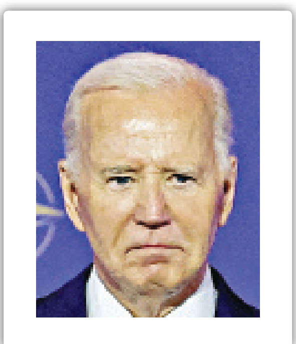
Ukraine will stop Putin

Biden tells Nato in forceful speech, promises new air defences for Kyiv

REUTERS, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden pledged to forcefully defend Ukraine against Russia's invasion at the Nato summit in Washington on Tuesday evening, using the global stage to try to show allies at home and abroad that he can still lead.

Biden, 81, has endured 12 days of withering questions about his fitness for office as some of his fellow Democrats on Capitol Hill and campaign donors fear that he will lose the November 5 election after a halting debate performance on June 27.



"(Vladimir) Putin wants nothing less, nothing less, than Ukraine's total subjugation ... and to wipe Ukraine off the map," Biden said in his welcome to Nato member states to the summit, referring to the Russian president. "Ukraine can and will stop Putin."

Biden spoke off of a teleprompter with a strong and confident voice and largely avoided the verbal flubs and signs of confusion that marked his debate performance.

"Today Nato is stronger than it's ever been in its history," he said. Biden also announced a major package of air defences for Ukraine.

The air defences "will help to protect Ukrainian cities, civilians, and soldiers," Biden said in a joint statement with other leaders, adding that they would look to send dozens more shorter range systems in the coming months.

The US pledge comes on top of two new Patriot systems already being given by Germany and Romania, and one the Netherlands has said it is putting together with parts from other allies, reports Reuters.

The centrepiece of the Nato summit is set to be new commitments of military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the summit would "further strengthen" the war-torn country's path to Nato membership.

Zelensky, who arrived in Washington on Tuesday and is due to meet with Biden today, has said Ukraine needs a minimum of seven Patriot systems.

"We are fighting for additional security guarantees for Ukraine - and these are weapons and finances, political support," he said on social media.

Ukraine ultimately wants to join Nato to ward against further future attacks by Russia but candidates have to be approved by all of the alliance's members, some of which are wary of provoking a direct conflict with Russia.

Some members want the alliance to make clear Ukraine is moving toward Nato "irreversibly" and are keen for language in a summit statement beyond the alliance's pledge last year that "Ukraine's future is in Nato."

Scaloni hails grit of Messi & Co

REUTERS, *East Rutherford*

Argentina's path to the Copa America final has been no bed of roses, coach Lionel Scaloni said, as he lauded his players for their performance in Tuesday's 2-0 semifinal win over Canada.

Canada, ranked 48th in the world, played high-energy football and looked to turn the match into a physical battle but Argentina's quality shone through in the end.

Julian Alvarez and Lionel Messi scored to secure Argentina's spot in the final of a third straight major tournament after their victories at the 2022 World Cup and Copa America in 2021.

"It is extremely tough to reach another final. It is tough because we know how hard it is to get there," Scaloni told reporters.

"The bar has been set very high. Everyone thought it was going to be a bed of roses and it wasn't like that at all. Canada proved it today by being a very difficult opponent."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Argentina superstar Lionel Messi celebrates scoring his team's second goal as the first goal-scorer Julian Alvarez chases him during their 2-0 win against Canada in the first semifinal of Copa America at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP**

Mummified climber found in Peru 22 yrs later

REUTERS, *Santiago*

Peruvian police and mountain rescue workers recovered the body of an American climber who went missing in 2002 as glaciers in Peru's highest mountain and surrounding area continue to retreat.

The mummified, skeletal corpse still had well-preserved climbing boots, crampons and clothing, as well as a driver's license and passport belonging to William Stampfl.

Stampfl is suspected to have died in an avalanche more than 20 years ago.

In a statement, police said they recovered his body on July 5 at an altitude of 5,200 metres (17,060.37 ft), well below Huascaran's 6,768-metre summit.

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Quota protests heat up as govt mulls hard line

STAR REPORT

Ignoring police warnings and ministers' calls to step back, anti-quota protesters yesterday broke barricades on roads and went ahead with their "Bangla Blockade", leading to a face-off with the law enforcers.

Sporadic incidents of clashes and chases were reported in two districts during the four-hour-long blockade that left at least 20 students injured in Cumilla and Chattogram.

The students said they would continue their demonstrations until parliament enacts a law to reform the quota system, keeping five percent quota for underprivileged communities.

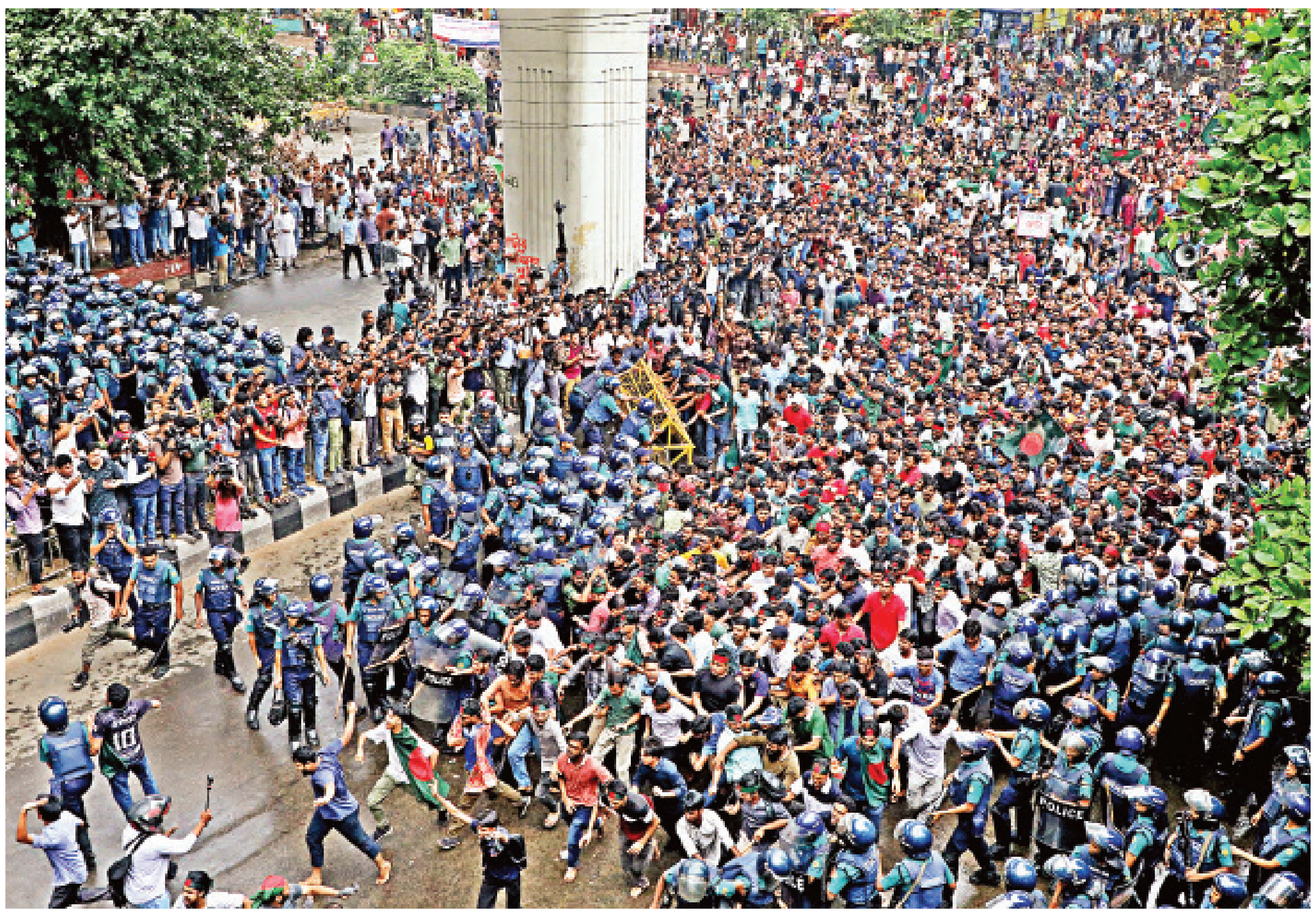
They would bring out processions and hold rallies in all educational institutions across the country at 4:00pm today, said Nahid Islam, a key organiser of the anti-quota campaign.

Students of public universities and colleges along with jobseekers have been demonstrating against the quota system in government jobs for the last 11 days. They occupied key city intersections, major highways, and rail lines.

There were no obstructions from law enforcement agencies during

The students said they would continue their demonstrations until parliament enacts a law to reform the quota system, keeping five percent quota for underprivileged communities.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Students break through a police barricade in the capital's Shahbagh around 5:30pm yesterday during a demonstration demanding reforms of the quota system in government jobs. Students from different public universities and colleges have been staging protests across the country since July 1.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

PUBLIC JOBS

Govt free to alter, reduce or increase quota: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs if it feels it is necessary, the High Court has said in a portion of its judgement on the quota system.

It also said the authorities concerned are at liberty to fill the vacant posts from the general merit list of the jobseekers if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

The HC declared illegal the circular issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018 that cancelled the quota system in recruitments for government jobs as it was issued without lawful authority.

The circular said that in the case of direct

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PM'S CHINA VISIT

Dhaka now has to play its cards right

Say int'l relations experts

PORIMOL PALMA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's China visit has laid the foundation for a forward-looking and expansive relationship and Dhaka now needs to play its due role to make the most of it, according to international relations analysts.

Following their meeting on July 10, Hasina and Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the elevation of the bilateral relationship to "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation" (CSPC) from the "Strategic Partnership of Cooperation" established in 2016.

The elevation of the bilateral relationship to CSPC means the cooperation will deepen in all the sectors possible keeping in mind Bangladesh's vision for 2041, said M Humayun Kabir, a former diplomat.

Xi and Hasina agreed to "foster greater synergy between development strategies of the two countries", according to the joint statement issued on the conclusion of Hasina's three-day tour.

The Asian giant has huge capabilities in funding, technology, clean energy, healthcare, infrastructure and so on, according to Kabir.

"The question is if Bangladesh will be able to take

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

NBFIs' bad loans surge to a record Tk 23,208 crore

MD MEHEDI HASAN

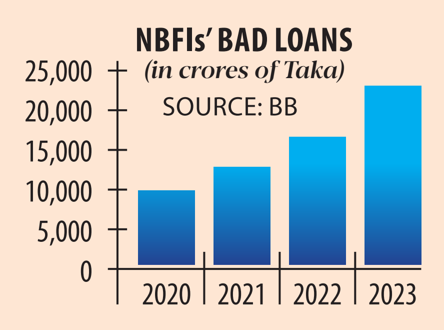
Defaulted loans at non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) soared 38 percent to a record Tk 23,208.7 crore at the end of 2023, raising concerns over the sector's deteriorating health.

The toxic assets accounted for a record 32 percent of the total disbursed loans of Tk 73,560.5 crore in the sector, up from 31.55 percent a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

The data on 35 NBFIs' bad loans comes when economists have raised concerns over vulnerabilities in Bangladesh's financial sector due to rising defaulted loans and a lack of corporate governance.

Industry insiders said the central bank is largely responsible for the state of the NBFI sector as its supervision was not strict.

The toxic assets are legacy loans from the large scams and irregularities seen in the sector a few years ago, said Kanti Kumar Saha, chief executive officer of Alliance Finance.


NBFIs' BAD LOANS
(in crores of Taka)
SOURCE: BB

For instance, PK Halder, former managing director of NRB Global Bank, which was later renamed Global Islami Bank, swindled at least Tk 3,500 crore from four NBFIs: People's Leasing, International Leasing, FAS Finance and BIFC, according to a BB probe report.

As a result, the four NBFIs have become ailing institutions with more than 90 percent of their loans going bad.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

PSC QUESTION LEAKS

Names of some big fish come up in probe

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The syndicate of PSC officials and employees that leaked the questions of cadre and non-cadre exams was involved in leaking questions of other recruitment tests as well, investigators have found.

The investigators have also listed at least 24 names that came up during the confessions of those arrested in this connection, said sources involved in the ongoing probe.

They added that those named are currently working in different government departments, including the cadre service, and some are high officials.

Coordinated by Sayed Abed Ali, a former driver of Public Service Commission chairman, the syndicate spread its tentacles throughout the country.

It has so far leaked question papers of at least 30 government exams, including those for the recruitment of health cadres, polytechnic institute instructors, deputy assistant engineers of the public works ministry, upazila assistant education officers, auditors, and nurses.

Intelligence sources said the syndicate was even

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Court's door always open to students

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday said the court is always open to anti-quota protesters.

He suggested that the protesters present their demands through legal channels instead of addressing the executive branch.

"Why do they [students] address the executive branch? Any decision by

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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Police try to take away the banner, *left,* of a students' procession demanding reforms to quota system in government jobs in Tigerpass area of Chattogram city yesterday. Police trying to stop students of Comilla University, *top right,* from going out of their campus and blocking the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Students surround a riot car, *bottom right,* after forcing their way through a police barricade at Shahbagh intersection in the capital.

PHOTO: **STAR, COLLECTED**

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Junta 'trying to destroy country'

Warns UN special rapporteur

AFP, *Bangkok*

Myanmar's junta appears to be "trying to destroy a country it cannot control", the UN special rapporteur to the country warned yesterday.

Clashes between an alliance of ethnic minority armed groups and the military have shredded a Beijing-brokered truce in January.

The ceasefire had briefly halted widespread fighting in the northern part of the Southeast Asian nation since a military coup ended democratic rule in 2021.

"The junta is on its heels, it's losing troops, it's losing military facilities, it is literally losing ground," UN special rapporteur Tom Andrews said during a briefing to the national security body of neighbouring Thailand.

"It almost appears as if the Junta is trying to destroy a country that it cannot control."

The military's response to its losses has been to attack civilians, he said, adding there had been a substantial increase in the number of attacks on schools, hospitals and monasteries in the last six months.

Govt free to alter, reduce or increase quota

FROM PAGE 1

recruitments to the posts of 9th grade (formerly 1st class) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly 2nd class), the appointments should be made on the basis of merit. It added that the existing quota system for direct recruitment to those posts was abolished.

On June 5 this year, the HC delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed by Ohidul Islam Tushar and six other children of freedom fighters, challenging the legality of the circular.

On that day, agitators started staging demonstrations at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University, protesting the HC verdict.

They took to the streets on July 1 demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 circular.

Students at different institutions across the country intensified their movement on July 4 as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court did not stay the HC verdict following a government petition.

The protesters are continuing the movement now, demanding reforms to the quota system by formulating a law.

In the judgement released yesterday, the HC directed the respondents to the writ petition to restore the quota for the children and grandchildren of the freedom fighters. It also directed them to keep the quotas for district, women, people with physical challenges, ethnic groups and others, if there are any.

The HC further ordered the government authorities to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible, preferably within three months from the date of receipt of its order.

Deputy Attorney General Sk Shaifuzzaman, who received a copy of the HC verdict's portion, told The Daily Star that the details of the findings and grounds, on which the HC delivered the verdict, would be known once the full text of the judgement is released.

He said no appeal can be moved before the Appellate Division challenging the HC verdict without the full text.

"The full text is necessary so the Appellate Division can examine whether the verdict is correct."

On July 10, the Appellate Division issued a four-week status quo on the subject matter and the HC judgement on it.

The status-quo order means the quota system will not remain in force until the Appellate Division's further order, legal experts told The Daily Star.

Quota protests heat up

FROM PAGE 1

their agitations until yesterday.

However, police yesterday said that they would take legal action if the protesters continued to block roads and cause public sufferings even after the Supreme Court "directed to maintain status quo in respect of subject matter".

Around the same time the police made the announcement, Chhatra League President Saddam Hossain in a press briefing at Dhaka University said Chhatra League was ready to face those trying to use the movement to gain political mileage.

Police yesterday mobilised additional forces and kept riot cars and water cannons in Shahbagh and some key intersections in Dhaka.

Law enforcers put barricades at Shahbagh intersection, but several thousand students coming in from Dhaka University breached it around 5:00pm.

The law enforcers, however, surrounded them and did not let them go beyond the Birdem Hospital, sparking a tussle. The students chanted "bhua" (fake) towards the police and eventually took position at Shahbagh intersection.

Somoy TV reporter Twoha Khan Tamim and cameraperson Prince Arefin were attacked at Shahbagh, the media outlet reported.

Another group of demonstrators, mostly from Dhaka College and Eden Mohila College, marched towards Shahbagh but were halted by police in New Market area.

They held a brief rally in front of Dhaka College and vowed to continue with their demonstrations.

A section of Jagannath University students joined the protesters at Shahbagh after breaking the lock on the university main gate.

During their march towards Shahbagh, police attempted to stop them at Shankhari Bazar, in front of the CMM Court, and at Tantibazar, but failed.

CLASHES

In Cumilla, at least 10 students, including journalists Anon and Sourav of Comilla University, were injured as police charged truncheons on protesters.

"Of the injured, six were released after treatment at the Cumilla General Hospital while the rest were undergoing treatment there," Fazle Rabbi, director of CGH, told The Daily Star.

According to locals and witnesses, the protesters were chanting slogans against the police in Ansar Camp area near the university. Police charged baton to disperse them and the students retaliated by throwing brick chunks.

Police, later, fired tear gas shells, resulting in injuries, they said.

Nazmul Hasan, additional superintendent of police in Cumilla, said the police were there to save lives and properties.

In Chattogram city, at least five people were hurt in two clashes between the police and the protesters in Gate No-2 and Tigerpass areas.

Police charged truncheons on the agitators at Tigerpass around 4:40pm as the protesters tried to march defying barricades. Police used truncheons again when the protesters reached Gate No-2 area around 5:00pm.

Afterwards, the students blocked the gate area until 7:30pm.

CROSSING THE LINE

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the students were crossing the line.

Asked if the government would take action if the students did not withdraw their protest programmes, the home minister, during a press conference, said, "They are educated and intelligent. Why would they go against the state? They should observe the situation and return."

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader urged the students to go back to their educational institutions and stop their agitation that is causing public sufferings.

The government must take legal actions if anyone tries to capitalise on the emotions of students and attempts to create anarchy, he said.

DMP Additional Commissioner (Crime and Ops) KH Mahid Uddin yesterday said they would take legal action if quota protesters continued to block roads.

There is no logic behind the movement after the Supreme Court issued a status quo order, he said urging the students to respect the law and the SC.

"The Dhaka Metropolitan Police are not only for them [students]. We are accountable to the city dwellers too," he said.

GO BACK TO CLASSROOMS

The University Grants Commission issued a letter to vice-chancellors of all universities and asked them to take necessary measures to bring the anti-quota demonstrators back to classrooms and create an environment conducive to education.

It said the students should return to their educational institutions and resume studies.

"If the protesting students wish, they can present their arguments to the court through their lawyer. The court would consider it ... ," it said.

Jubo League leader, two others sued

FROM PAGE 12

the CSA case are Arif Billah alias Nasim, a former senior vice-president of Mohipur thana unit of Chhatra League, and Jubo League activist Roni Hossain of Kalapara. Jubo League leader Shamim contested for the post of chairman in the recent Kalapara upazila election and was defeated.

According to the case statement, Arif and Roni following the instructions of Shamim Tuesday noon uploaded a video clip on their Facebook pages which contained offensive content.They are accused of attempting to destroy communal harmony and deteriorating law and order by spreading misinformation on Facebook. Allegations have also been brought against the three of tarnishing the image of the state minister.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Arif said, "I don't know anything about the case. After the Kalapara upazila polls on May 29, I have been away from the area. Now I'm not involved in local politics. Yet I'm still held responsible whenever something happens in the area. I also want a proper investigation ... ."

This correspondent tried to contact the two other accused in the case, but they did not pick up their phones.

Over "insulting" state minister Mohibbur, Didar Uddin Ahmed, general secretary of Kalapara municipality unit Awami League, filed a GD with Kalapara Police Station on Wednesday, while Rakibul Hasan Ferdous, a member of Rangabali Sadar union unit AL, lodged another GD with Rangabali Police Station on Thursday.

The complainants accused Arif, Roni, and other unidentified individuals of tarnishing the reputation of the state minister by spreading propaganda on social media.

OC Ali Ahmed of Kalapara Police Station could not be reached despite several attempts, while OC Helal Uddin of Rangabali Police Station refused to comment.

Names of some big fish come up in probe

FROM PAGE 1

involved in the question leaks of recruitment exams of banks and medical admission tests.

It all came to light after the Criminal Investigation Department arrested 17 people, including six officials and employees of the PSC, for their involvement in leaking questions of a railway recruitment test on July 5.

According to investigators, the racket, which began its activities back in 2002, has made huge sums of money over the years.

All the arrestees had multiple suspicious transactions in their bank accounts. The CID arrested PSC office assistant Sajedul Islam with bank cheques worth Tk 10 crore in his possession, they said.

Another arrestee, PSC dispatch rider Khalilur Rahman was found to own wealth worth around Tk 50-60 crore.

Probe sources further said the syndicate had supplied the questions of the railway recruitment test to at least 300 candidates.

Abed Ali alone collected around Tk 7-8 lakh each from at least 60 of them.

The CID is now listing the names of the candidates along with those of absconding syndicate members, including former and current PSC officials.

CID Chief Mohammad Ali Miah, also additional inspector general of police, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We're conducting drives to arrest those who went into hiding after the 17 were arrested.

"We have information that the syndicate started leaking questions since 2002. We've been chasing this the group for the last six months."

He said, "Many big fish are involved. We're hopeful of arresting all those involved soon."

A CID source said Abed Ali's involvement in question leaks came to light during a medical admission test in 2010.

Cops had arrested him and some others at that time and a case was filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station in 2011. After the PSC was informed about Abed's involvement, he was fired in 2014.

Abed admitted his involvement after both arrests.

Sources further said that he even had links with those involved in printing exam question papers. Suspected printing press workers are being investigated in this regard.

Former army personnel Noman Siddique, another arrestee, was found involved in leaking medical exam questions in 2015, investigators said, adding that he dragged his colleague Priyonath Roy into the racket. They both tried to recommend two candidates for a job in the family planning department.

Noman was involved in leaking bank recruitment exam questions for the next couple of years as well.

Meanwhile, the CID yesterday filed prayers with a Dhaka court for a 10-day remand for each of 11 of the 17 arrestees.

No remand was sought for the six others, including Abed Ali, as they have already made confessional statements before courts following their arrests on Sunday and Monday.

Jewel Chakma, additional special superintendent of the CID, submitted the remand prayers for the 11, including two PSC deputy directors -- Abu Zafar and Jahangir Alam, and assistant director SM Alamgir Kabir, and Noman.

Asked whether action would be taken against officials whose names come up during the probe, Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain said, "If anyone breaks service rules .. if they resort to fraud or deception, action will be taken as per the law.

"We're paying close attention to this matter."

Court's door always open to students

FROM PAGE 1

the executive branch can be challenged in court."

He said that the protesters could present their arguments through lawyers and assured that the court would consider them seriously.

The chief justice urged the senior lawyers to provide necessary guidance to the protesters in this regard.

He made the remarks during an appeal hearing regarding a previous High Court verdict that made 16 recommendations to parliament for forming an independent cadre service for the Anti-Corruption Commission to build a corruption-free nation.

Earlier, the chamber judge of the Appellate Division stayed the HC verdict, saying the Supreme Court could not advise parliament.

NBFIs' bad loans surge to a record

FROM PAGE 1

Saha, also vice-chairman of Bangladesh Leasing and Finance Companies Association (BLFCA), said the loans that were disbursed in the last one or two years are regular.

"Now, most of the NBFIs are trying to do better," he said, adding that the industry is looking to upgrade its manpower for improved performance.

Md Golam Sarwar Bhuiyan, chairman of the BLFCA, said that not only the NBFIs, but the overall economy is now facing multiple challenges, and that is why the bad loans in the sector have increased.

Bad loans jumped after the central bank in 2022 withdrew the deferral facility extended during the pandemic for paying back loans, said Bhuiyan.

Due to the confidence crisis in the sector, deposits in NBFIs fell to Tk 44,304 crore in the January-March quarter from Tk 44,830 crore in the previous quarter.

Dhaka now has to play its cards right

FROM PAGE 1

advantage of the new relationship with China," he said.

The two sides agreed to deepen cooperation in trade, investment and finance, and to conclude the joint feasibility study on a China-Bangladesh free trade agreement.

"This will significantly boost trade between the two countries," said Kabir, also the president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, a non-profit, non-political research centre.

China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner by a wide margin, with bilateral trade amounting to upwards of $25 billion. However, Bangladesh's exports account for less than 3 percent of the sum.

"China has completed the entry procedures for Bangladesh's fresh mango exports to China, and welcomes Bangladesh to expand exports of jute, leather, aquatic products and other high-quality special products to China. The two sides agreed to further strengthen communication on the export of high-quality Bangladeshi agricultural products to China," the joint statement said.

Ahead of the three-day visit, there was expectation that Beijing would provide a $5 billion loan in yuan for trade facilitation to help Bangladesh cope with the strain on currency reserves, and billions more for projects.

At a press briefing after Hasina's meeting with Li Qiang on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said China has agreed to provide 1 billion yuan (about $137 million) in assistance. However, the joint statement does not mention this assistance extended to Bangladesh.

China has now become more cautious in giving out loans after it was blamed for the economic crisis in some countries such as Sri Lanka, said Kabir, who served as Bangladesh's ambassador to Nepal and the US and the high commissioner to Australia.

In case of Bangladesh too, China is exercising the same caution.

For instance, China has decided to form a joint technical committee for assessing the projects proposed by Bangladesh, Kabir said.

"I would say that this visit is meant to build a relationship that is futuristic and expansive," he added.

China committed to provide about $20 billion during Xi's visit to Dhaka in 2016 for a host of mega projects. Some of the projects are yet to be implemented. So Bangladesh did not get the full amount pledged.

"So, China wants better scrutiny this time -- Beijing would like to look at the nitty-gritty of the projects this time," said Mahbub Uz Zaman, former ambassador to China.

Xi spoke about building party-to-party relationship between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the ruling Awami League in Bangladesh. He said "good governance requires good party".

Asked what this means, Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives, said: "This is Chinese approach of building relationship, which they do everywhere. Through this, they find it easier to implement their policies."

The Awami League can learn discipline and governance of the party from the CPC, said Ahmed, also a professor of international relations at the University of Dhaka.

Xi also assured Hasina of support for repatriating the more than a million Rohingya. However, analysts say how far it will work will depend on the situation in Myanmar, which is now going through a civil war.

Repatriation has not been possible in the last seven years despite several efforts including under a tripartite mechanism under Chinese leadership.

On this, Kabir said: "Chinese assurance is great and is required for the solution, but we will have to wait to see what happens in Myanmar, particularly in the Rakhine State in the days to come."

Why do they [students] talk about the executive department? Any decision of the executive department can be challenged in court. The court's door is always open for them.

OBAIDUL HASSAN
Chief Justice

BNP wants to turn the anti-quota protests into anti-government agitations. If anyone tries to give the protests a political shape, we'll face it politically.

OBAIDUL QUADER
Road Transport and Bridges Minister

We have instructed our security forces to listen to their [students] demands. However, there is a limit to listening, and it appears that they are crossing it.

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN KAMAL
Home Minister

The [Supreme Court's] Appellate Division order restored the 2018 government circular on quota system... refrain from carrying out any activity that causes public sufferings.

MOHAMMAD ALI ARAFAT
State Minister for Information

Passengers stand inside a cramped carriage as continued road blockades have left commuters with no other option but to turn to the metro rail. As a result, metro usage has soared, with crowds accumulating at the stations. The photo was taken in the Shahbagh metro rail station yesterday.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

SOUTHERN DEV INITIATIVE

China supports Bangladesh's plan

Says joint statement

UNB, *Dhaka*

China has supported Bangladesh's plan to implement the Southern Integrated Development Initiatives (SIDI) under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative to help this region achieve balanced and sustainable development.

Chinese enterprises will be encouraged to take an active part in the construction of subways, metro rail and roads, oil and gas exploration, hospitals and water resources and sewage management projects in Bangladesh in a proper way, according to a joint statement issued after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's July 8-10 official visit to Beijing.

Bangladesh and China will accelerate existing cooperation projects, continue to expand areas of cooperation, and work towards more fruitful outcomes in practical cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides agreed to advance projects such as the Burn Unit in Chattogram Medical College Hospital, the No. 6 Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge Renovation, the No. 9 Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge and the National Emergency Operation Center in Bangladesh.

The Chinese side will continue to provide support for training programmes on human resources development of Bangladesh under the framework of "China Aid".

The two sides agreed to step up experience sharing on development planning and economic development policies, and further deepen high-quality Belt and Road cooperation under the principle of planning together, building together and benefiting together.

Bangladesh and China also have agreed to enhance

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Lost in Kerala, found in Kamrangirchar

Police recover 207 smuggled smartphones; 2 siblings held

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Nearly four months back, an Indian medical student, Shaheen Rawshan, lost his iPhone 15 Pro Max in Kerala. After about three months, he tracked its location to the East Rasulpur area of Kamrangirchar in Bangladesh.

As he contacted a police official of Lalbagh Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, a team of Kamrangirchar police recovered his iPhone from a house in East Rasulpur and arrested two siblings in this connection.

Police also recovered 207 smartphones -- including 138 iPhones smuggled from neighbouring countries, including India, by evading customs duty -- one MacBook and Tk 94,000 during a drive on July 3, Imran Hossain Molla, assistant commissioner of Lalbagh Zone, told The Daily Star.

The matter came to the fore yesterday after the DMP provided a press release in this regard.

The arrestees are -- Shakil, 24, and his brother Shahin, 21.

"They [Shahin and Shakil] used to buy these stolen mobile phones from different people in different cities of India like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kerala and smuggled them into Bangladesh illegally by evading customs duty and would sell them," the police official said.

Such smuggling of stolen smartphones has become frequent nowadays, with several incidents reported of recovered stolen smartphones in both India and Bangladesh.

On June 30, a team of Shahjahanpur police recovered a stolen iPhone belonging to a Kolkata resident from Keraniganj, which she lost in the Park Circus area nearly a year ago.

On November 7 last year, Ferdous Miah, a deputy jailer from Dinajpur, was robbed in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area, losing his Samsung S23 Ultra mobile phone.

There are transnational rackets active in Bangladesh and India that are smuggling stolen and unauthorised mobile phones between the two countries, law enforcers found.

After filing a GD and using a tracking app, he located the phone months later in Gujarat, India.

There are transnational rackets active in Bangladesh and India that are smuggling stolen and unauthorised mobile phones between the two countries, law enforcers found.

High-end phones like iPhones, known for their hard-to-alter IMEI numbers, are risky to sell locally, so criminals smuggle them in a different country, according to law enforcers.

Besides, there is a significant demand in Bangladesh for unauthorised mobile phones that evade customs duties and taxes upon entry.

Imran said Shaheen, an Indian citizen of Kerala, lost his iPhone on March 27. Later on July 2, he contacted him for recovery of the phone.

On July 3, Kamrangirchar police raided the East Rasulpur house and recovered 190 smartphones including 138 iPhones. Based on their information, they raided a shop in Orchard Point shopping mall in Dhanmondi and recovered 17 more smartphones.

A case was filed with Kamrangirchar Police Station under the Special Powers Act following the drive.

The police official said the arrestees maintained communications with multiple contacts in different countries, including India, exchanging information and smuggling smartphones from neighbouring countries.

The investigation uncovered videos, photographs of parcels containing smartphones, and various details related to the illegal sale of stolen mobile phones, he added.

HC order on Yunus' petition July 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver on July 21 its order on a petition, filed by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six other officials of Grameen Telecom, challenging a Dhaka court's order that framed charges against them.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain yesterday fixed July 21 for passing the order after conducting hearing on the petition.

Abdullah-Al-Mamun appeared for Prof Yunus, while Khurshid Alam Khan and Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the ACC and the state respectively.

Prof Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom on Monday submitted the petition seeking an HC order to scrap the case's trial proceedings.

The case was filed by the ACC on the charge of misappropriating about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund.

On June 12, a Dhaka court framed charges against Yunus and 13 others.

Hazaribagh and Lalbagh to become green hotspots

$105 million project taken by Rajuk, GIZ

MD ABBAS

Hazaribagh was once surrounded by tanneries for which untreated waste was dumped into the Buriganga river, polluting the environment.

Considering the environmental threat, the government relocated the tanneries to Savar in 2017.

Now, dilapidated buildings and abandoned machinery prevail on the site, but long-term tannery operations have accumulated dangerous levels of chromium in the soil.

We only talk about the plan, but in reality, the decision to relocate the tanneries in Hazaribagh has not been fully implemented. If a plan is not implemented properly, there is no point in just planning.

RAM OBAIDUL MUKTADIR CHOWDHURY
Housing and Public Works Minister

To make the area sustainably liveable for residents, a plan titled "Climate Resilient and Green Action Plan (CRGAP)", prepared by Rajuk and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) with the support of the City Climate Finance Gap Fund, has been finalised to transform Hazaribagh and Lalbagh into a green hotspot.

Under the project, contaminated soil will be cleaned up, and new environment-friendly block-based structures will be built in the Hazaribagh area, Md Ashraful Islam, chief town planner of Rajuk, told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Awareness key to reduce C-section

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health and Family Welfare Minister Samanta Lal Sen yesterday said the number of caesarean operation is increasing in the country. The more we can reduce the number of C-section, the better, he added.

He said this at a programme at Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Convention Hall in the capital, marking World Population Day.

Sen also said, "The number of C-section in private clinics and hospitals is very high. We want to reduce this number."

He emphasised the government's commitment to reducing the number of caesarean operation and said, "My humble request to those of you who work at the village level, explain to the people [pregnant mothers] that they should undergo health check-ups at community clinics and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MIRANZILLA HARIJAN COLONY

SC extends status quo on eviction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday extended its order that on Wednesday directed Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) to maintain status quo on eviction proceedings at Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Dhaka's Bangshal area till further order.

The apex court also asked the High Court to dispose of the writ petition that was filed challenging the eviction move at the colony in two months.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan passed the order after hearing a petition filed by the DSCC that sought a stay on an HC order.

Following the SC order, the authorities cannot conduct any eviction at Miranzilla Harijan Colony.

On June 13, the HC issued one-month status quo on the eviction proceedings in the colony and ordered the DSCC to arrange accommodation for the affected residents.

Following yesterday's SC order, the authorities cannot conduct any eviction at Miranzilla Harijan Colony, Barrister Manoj Kumar Bhowmik, one of the writ petitioners, told The Daily Star.

Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Aneek R Haque appeared for the writ petitioners while Advocate Murad Reza argued for the DSCC during the hearing yesterday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

While there are no laws against enjoying a rainy afternoon, there is definitely one against riding bikes without helmets. These students cruise through the Mirpur Road in Dhanmondi amid the rain, taking selfies, while the risk of accidents loom. The photo was taken yesterday.

5 brokers held at CMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Police yesterday arrested five brokers at the emergency and medicine wards of Chittagong Medical College Hospital on the charge of deceiving health service seekers.

The arrestees -- Golam Kibria, 24, Shahadat Hossain, 25, Abdul Awal, 31, Abul Kalam, 32, and Sujan Singha, 39 -- are staffers of various private clinics, medicine shops and diagnostic centres near the CMCH, said Nurul Alam, in-charge of CMCH Police Camp. "We are taking further legal action against the arrestees," he said.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 12

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-30	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

The Port Road in Barishal city has been in a dilapidated condition for a long time. Due to a lack of maintenance, the road has become dotted with potholes, escalating sufferings of commuters. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

DESTRUCTION OF FOREST

26 including AL men sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

The Department of Environment has filed a case against 26 named and 10-15 unnamed persons, most of them being activists of ruling Awami League, over destruction of mangrove forest in Sonadia Island of Cox's Bazar district.

The accused had ravaged around 562 acres of the mangrove forest for fish and shrimp enclosures and salt fields since last January, according to the case filed under the Bangladesh Environment Protection Act.

They also encroached on government land and felled mangrove trees across 4,916 hectares of Ecologically Critical Area in at least seven places under Kutubjom union.

Faizul Kabir, inspector of the Department of Environment Cox's Bazar district office, filed the case with Maheshkhali Police Station on July 9, said Sukanto Chakraborty, officer-in-charge of the station.

The named accused are: Jasim Uddin, 40, president of Maheshkhali upazila unit of Sramik League; Sajedul Karim, 45, general secretary of upazila unit of Jubo League; Nurul Amin Khoka, 41, a former member of Qutubjom Union Parishad; Md Siddique Rimon, 39, an incumbent member of the union parishad; Nurul Amin, 62, former union parishad chairman; Saber Ahmed, 48; Mohsin Anwar, 50; Osman Ali, 61; Rabiur Alam, 42; Md Farooq, 41; Jahangir Alam, 42; Zafar Alam, 60; Md Tarek, 35; Amiruzzaman, 62; Sazzadul Karim, 38; Shahadat Kabir, 45; Sonamia, 37; Shahidullah Sikder, 68; Md Nezam, 43; Amir Hossain, 54; Nasir Uddin, 50; Shafi Alam, 45; Md Alam Sharif, 47; Zainal Ahmad, 45; Amir Hossain Company, 48; and Azizul Haque, 46.

Jamir Uddin, deputy director of DoE in Cox's Bazar, confirmed the matter.

OC Sukanto said necessary action will be taken against the accused.

Hazaribagh

FROM PAGE 3

Tree plantation and development projects, including residential, commercial, and recreational centres, will be established there, he said.

In the historically significant Lalbagh, the project will protect the heritage sites, and will build different climate-resilient developments, including parks and walkways, and structures will be made on both sides of the Buriganga, he added.

Ashraful said once the US $105 million project is completed, the capital's greenery will increase by 25 to 30 percent.

"We will complete the preliminary work by this year and start implementing the project by January," he added. They expect to complete the project by 2029, he added.

To brief about the project, a day-long workshop was organised at the Rajuk Auditorium yesterday.

Addressing as chief guest, Housing and Public Works Minister RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury said a plan that is not implemented is worthless.

"We only talk about the plan, but in reality, the decision to relocate the tanneries in Hazaribagh has not been fully implemented, and the relocation was not completed properly. If a plan is not implemented properly, there is no point in just planning," he said.

He asked the officials concerned to work properly so that progress is visible by the end of this year.

Rajuk Chairman Siddiqur Rahman Sarker said the plan is designed to guide future green and climate-resilient development.

He reiterated the importance of developing green and environment-friendly infrastructure in Hazaribagh and Lalbagh.

"We want to work together with the local population to create a greener, cleaner, and more sustainable area to ensure a better quality of life. We'll create a green, beautiful, and climate-resilient environment through tree planting, setting up aesthetic parks and playgrounds, and constructing environment-friendly buildings," he added.

Md Fazle Reza Sumon, team leader of CRGAP, presented concerning environmental issues and addressed the necessity of a regeneration plan.

Martina Burkard, acting country director of GIZ Bangladesh, and Nabirul Islam, secretary of the Housing and Public Works Ministry, also spoke at the event.

Quota can be 'logically' reformed

Says Sector Commanders Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The quota system in government jobs can be "logically and realistically" reformed, said Sector Commanders Forum-Liberation War'71 in a statement yesterday.

Its Executive President Md Nurul Alam and Secretary General Haroon Habib came up with remarks at a time when university students have been protesting against the reinstatement of the quota system.

"Most freedom fighters belonged to underprivileged sections of rural areas. They fought for the country's independence, risking their lives. But they were 'ignored and neglected' for decades," said the statement.

The country's half of the total population are women, who are still lagging behind in society, despite different development activities. Even physically challenged and indigenous people are also lagging behind, it said. "So, a considerable ratio of the quota system in government jobs is logical," it added.

A quota system for the development of underprivileged people exists in every corner of the world, the statement said.

"Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman introduced the quota system in the war-torn Bangladesh after independence. However, the freedom fighters could not avail of the opportunity for around 21 years after his assassination in 1975 as the military rulers and their followers, who bore anti-Liberation War sentiments, assumed power during that time," the statement continued.

As a result, many freedom fighters crossed their age limit for government jobs. In 2009, the government extended the quota system as a sign of respect for freedom fighters. In 2018, the government abolished the quota system, and the forum does not think it was rational, it added.

It will be alarming if the anti-liberation force undermines the Liberation War and freedom fighters by intruding into the protesters, the forum said.

Awareness key

FROM PAGE 3

upazila health complexes regularly and on time."

Saying that the C-section is prevailing at every corner of the country, the health minister said it has become necessary to find out the root cause behind the rising number.

"There is a tendency to opt for C-section when a pregnant mother has already undergone C-section in the past. That cannot be an answer. We need to find out the reason why it happened the first time," he added.

China supports

FROM PAGE 3

cooperation in financial regulation, and encouraged increased use of local currency settlement in bilateral trade.

China has also expressed its support to continue the zero-tariff treatment on 98 percent of taxable items to Bangladesh for a transitional period beyond 2026 when Bangladesh will graduate from LDC status, according to the joint statement.

'ROHINGYA REPATRIATION THE ONLY SOLUTION'

China has pledged to continue to provide support to the "best of its abilities, including providing a platform for dialogue" to help achieve early repatriation of the displaced people to Myanmar.

The two sides shared the view that early repatriation is the only way to resolve the issue concerning the displaced people from Rakhine State of Myanmar, who have taken shelter in Bangladesh, according to the joint statement.

The two sides called on all parties in Myanmar to bridge their differences through dialogue and consultation and underscored the cessation of hostilities in Rakhine State as soon as possible.

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যোগাযোগ: ০১৭৯৯-৯৮৯৭৫৯, ০১৭৯৯-৯৮৯৯১৯

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কোর্স ফি : ৪,০০০ টাকা
আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ: ৩১ জুলাই ২০২৪
শিক্ষণপদ্ধতি : কোর্সের শিক্ষণপদ্ধতি হবে অংশগ্রহণমূলক। কোর্সভুক্ত বিষয়াবলীর তাত্ত্বিক ও ব্যবহারিক দিকের প্রতি লক্ষ্য রেখে শ্রেণিকক্ষ আলোচনা, দলীয় কাজ ও উপস্থাপন, অ্যাসাইনমেন্ট এবং প্যানেল আলোচনা–এ সকল নানাবিধ পদ্ধতির সমন্বয়ে ক্লাস পরিচালিত হবে।
ফ্যাকাল্টি : রিসোর্স-পার্সন হিসেবে উপস্থিত থাকবেন বিভিন্ন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক, অর্থনীতিবিদ, আইনজীবী, গবেষক ও নারীনেত্রীগণ।

ভর্তির জন্য যোগাযোগ:
সীমা মোসলেম, নারীনেত্রী, যুগ্ম সাধারণ সম্পাদক ও কোর্স পরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ মহিলা পরিষদ।
ফোন: ০১৬২৫০১৮৫০৭, ০১৯১৪৪৩২৫১৭
রেজিস্ট্রেশন লিংকের জন্য ইনবক্স করুন অথবা মহিলা পরিষদের ওয়েবসাইট দেখুন।
ইমেইল:info@mahilaparishad.org
ওয়েবসাইট: mahilaparishad.org
প্রশিক্ষণ, গবেষণা ও পাঠাগার উপপরিষদ, বাংলাদেশ মহিলা পরিষদ

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
Phone: 222218331-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Memo No. 53.23.0000.001.03.162.23.4228 Date: 11-07-2024

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No	Description	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing/ Opening Date & Time
1002877	Procurement of Office Equipment [Desktop Computer (40 nos.), Laptop (40 nos.), Laser Printer-B/W (10 nos.), Auto-feed Scanner (02 nos.), Photocopier (3 nos.), Voice Recorder (02 nos.), Portable SSD (05 nos.), Camera (02 nos.), Video Conference System (07 nos.) and Conference System (01 no.)] under SMART Project of PKSF. (Package no.: PKSF/SMART/G-01)	11-07-2024 & 10:00 AM	12-08-2024 & 14:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (**http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd**) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (**helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd**).

Deputy Managing Director-1

UTTARA BANK PLC.
HEAD OFFICE
47, Shahid Bir Uttam Asfaqus Samad Sarak
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Bank in its 813th meeting held at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, the 11th July, 2024, approved the un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the 2nd quarter ended on 30th June, 2024 and disclosed the following financial indicators of the Bank:

Financial Results:

Particulars	Consolidated				Solo			
	Jan. 01 to June 30, 2024	Jan. 01 to June 30, 2023	April 01 to June 30, 2024	April 01 to June 30, 2023	Jan. 01 to June 30, 2024	Jan. 01 to June 30, 2023	April 01 to June 30, 2024	April 01 to June 30, 2023
Net Profit after Tax (Taka in crore)	194.00	120.63	137.49	65.91	197.09	121.50	139.37	67.09
Earnings Per Share (EPS) in Taka	2.35	1.46	1.66	0.80	2.39	1.47	1.69	0.81
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS) in Taka	6.60	(5.99)	-	-	6.63	(5.90)	-	-

Financial Position:

Particulars	Consolidated		Solo	
	As at June 30, 2024	As at June 30, 2023	As at June 30, 2024	As at June 30, 2023
Net Asset Value (NAV) (Taka in crore)	2,348.67	2,077.77	2,342.13	2,065.92
Net Asset Value Per Share (NAVPS) in Taka	28.44	25.16	28.36	25.02

The detail of the published 2nd quarter financial statements will be available in the website of the Bank at **www.uttarabank-bd.com.**

By order of the Board

Date: Dhaka
11th July, 2024

IFTEKHAR ZAMAN
Executive General Manager & Secretary

Flood situation worsens in Kurigram

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

The ongoing flood situation in Kurigram has deteriorated further as the water levels of the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers started rising again in 12 hours till yesterday morning.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board sources, Brahmaputra's water has risen by 10cm since Wednesday evening and was flowing 46cm above danger level at Chilmari Point yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, Dudhkumar was flowing 3cm and Dharla 10cm above danger level at Pateshwari and Bridge points respectively yesterday morning.

"Heavy rains and onrush of water from upstream in India caused the water level to rise again, deteriorating the flood situation," said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of BWDB in Kurigram.

Suruj Ali, 65, of Hatia village under Kurigram's Ulipur upazila, said, "After Brahmaputra's water started receding, we hoped the situation would improve. However, the water has started rising again. We are living in an inhumane condition inside these polythene shanties on the BWDB embankment."

Meanwhile, cattle farmers are having a hard time finding fodder for their animals, with vast stretches of pasture land inundated and stocked hay washed away in floodwater.

Around 15 lakh domestic animals have been affected by the flood, said Monakka Ali, district livestock officer in Kurigram.

Meanwhile, the ferry service at Kurigram's Chilmari river-port is suspended as the ghat's connecting road has been submerged.

At least 1,000 people use the ferry service daily to commute from Chilmari to Roumari, Char Rajibpur, Mymensingh, and Jamalpur. Now they have no alternative to using boats to cross the swelling Brahmaputra amid risk while also spending more money.

Prafulla Chauhan, manager of Chilmari Ghat of BIWTC, said the service will resume once the floodwaters recede and the ghat is renovated.

"This ferry ghat is a temporary one. A permanent ghat is under construction," he added.

EROSION WORSENS IN LALMONIRHAT

In Lalmonirhat, even though the flood situation saw gradual improvement, the erosion of the Teesta has worsened, leaving riverbank residents with sleepless nights.

At least 15 houses, a mosque, and around 100 bighas of arable land have been devoured by the river in Gobardhan village under Aditmari upazila since Saturday, while around 50 more homesteads and several hundred bighas of arable land are at risk of erosion, said Matiar Rahman Mati, a union parishad member.

A similar situation prevails in the Dawabari union where 110 homesteads, around 500 bighas of arable land, a government primary school and two mosques have been devoured in the last five days.

At least 300 houses, several hundred bighas of agricultural land and a community clinic are under threat of erosion.

"The BWDB authorities took no steps in this regard. I have dumped 150 sand-filled geo-bags myself, but it is insufficient to stop the erosion," said Mosaddek Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the union parishad.

Mashiur Rahman, Dawabari Union Parishad chairman, echoed him.

Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat, said steps will be taken in this regard.

SIRAJGANJ FLOOD

No respite as Jamuna continues to swell

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

The flood situation in Sirajganj continues to deteriorate as Jamuna river's water level has been rising since yesterday morning.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sirajganj, Jamuna was flowing 37cm and 17cm above danger level at Sirajganj Hard Point and Kazipur Point respectively at noon yesterday.

Rainfall enhanced onrush of upstream water, causing water level to rise by 3cm and 4cm at the two points respectively in previous 12 hours, said Md Nazmul Hossain, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB in Sirajganj.

"The water level is expected to increase till July 14," he added.

At least 336 sq km area in 34 unions in the district have become inundated, leaving over one lakh people marooned, said sources at relief and rehabilitation department in the district.

2 schoolboys die as boat sinks in beel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Two schoolboys died after a boat capsized in a beel in Sadar upazila of Sherpur yesterday afternoon.

The victims -- Sujon Mia, 14, and Sumon Miah, 14, from Dubarchar Dakshinpara in Sadar upazila -- were eighth-graders at a local high school, said police.

Md Emdadul Haque, officer-in-charge of Sherpur Sadar Police Station, said the teenagers went to the waterbody for a boat ride around 4:30pm.

Suddenly, during the ride, they lost control of the boat due to a heavy current and it sank, said the OC.

On information, police, with support from locals, recovered the bodies and handed them over to the families.

An unnatural death case was filed with the police station, said the OC.

'We've been surviving on just puffed rice'

Flood-hit people grapple with food, water crisis in Jamalpur

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, *Jamalpur*

The flood victims in Jamalpur's shoal areas are passing days amid an acute crisis of food and drinking water.

Also, they are having a hard time feeding their domestic animals due to shortage of fodder.

Visiting different shoal areas in Islampur, Sarishabari and Dewanganj upazilas of the district, this correspondent saw flood-affected people have left their homes and sheltered in any possible higher grounds, including railway station, school buildings, bridges and union parishad premises, with their family members and cattle.

Vast stretches of residential and arable lands, roads, markets, fish enclosures and educational institutions have been inundated.

Many of them have been living on dry food for several days without having received any relief.

The flood has so far affected 2,03,028 people of 32 unions and one municipality in the district, according to sources at the relief and rehabilitation department in Jamalpur.

Also, around 1,000 residents in five upazilas of the district lost their homes to erosion by the Jamuna and Brahmaputra rivers.

"We have been surviving on just puffed rice...," said Moynal Ali of Islampur upazila.

Echoing him, Momana Begum of Dewenganj upazila urged the government to provide the victims with food and fodder.

"I have decided to sell four of my cows as I cannot feed them in this situation," said Badsha Miah of Sarishabari upazila.

Shafiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Jamalpur, said 500 tonnes of rice, Tk 10 lakh cash relief and 4,500 packets of dry food have been allocated for the flood victims in the district, of which 480 tonnes of rice, Tk 6 lakh in cash and 4,050 packets of dry food have already been distributed.

"The UNOs of the flood-affected upazilas have been distributing the relief. If necessary, we will distribute more food among the victims," the DC added.

Rafiqul Islam, executive engineer of BWDB in Jamalpur, said they have taken temporary emergency measures to ensure safety of the residents in riverbank areas.

বেনাপোল পৌরসভা
বেনাপোল, যশোর

স্মারক নং-৪১.০৮.০২.০০১.০৩০.০০.২০২৪-২৯০ তাং ০৭/০৭/২০২৪ইং

সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বেনাপোল পৌরসভায় ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নকরণের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত হারে তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন ফিস জমা প্রদানপূর্বক লাইসেন্স তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নের জন্য আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রঃ নং	তালিকাভুক্তি করণ ফিসের পরিমাণ	নবায়ন ফিসের পরিমাণ	তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নের সর্বশেষ তারিখ
০১	৫,০০০/-	২,০০০/-	২২/০৭/২০২৪

নিম্নলিখিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন করা যাবে।
১। হালসনের ভ্যাট, আয়কর ও ট্রেড লাইসেন্স থাকতে হবে।
২। এছাড়া অফিস চলাকালিন সময়ে প্রকৌশল বিভাগ হতে বিস্তারিত জানা যাবে।

মোঃ নাসির উদ্দীন
মেয়র
বেনাপোল পৌরসভা

GD-42

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Dhaka Zone, Allenbari, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215.
Phone : 880-2-9136138 Fax : 880-2-9138075
E-mail : acedha@rhd.gov.bd, hakazone2020@gmail.com

Memo No.: 35.01.2690.007.07.001.24-4830 Dated: 11-07-2024

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have published through e-GP portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Package No. & Date of Publishing	Nome of Work	Last Selling and Closing Date & Time.
01.	**Tender ID: 1003045** Package No.: DZ(e-GP)-01/PMP(Road)/2024-2025 **Publishing: 11-July-2024**	Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP) for Repair and Maintenance of Existing damaged pavement surface by Profile Correction through DBS Base Course, Hard Shoulder repair with Camber Correction by Carpeting and DBST with other ancilary works at different Portion of Ch. 28+120m to 46+140m of Dhaka (Mirpur)- Utholi-Paturia (N-5) Road under Manikganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	11-Aug-2024; 17:00:00 12-Aug-2024; 12:00:00
02.	**Tender ID: 1003138** Package No.: DZ(e-GP)-02/PMP(Road)/2024-2025 **Publishing: 11-July-2024**	Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP) for Repair and Maintenance of Existing damaged pavement surface by Profile Correction through DBS Base Course, Hard Shoulder repair with Camber Correction by Carpeting and DBST with other ancilary works at different Portion of Ch. 46+140m to 70+079m of Dhaka (Mirpur)- Utholi-Paturia (N-5) Road under Manikganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	11-Aug-2024; 17:00:00 12-Aug-2024; 12:30:00

The interested persons/firms may visit the web site www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

Futher information and guidelined are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

11.7.24
(Mohammad Abdur Rashid)
Sub-Assistant Engineer, RHD
Dhaka Zone, Dhaka.

11/07/2024
(Md. Nurul Islam)
Assistant Engineer, RHD
Dhaka Zone, Dhaka.

11.07.2024
(Md Sabuj Uddin Khan)
Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Dhaka Zone, Dhaka.

GD- 43

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD
Jamalpur Road Circle
Telephone: 0981-65087
Fax: 0981-63912
E-mail : jamalpurcircle@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.3936.180.07.003.24.47 Date : 10-07-24

e-GP Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Jamalpur Road Circle, Jamalpur for the procurement of below mentioned works :

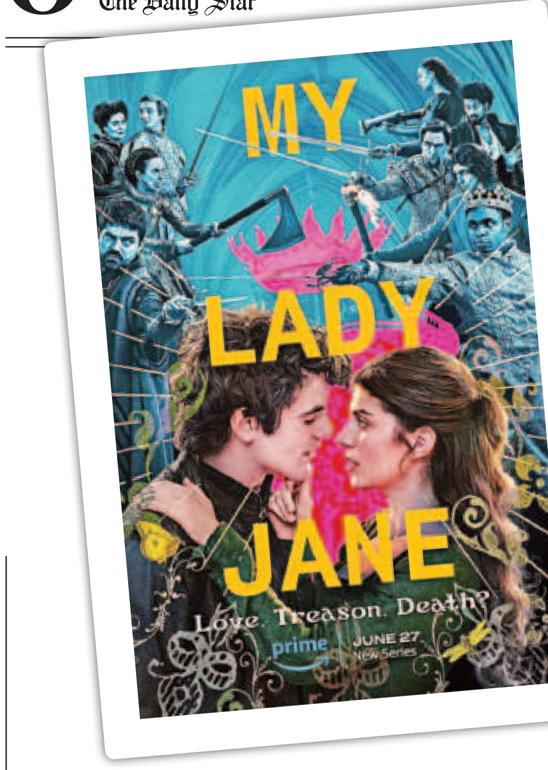
Sl No.	Name of works	Last Selling Time	Tender Closing Time
01.	Re-construction of Flexible Pavement, Construction of Rigid pavement, Construction of Bridge & Culvert and Protective work from Ch. 18+000 to Ch. 26+000 KM of Jamalpur (Madarganj)-Koyra-Mansurnagar (Kazipur)-Abdullah More (Sarishabari)-Tangail (Dhanbari) Zila Highway (Z-4029) under Jamalpur Road Division (WP-3). Invitation Reference No. 01/e-GP/JRC-Jam/Dew/2023-2024 (Re-tender).	30-07-2024, 17:00.	31-07-2024, 12:00.

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

10.7.24
(Md. Moniruzzaman)
[ID: 601961]
Superintending Engineer (C.C), RHD
Jamalpur Road Circle.

GD-41

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



'MY LADY JANE' shakes up British history with unapologetic romance and whimsy

SHABABA IQBAL

A lot of British history is incredibly depressing: the Black Death, Henry VIII's numerous deceased wives (by his decree), religious wars, and so on. Authors Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton, and Jodi Meadows were inspired by all this bleakness to take history into their own hands with their revisionist YA novel, ***My Lady Jane***. This 2017 New York Times bestseller reimagines Lady Jane Grey's tragic, nine-day reign as the pawn Queen of England into a fantastical, swoon-worthy romance that allows Jane to become a player in her own story.

With the guidance of writer and showrunner Gemma Burgess, ***My Lady Jane*** translates well into an eight-episode Prime Video series that confirms that history is a lot more fun and watchable when approached with an unapologetically tongue-in-cheek attitude.

Although the series is set in 1553, ***My Lady Jane*** wastes no time in establishing its anachronistic, irreverent tone and voice through a hand-drawn, animated prologue that immediately elicits some hearty laughs. Through comically outrageous violence and a brilliantly snarky commentary from an omniscient narrator (Oliver Chris), we are provided with a summary of the actual history and the context behind why 17-year-old Lady Jane Grey (Emily Bader) held any significance for the Tudor dynasty. From there, the show takes off, establishing Jane's predicament as the eldest daughter with no agency in a patriarchal society.

My Lady Jane packs a punch in every way imaginable, but it especially scintillates with the romance. When Jane coincidentally meets her intended, the charismatic Lord Guildford Dudley (Edward Bluemel), their chemistry, although initially antagonistic, is palpable and immediate, making their love story utterly addictive. The show explores a myriad of tropes while the characters deal with their chaotic everyday lives, making each episode more riveting than the one before it. While some moments feel slightly off from the overarching theme, it never detracts from the story's progression.

In some cases, especially in historical pieces, couples are forced to consummate the marriage to add legitimacy, which often robs the woman of her agency. But ***My Lady Jane*** works because Guildford never forces that, and the two start their relationship as equals. As Jane and Guildford get to know each other, their disdain slowly becomes toleration, and then a genuine friendship. Their relationship feels believable, and their admiration for each other grows so carefully that when things progress, it is immensely gratifying for viewers to watch.

Notably, the smouldering will-they/won't-they dynamic between Jane and Guildford is not the sole driving force of ***My Lady Jane***. The story delves into numerous layers of political intrigues that revolve around the sickly King Edward VI (Jordan Peters) and his struggle to thwart the ambitions of his bitter half-sister, Mary (Kate O'Flynn), and her cunning partner. However, the most significant narrative element stems from supernatural origins—a conflict between Verities (normal humans) and Ethians (humans who can transform into specific animals). The monarchy, particularly Mary, views Ethians as abominations and places a bounty on their heads, often leading to their demise. The Verities/Ethians division also becomes a reason for Jane and Guildford to deepen their connection beyond just attraction.

The leads are supported by a cast who, as a company, never miss a beat in finding the right balance between heightened drama and smart humour. The show clearly benefits from its primarily female writers' room, who aren't shy about embracing a bawdier and more adult presentation of the story. They capture the book's blithe approach to history while adding bite and intelligence to the dialogue.

However, fans of the historical figure Lady Jane Grey or those expecting a deeper exploration of female empowerment might be left feeling disappointed. The show's focus on light-hearted humour and fantasy elements tends to overshadow the gravity of Jane's real-life struggles and the importance of a woman briefly reigning on the throne.

My Lady Jane doesn't offer much that is new to the already crowded genre of cheekily anachronistic period pieces, such as the popular show ***Bridgerton***. However, it executes the premise very well. The strong chemistry between Bader and Bluemel ensures that the romantic comedy elements are firing on all cylinders—and they truly keep the viewers hooked.

'My Lady Jane' doesn't offer much that is new to the already crowded genre of cheekily anachronistic period pieces, such as the popular show 'Bridgerton'. However, it executes the premise very well.

PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

Chashi Alam welcomes first child

Chashi Alam, beloved as 'Habu bhai' in Kajal Arefin Ome's directorial ***Bachelor Point***, has become a father in real life. He and his wife Tultul welcomed their baby on Wednesday (July 10) night.

The actor confirmed the news of the birth of his son to local media on Thursday, stating, "Last night, my wife had a normal delivery. We've named our newborn Nur Farishta."

Last year, Chashi Alam got married to his wife, hosting a small reception with their close family and friends.

Chanchal receives award from Parambrata

Two renowned actors from the Bengali film industry, Chanchal Chowdhury from Bangladesh and Parambrata Chattopadhyay from India, recently crossed paths.

This year, the North American Bengali Conference (NABC) 2024 introduced an award named after the esteemed filmmaker Sunetra Ghatak Chattopadhyay, Parambrata's mother. Chanchal was honoured as the best actor in this category.

The actor expressed his gratitude acknowledging, "My friend, actor Parambrata, presented the award to me. I am deeply honoured to have received an award in the Sunetra Ghatak Memorial Award category from the actor himself."

Established in 1981, NABC is a major event for Bengalis in the US and Canada, featuring various programmes and stars. Every year, celebrities from Bangladesh and West Bengal participate in the festivities.

COUNTRYWIDE

Work to protect Dharla riverbanks stalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Work for protecting the banks of Dharla river in Kurigram Sadar upazila has remained stalled for over a year now.

As a result, local farmers are worried as the embankment work to save their croplands from possible erosion is still far from completion.

Moreover, nearly a thousand families at Dharla river basin Sardob village under Holokhana union are at serious risk of flooding and river erosion.

However, Water Development Board (WDB) authorities and the contractor concern are blaming each other for the delay as over 60 percent of the work still remain pending.

According to Kurigram WDB, a tender was called to construct a 450-metre portion of the Dharla river embankment protection work at Sardob village in 2021, and contractor Jihan Jennifer Hassan, owner of Foundation Engineers Limited (FEL) in Dhaka, got the Tk 12.93 crore.

Although as per the contract about 1,30,984 cement concrete blocks (CC blocks) was supposed to be constructed, only 25,122 CC blocks have been constructed so far.

Later, a small amount of the CC blocks was dumped at different vulnerable points, but the earth filling work along the river bank still remain incomplete.

The embankment protection work started in May 2021 was scheduled to be completed by May 2023.But surprisingly, after doing only 37 percent of the work the contractor left the project in May 2022, without informing the WDB officials. The contractor also withdrew a partial bill of Tk 3.69 crore before leaving over 60 percent of the work unfinished.

Meanwhile, due to the unfinished work villagers fear that they may have to face flooding this year as usually Sardob is a flood-prone area.

They also urged the authorities concerned to appoint a new contractor and complete the embankment protection work immediately.

While talking, contractor Jennifer Hassan said she had to stop the work midway as she was going through huge financial crisis due to non-payment of bills.

"I can complete the project, if WDB authorities give me a chance to revise the work rate," she said.

Kurigram WDB Sub-Divisional Engineer Ismat Toha said the contractor concern stopped the embankment protection work without consulting with the WDB officials. The contractor was served a show-cause notice, but she did not even bother to reply, Ismat said.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Cement concrete blocks meant for protecting the Dharla river embankment are kept piled along the riverbank at Sardob village in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

'Hungry' Colombia up

FROM PAGE 12

past Uruguay despite going down to 10 men in yesterday's incident-packed semifinal in North Carolina.

Facing them are a team that have not been pushed to the edge in the USA. Argentina conceded just one goal throughout the tournament and boast a balanced and experienced squad, marshalled by inspirational Lionel Messi at his career's twilight, oozing with self-belief on the back of three major titles in three years.

Historically, Colombia have struggled against Argentina, with just one win in their last 12 meetings. However, this underdogs status might work in Colombia's favour, allowing them to play with a sense of freedom and without the pressure that often accompanies the superior side on paper.

Their last Copa America encounter saw heroics from Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez making the difference in tiebreakers. Nevertheless, the Men in Yellow can also draw inspiration from a historic match dating back 30 years, when they handed Diego Maradona's Argentina one of their heaviest defeats ever, a 5-0 thrashing, in a crucial 1994 World Cup qualifiers fixture, advancing into the main event as a result.

A couple of individuals who could script Colombia's success are their coach Nestor Lorenzo, who has guided the side in 25 unbeaten matches, and their talismanic captain James Rodriguez. With Lorenzo having been an assistant coach for Argentina, the 58-year-old is relishing the match-up with his homeland, up against compatriot and counterpart Lionel Scaloni.

"This is going to be very nice. I am going to be competing with players I met during my career and who I admire a lot," said Lorenzo after beating Uruguay, the charges of revered Argentine coach Marcelo Bielsa.

"This is a group that wants to be a protagonist, that wants to win something, that is hungry and that is growing. We are moving forward," he added.

On the individual side of things, Lorenzo will bank on Rodriguez to play the protagonist-in-chief. The in-form playmaker yesterday became the first player to register six assists in a single edition of the competition, surpassing Messi's five assists in 2021.

The final, set to take place in Miami three days later (Monday 6 am, Bangladesh time), will be the first-ever Copa America final meeting between these two sides. While Argentina are seen as favourites to seal a record 16th title, Colombia's solid form leading up to their second-ever final could help etch their name in football folklore once again.

Ctg police recommends

FROM PAGE 12

by the Anti-Corruption Commission. The ACC has been probing allegations of amassing illegal wealth by him in Chattogram and Dhaka.

In the probe report to the Police Headquarters, the CMP has recommended firing Kamrul for embezzling the money, according to sources.

The probe committee was led by CMP Additional Commissioner (crime and operation) Abdul Mannan Miah, while Deputy Commissioner (Traffic-North) Joynul Abedin Tito was its member.

It also recommended punitive measures against Inspector Atiqur Rahman of CMP's Detective Branch and two other staffers of the billing section for their involvement in the embezzlement. Atiqur was in-charge of the section until September 9, 2023, said a CMP source.

CMP Additional Commissioner Mannan told The Daily Star, "The internal probe committee found ADC Kamrul and others guilty, and we have forwarded the findings to the Police Headquarters with the recommendation of sacking him."

The PHQ and the home ministry will decide their fate, he added.

Court sources said the daily allocation for food of an arrestee in a police station or a court lockup is Tk 150. But the ADC and the others used to prepare bills of Tk 75 for each without providing the arrestees with any food. Police rather took money from the arrestees' families to provide food.

On May 31, 2023, the ACC launched an inquiry into the allegations of amassing illegal wealth by ADC Kamrul and his wife Saima Begum. Kamrul was summoned to the ACC Chattogram office on August 14 for questioning.

After the inquiry, ACC Assistant Director Emran Hossain of the Chattogram office submitted a report to its headquarters on May 13 this year.

Confiscate all

FROM PAGE 12

The ACC official in his petition said Matiur and his family members were trying to transfer the ownership of their properties and launder money, and that is why they should be prevented from making such attempts.

Matiur and his family members also opened 23 beneficiary owner's (BO) accounts with different brokerage houses.

On June 24, the same court imposed travel bans on Matiur, Laila and Taufiqur in connection with corruption allegations.

Earlier, the ACC formed a three-member committee to probe the allegations of amassing huge illegal wealth against them.

Senators raise

FROM PAGE 12

Hollywood star Clooney penned a devastating editorial in the New York Times Wednesday just three weeks after co-hosting a huge fundraiser in Los Angeles that raised nearly $30 million for Biden.

"It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fundraiser was not the Joe 'big F-ing deal' Biden of 2010," wrote Clooney.

"He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate."

Clooney said that Biden would lose the presidential election, and Democrats would also lose both chambers of Congress.

In response to Clooney's editorial, the Biden campaign pointed to the president's statements on Monday saying he was committed to running again in November.

Stop 'judicial harassment'

FROM PAGE 12

campaign against him, it added.

In September 2023, the UN raised concerns about the intimidation and harassment against Prof Yunus, which has persisted for almost a decade. The smear campaigns against him emanate from the highest levels of government, undermining his right to a fair trial and due process in line with international standards, according to the release.

On January 1 this year, Prof Yunus was convicted of violating Bangladesh's labour laws. He and three of his Grameen Telecom colleagues were sentenced to six months in jail for failing to create a workers' welfare fund in the company. They were granted bail pending appeals, it said.

On June 12 Prof Yunus and 13 others were indicted on charges of embezzlement from the welfare fund of his telecom company. Prof Yunus has denied these charges, and his trial is due to start on July 15.

The judicial harassment of Prof Yunus "seems to be vindictive and politically motivated" and highlights the systematic targeting of civil society and critics by the government. The authorities must halt this abuse of the judicial system to persecute Prof Yunus and end this travesty of justice, the release added.

In December 2023, the Civicus Monitor downgraded Bangladesh's civic space to "closed", its worst rating.

The downgrade is the result of attacks on civil society and a massive government crackdown on opposition politicians and independent critics in the run-up to the national elections held in January 2024, the release said.

GAZA OFFENSIVE

Biden, US complicit in alleged war crimes

Says Erdogan

REUTERS, *Ankara*

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said US President Joe Biden and his administration are complicit in what he called Israeli war crimes and violations of international law in the Gaza conflict, and he called for sanctions against Israel.

In an interview with Newsweek during the Nato summit in Washington, Erdogan said Israel's "brutal murder" of civilians, its strikes on hospitals, aid centres and elsewhere constituted war crimes.

"The US administration, however, disregards these violations and provides Israel with the most support. They do so at the expense of being complicit in these violations," Erdogan was quoted as saying.

Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese village of Tairharfa yesterday. Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah, an ally of the Palestinian group Hamas, have exchanged near daily cross-border fire since the Gaza offensive began on October 7, stoking fears of an escalation into all-out war.

PHOTO: **AFP**

POST-POLLS FRANCE

Left-wingers blast Macron

Demand keys to govt

AFP, *Paris*

French left-wingers attacked President Emmanuel Macron yesterday after he called for a broad coalition government, demanding that their movement alone should propose a prime minister.

No single force won Sunday's second-round vote outright, though a broad alliance of Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) won the most seats, with 193 in the 577-strong National Assembly.

In an open letter to voters, Macron said Wednesday that "nobody won" the ballot. He has left centrist Prime Minister Gabriel Attal in place and called on parties to find common ground for a broad coalition.

Socialist Party chief Olivier Faure accused Macron of failing to "respect the vote of the French people", while LFI figurehead Jean-Luc Melenchon blasted the "return of the royal veto".

Sophie Binet, head of France's biggest trade union federation, the CGT, also enlisted the image of France's long-defunct monarchy to attack the president.

"It's like having Louis XVI locking himself away in Versailles," she said, referring to the king guillotined in 1793 during the French Revolution.

"If (Macron) doesn't respect the result of the polls, he risks plunging the country into chaos once again," she said.

Allow Gaza access

Dozens of int'l news groups urge Israel

AFP, *New York*

More than 60 news organizations, including some of the world's largest, yesterday signed an open letter calling on Israel to immediately end restrictions on international media entering and reporting on Gaza.

CNN, the BBC, Agence France-Presse and the Associated Press were among 64 media groups demanding greater access to the enclave that has faced a withering assault by Israel since Hamas's deadly October 7 assault.

"We, the undersigned, request that Israeli authorities end immediately the restrictions on foreign media entering Gaza and grant independent access to international news organizations seeking to access the territory," states the letter, organised by the Committee to Protect Journalists.

"Nine months into the war, international reporters are still being denied access to Gaza except for rare and escorted trips arranged by the Israeli military," it said.

"This effective ban on foreign reporting has placed an impossible and unreasonable burden on local reporters to document a war through which they are living," it added.

ISRAELI OFFENSIVE IN GAZA

MSF facing 'critical' medical supply shortage

AFP, *Paris*

Aid group Doctors Without Borders has warned of "critical" shortages of medical supplies in Gaza, with no resupply for more than two months as fighting between Israel and Hamas wears on.

The group known by its French initials MSF is "facing critical shortages of many things like gauze, gloves... things like that," Amber Alayyan, who works on the Palestinian territories for its French branch, told AFP on Wednesday.

The aid group warned last week in a statement it had been unable to bring any medical supplies into Gaza since the end of April and called on Israel to open more crossing points into the territory.

"We're seeing people who are injured in bombings, in shootings, in drone attacks," Alayyan said.

MSF staff have shifted to changing wound dressings every four days rather than the usual two to save on supplies

"We're seeing people who are living in such poor conditions that they're cooking on the floor."

MSF staff have shifted to changing wound dressings every four days rather than the usual two to save on supplies, paediatrician Alayyan added.

MSF now risks running out of vital medication such as anaesthetics needed for surgery.

"If we have to continue going like this... we won't be able to operate. We won't operate without anaesthesia," Alayyan said.

UNRWA, the United Nations body responsible for Palestinian refugees, estimated last month that around 10 children per day were losing one or both legs in Gaza.

Where MSF is involved, "most of the amputations... are being done as life-saving amputations," Alayyan said.

Afterwards, "we don't even have enough wheelchairs in our own hospital... much less prosthetic devices", she added.

With around 88,000 people wounded in Gaza, according to the health ministry, it will be a "proper catastrophe for years to come in terms of post-operative care, wound care, amputations, prosthetics", Alayyan said.

"Gaza itself needs to be rebuilt. So it's going to have to be rebuilt with wheelchair-accessible ramps all over the place for the thousands of people who are going to be in wheelchairs," she said.

"The offensive needs to stop... the healthcare system is completely destroyed."

After initially blocking all deliveries into Gaza, Israel reopened Kerem Shalom in December under international pressure.

An average of 250 trucks now cross the checkpoint daily according to COGAT, still well below UN figure of 500 aid and commercial trucks before the offensive.

Independent UN rights experts accused Israel on Tuesday of a "targeted starvation campaign" in the Gaza, where they said 34 Palestinians have died of malnutrition since October.

Taiwan detects 66 Chinese aircraft around island

AFP, *Taipei*

Taiwan's defence ministry said yesterday it had detected 66 Chinese military aircraft around the island in a 24-hour window, a record-high this year, a day after it said Beijing was conducting exercises in nearby waters.

China -- which maintains a near-daily military presence around Taiwan -- claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory and has said it will never renounce the use of force to bring it under its control.

Yesterday's record comes a day after Taipei spotted Chinese aircraft around the island that it said were headed to the western Pacific for exercises with the PLA aircraft carrier Shandong.

"66 PLA aircraft and seven PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am (2200 GMT Wednesday) today," the defence ministry said in yesterday's statement, adding it has "responded accordingly".

Fifty-six of the Chinese aircraft crossed the sensitive median line bisecting the Taiwan Strait -- a narrow 180-kilometre (110-mile) waterway separating the island from China.

Ukraine seizes cargo ship in Black Sea

Detains captain for exporting 'looted' grain from occupied Crimea

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

Ukraine seized a foreign cargo ship in the Black Sea off its Odesa region and detained the captain on suspicion of helping Moscow export Ukrainian grain from Russian-occupied Crimea, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said yesterday.

The vessel, which it did not identify, was travelling under the flag of a central African country and repeatedly docked at the Crimean sea port of Sevastopol to pick up "looted" agricultural products in 2023-24, the SBU said.

Russian forces occupied swathes of Ukraine's southern agricultural regions in the first year of its invasion in 2022 and Kyiv has accused Russia of stealing and destroying its grain.

The SBU said the captain and 12 crew members helped Russia export Ukrainian grain taken from the occupied south to the Middle East for sale on behalf of Russia.

"The investigation is ongoing to establish all the circumstances of the crime and identify other persons involved in the illegal activity," the SBU said.

The captain, a citizen of a South Caucasus country, could face up to five years in prison for violating travel restrictions governing Ukraine's Russian-occupied territories, it said.

The Odesa region hub plays a key role in Ukraine's Black Sea exports that it has revived without Russia's assent after Moscow quit a UN-brokered deal last summer that had allowed Kyiv to export food during the war with Russia.

"The evidence is clear : invest in prevention"
PROTEST AGAINST PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES.
WE HAVE NO INCOME
COMMODITIES PRICES INCREASE DAY BY DAY
W.B. GOVT. SPEAK TO NOT.
-S.K.D. CONG

Supporters and activists of the Congress party block a road as they take part in a protest against the recent price hikes of essential commodities, in Kolkata, India yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

ARCTIC CROSSING

Melting ice no guarantee of smooth sailing: study

AFP, *Paris*

Melting sea ice in the fast-warming Arctic Ocean is not making it easier for sailors to navigate a legendary shortcut between Europe and Asia despite popular belief, scientists said Thursday.

To the contrary, climate change was causing thicker, more hazardous ice to choke the fabled "northwest passage" long-sought by navigators seeking a faster route from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans.

Considered virtually impassable a century ago, a growing number of ships have been sailing this remote seaway north of Canada as the thawing of the polar ice promised new opportunities for trade and exploration.

But a new study challenges "the increasingly common belief" that the northwest passage could become a viable alternative shipping route as warming temperatures cause an overall decline in Arctic sea ice.

> **"Remember -- the biggest cost and the greatest risk will be if Russia wins in Ukraine. We cannot let that happen."**
>
> Nato's outgoing Secretary General **Jens Stoltenberg** tells world leaders at the annual summit

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BABE (F) - 632/ NAVCOM / 2024-2025 11 July 2024

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

01	Procuring Entity Name	Khulna Shipyard Limited, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna
02	Invitation For	Various type of Navigation and Communication Items
03	Invitation Reference No.	BABE (F) - 632/ NAVCOM/ 2024-2025 DATE: 11 JULY 2024
04	Procuring Method	Open Tender (Two Envelop System)
05	Budget & Source of Funds	Own Finance
06	Tender Last Selling Date	30 July 2024
07	Tender Closing Date & Time	Date: 31 July 2024 Time: 11:15am
08	Tender Opening Date & Time	Date: 31 July 2024 Time: 11:30am
09	Name & Address of the Office for Selling of Tender Documents: (1) Cash Section, Khulna Shipyard Ltd. Bangladesh Navy, Khulna. (2) Naval Store Sub Depot, Khilkhet Nama Para, Khilkhet, Dhaka.	
	Receiving & Opening Tender	Khulna Shipyard Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna
	(Tenderer's and their Authorized Representatives are allowed to attend)	
10	Price of Tender Document	Tender set Tk. 5,000.00 (Tk. Five Thousand) Non-refundable
11	Contact Details of Official	Mob: +8801674900715 Email: oiccomf.ksy@gmail.com
12	Special Instructions	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all or any Tenders prior to acceptance without showing any reason.

GD-44
Manager Admin

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Make central bank fully independent

Absence of autonomy has proven disastrous

It is heartening to see the government acknowledge the importance of having an independent central bank. Reportedly, the authorities are set to amend the Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972 to supposedly align it with global best practices and give it more autonomy. The development comes at a time when the economy is going through one of the worst downturns in recent memory, with inflation continuing to break new records. As experts have pointed out, failed government policies have been a major factor for the runaway inflation and other economic problems we are currently experiencing. And the role of government-controlled Bangladesh Bank in this debacle is particularly notable.

It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that many of our problems could have been avoided or better addressed if we had an independent and courageous central bank. The government-imposed interest-rate caps on both the lending and deposit rates—at 9 and 6 percent—is a perfect example of this. Perhaps a more independent central bank would have realised—and indeed listened to experts—that this was a flawed policy that would only end up fuelling inflation. The decision to artificially inflate the value of the taka was another disaster that, too, could have been avoided.

Even before the recent economic crisis began, the unchecked "looting" of our banking sector—under political patronage—had damaged our economy beyond comprehension. Those cracks are widening today as the government, including the central bank, fails to curb default loans with the policies for defaulters continuing to be relaxed. The government's decision to provide continuous loan rescheduling facilities and interest rate waivers to loan defaulters has not been beneficial whatsoever. Therefore, we hope the Bangladesh Bank is given autonomy to pursue stricter policies with regard to wilful defaulters, without political interventions.

In its technical assistance report regarding the Bangladesh Bank, the IMF said that the bank "order needs to be substantially amended so that price stability is the overriding objective of the new monetary policy regime, and governance arrangements are aligned accordingly." We cannot agree more. What's concerning, however, is that a provision of the order called for establishing a council comprising finance and commerce ministers, the bank governor, and others. This will ultimately constrain the bank's actions in times of pressure.

Therefore, while the amendment initiative may sound good, its success in terms of making prudent economic decisions will be determined by the degree of autonomy ultimately granted to the central bank. Previously, despite talks of providing it with autonomy, we have seen the government do the exact opposite. Hence, we hope the amendment is not simply an eyewash amid pressure for reforms. It must be able to address longstanding concerns about the bank's function and mandate. An expert-driven Bangladesh Bank that protects the nation's best interests is the need of the hour.

DSCC must respect court order

Ensuring rehabilitation of Harijan families facing eviction is vital

We are troubled by the recent actions of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and a ward councillor at the Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Bangshal that seem to defy a court order preventing eviction of the Harijan families who reside there. According to media reports, despite the High Court stay order on eviction, the DSCC made moves in contravention of it while local councillor MD Awal Hossain and his men antagonised colony residents, leading to a clash that left 16 injured.

It may be recalled that the DSCC, on June 10, had tried to evict several Harijan families saying they are "illegal residents" as they no longer work for the corporation. Later, on June 13, the HC issued a one-month status quo on eviction proceedings and ordered the DSCC to arrange accommodation for the affected residents. The DSCC, then, filed a leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division, challenging the order. However, with the appeal pending and the status quo still in force, the DSCC on July 9 sent letters to its chief executive officer and the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police for conducting eviction proceedings and deployment of police force.

Then, on Wednesday, DSCC Executive Magistrate Md Moniruzzaman went to the colony apparently to check the utility problems of a new building there, as reported by this daily. At the same time, the councillor and his men entered the colony seemingly to help DSCC employees, who got allotment of flats at the new building, to move in. It triggered colony residents who resisted them leading to the clash. All this is quite alarming.

The HC's June 13 order clearly directs the DSCC to make alternative living arrangements for the Harijan families facing eviction. These people have been living there for generations and have no other place to go. Why then did the DSCC find it urgent to install the new flat allottees, ignoring the court order on eviction and rehabilitation? Furthermore, who authorised the councillor and his men to enter colony? While we hail the Appellate Division's direction on Thursday to extend the status quo until further order, whether the DSCC can be trusted to follow the new ruling remains a question. We urge the DSCC and all relevant officials to respect court directives. Any eviction in the future must be preceded by proper rehabilitation of the affected.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Birthday of Pablo Neruda

On this day in 1904, Chilean poet, diplomat, politician and the winner of the 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature, Pablo Neruda, was born.

The quota question

In comments shared with **The Daily Star***, three experts shed light on the legal, political and policy-related arguments about the existing quota system in Bangladesh's civil service.*

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Quota should exist for the marginalised only

Ali Imam Majumder
is a former cabinet secretary.

ALI IMAM MAJUMDER

When the protests for quota reform first began in 2018, the government agreed to negotiate with the students. However, there was a sudden derailment in how the matter was proceeding.

As I have stated before, I am personally against the quota system; I believe it should only exist for marginalised groups. If the percentage of those coming through the quota system is that significant, many meritorious students will be deprived of opportunities. It is not merely the BCS exams; the quota system determines the recruitment of teachers, doctors and various other jobs. It has an impact on many facets of life, and students are naturally struggling to accept this system which can harm them directly. Overall, this system will disadvantage many.

The matter was in the government's hands in 1972, after Bangladesh had gained independence. It was Bangabandhu who had introduced the quota system for freedom fighters in 1972, and primarily for the BCS exams. The system was mostly for freedom fighters who would get jobs based on a 100-mark oral examination. We are now learning from different ministers of state that the number of freedom fighters at present, compared to that during 1971-1972, has tripled. There is, of course, a responsibility we bear for the freedom fighters. However, it is debatable whether these benefits should extend to their descendants, and if so, for how many generations.

Many jobs remain inaccessible to many individuals because of the quota system; it is even said that if certain jobs designated for individuals under the quota system remained unoccupied, they would stay vacant. The intelligent students are falling into hopelessness. This is only natural.

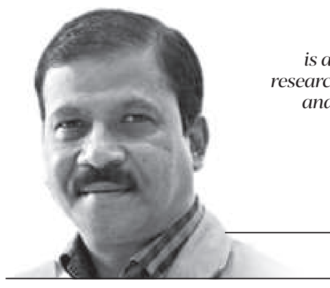
In my own experience, I have seen that those who come through the quota system come through a kind of uneven competition, and they often fall behind those who have come through on their own merit. The number of those certified as freedom fighters is less than three lakh and there is still some uncertainty regarding the number. At the end of 1971, we knew the number to be around one lakh, and over the years, this has been gradually increasing. Even if we assume the number is currently three lakh, and then we further assume there are five people in each family, that means 15 lakh people are receiving opportunities that the rest of the 17 crore people are not. In reality, this has disparaged freedom fighters, diminishing their immense role in our liberation.

In the National Integrity Strategy 2012, the government was committed to rationalise the quota system, and meritorious students would also receive opportunities. However, no concession was reached. Our job sector in general is not ideal. The government continues to be one of the largest recruiters, and our private sector has not developed to that extent where jobs can be made available for a significant portion of the population.

We need to remember that though the blockades may inconvenience many segments of the population, it is not unique to the quota reform movement, with our roads becoming blocked even with the Gonojagoron Moncho or even Pahela Baishakh celebrations.

Quota reform should not be an issue. We don't want the respect owed to freedom fighters to diminish in any way, and this matter threatens to do so. I would hope that the Appellate Division looks into this.

Govt has a duty to resolve the quota debate



Dr Asif Nazrul
is a professor of law and researcher on constitutional and environmental laws.

ASIF NAZRUL

Equality of opportunity in public employment is a fundamental principle of state policy in the Constitution of Bangladesh. Article 29 (3), however, allows the state to make special provisions, such as reserving quota for "backward" sections of the citizens, in public employment. But these provisions cannot be made perpetual; they may be retained only until securing "adequate representation" of those sections. The current dispute on quota in public service centres mostly around the "freedom fighters' quota" (in practice, freedom fighters' generations' quota), and it should be addressed according to constitutional provisions.

Our Liberation War was a jonojuddho (people's war)—participated, assisted, helped and supported by the overwhelming majority of the population, although the list of freedom fighters comprises only those who were trained and directly engaged in the war. Can the freedom fighters be termed "backward," compared to the rest of the supporting population, among which millions lost their lives or limbs or suffered immensely in doing this? If yes, what percentage of quota do the listed freedom fighters deserve, and when can we say that their "adequate representation" is secured?

Our first government under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman partly addressed this question when the Interim Recruitment Rules were framed in September 1972, and accordingly a few hundred freedom fighters were appointed through the quota system in 1973. The freedom fighters did not have equal comfort, mindset, and preparation when they sat for the competitive exams right after the Liberation War and, accordingly, this interim provision should be considered justified. But the successive governments continued this provision without much dissent in society, until the Awami League government made a number of decisions to extend this quota and delimit merit-based appointment. Among those, the freedom fighter quota was extended first to the children of freedom fighters in 1997, and later to the grandchildren of the freedom fighters in 2011. In addition, it was decided that if the quota cannot be filled up by qualified freedom fighters, it would be kept vacant and would not be filled up from the merit lists.

In response to a massive movement against these provisions for the freedom fighters' descendants, the government in 2018 hastily scrapped the quota system, although the demand then was for reform, not abolition. The High Court has very recently set aside the government circular of abolishing the quota system for freedom fighters, and this order has been suspended only for one month by the Appellate Division, pending disposal of the case which may take an uncertain period of time given the backlog of cases there. The student protesters, however, have demanded that this issue be resolved by the government, and based on that they have decided to continue their movement for the quota system reform.

I believe the government has at least one thing to do now. The government still has the option to issue a new circular reforming the quota system abolished in 2018. The reformed system, for example, can keep a quota for the generations only of physically disabled or martyred freedom fighters (as a disadvantaged group of citizens), physically disabled persons and small ethnic groups, which I believe should not exceed 15 percent in total. Nothing can bar the government from amending its policy decision if it does not contradict with the constitution.

We must remember that the quota in the constitutional scheme is not a "reward." It is a special provision to secure equality among the unequal, but not for creating more inequality.

A system need not be perpetual

Justice M A Matin
is a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

M A MATIN

Just because the quota system in government service has historically been in place, does not necessarily mean it cannot be discontinued. When the quota system was initially implemented, it was necessary at that time, but I believe it should be removed now. The court should consider what is logical and best for the people. The constitution always advocates for equality of rights, a principle that is universal in most countries. Regarding the promotion of marginalised groups, we can take necessary actions in times of need, which is why the quota system was established initially.

However, just because a system was implemented once, does not mean it must be perpetual. Honouring freedom fighters should not come at the cost of merit. This will not be beneficial for the country. It will break people's spirits.

When we were working on the quota, we requested for a list of freedom fighters, but the list was not properly provided. Since then, the list has been frequently updated. That leads to the question: is the current list complete and valid?

We know that some individuals have forged freedom fighter certificates to claim benefits as descendants of freedom fighters. When hard-working and meritorious people see such individuals getting appointed and receiving benefits and priority over them, it destroys their confidence and leads to the waste of their merit. The government needs to ensure the best service to the people. If the quota system remains forever, we will not get the best people in the government service; sometimes, there may be underqualified people filling positions that are more deserved by meritorious individuals. A person who feels undervalued for their merit will harbour resentment towards the system.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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For every step forward, must we take many steps back?

Amreeta Lethe
is a writer and translator, and sub-editor at Star Books and Literature.

AMREETA LETHE

On June 26, it was reported that the much-debated Sharifa's story would be removed from the Class 7 history and social science textbook. Earlier this year, fundamentalist and reactionary figures drummed up public sentiment against the inclusion of "The Story of Sharifa" in the NCTB curriculum and a probe committee consisting of only cisgendered men was formed, and following its recommendation, the education ministry announced the retraction of the passage in June.

This long battle over Sharifa's story, fought over the course of half a year, led to a ruling in favour of the reactionary camp who strong-armed the authorities with their vehement opposition. However, perhaps this framing of our ministries and public officials as powerless to do anything but concede to majoritarian demands lets them off the hook too easily. It fails to hold them accountable for their continued inability to anticipate and prepare for what should, by now, be foreseeable consequences of their half-baked attempts at development, diversity, and inclusion. After all, this trend of brandishing new projects and policies with the stated claim of supporting minorities, only to fail to uphold the promises—either as a result of external public pressure or internal structural shortcomings—has been repeated so often it is now a too-predictable pattern.

In the case of gender diverse rights, this performative back-and-forth far precedes Sharifa's tale. Among the most egregious and commonly cited instances date back to 2014-15, when the Ministry of Social Welfare had offered employment for members of the hijra community, only to then issue a memorandum noting that the authenticity of the applicants' gender identities would need to be determined through medical examinations. This betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding and also a woeful lack of rapport with the community, as it wrongfully endorsed the popular misconception that the hijra community only comprises intersex individuals (even this understanding is limited, as it only takes genital ambiguity into account). In actuality, the label hijra acts as both a gender and cultural marker, and the community is composed of individuals belonging to a diverse range of identities—primarily transgender women and intersex people.

Hinging on this misconception, all 12 selected applicants, who identified as hijra, were subjected to check-ups that invaded their privacy—they were strip-searched, inappropriately touched by non-professionals, and photographed when found to have "male" genitalia. Not only were they rejected from a job opportunity marked out for them, they were also severely humiliated when their information leaked to the media. Had it not been for the evident incompetence, such spectacular failure would make one think that the very premise of the project was malicious from the start.

Ten years on, we still seem to lack the community involvement and support infrastructure needed to ensure these initiatives truly help the people they are supposed to without adding to their miseries.

"The Story of Sharifa" could have been a step in the right direction. It had the potential to promote diverse perspectives among young learners, particularly at an age when many go through puberty and form a sense of their own identity. With numerous gender diverse individuals recounting that some of the earliest and harshest discrimination they faced had been at school, Sharifa's story could have taught students to be compassionate toward differences, effectively rooting out the sort of bullying that is perpetuated on the basis of non-normative gender expression.

But perhaps that is too generous and optimistic a consideration of what the story alone could have achieved if it existed in a vacuum. The truth is that it doesn't.

Throughout our own school lives, we have heard stories of how chapters teaching reproductive health (the closest thing we had to sex education) would routinely be left out of the syllabus, glued, stapled shut, or torn out altogether because teachers did not know how to broach the taboo topic. Without any supporting infrastructure in place to supplement the otherwise performative inclusion of "The Story of Sharifa" in textbooks, who's to say that, even in the absence of publicly reactionary forces, we would not have wound up in the exact same situation again—with pages glued, stapled, torn out, or otherwise excluded? The onus of completely altering the societal perception of an entire community and rooting out centuries of systemic prejudice cannot fall on a single textbook entry.

FILE VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

This was a measure that should have been preceded by extensive gender-sensitivity training and community engagement, not only of those involved with the creation of the textbook chapter, but also and especially of the educators who would be teaching it in classrooms nationwide. Of course, such failures only reveal the intersectional nature of these issues, as the lack of investment in teachers' training across schools in Bangladesh becomes evident long before one can even reach a part of the curriculum as miniscule as one social science textbook entry.

Another particularly appalling example of the state's lack of commitment to ensuring even the most fundamental rights for the gender diverse community is the nebulous language in state policies and projects. Over the past decade or so, in the years since the hijra community received official recognition in 2013, the terms "hijra", "transgender", and "third gender" have been used interchangeably without attempts being made to clearly, if at all, define which groups of people each of these labels refers to. Time and again, this has led to disastrous misconstruals such as the social welfare ministry's debacle, conflict over who is a "real" or "fake" hijra, and the incitement of anti-trans movements. With terms such as "third gender" also in use, including in "The Story of Sharifa", we are repeatedly forced to contend with their implicit but invariably patriarchal hierarchies—if there is a "third" gender, then by default, are men the first and women the second?

In 2022, during the recording of the national census, all gender diverse people (trans men and women, non-binary individuals, intersex people, hijra, etc.) were lumped together under "hijra". Since many did not feel comfortable identifying with the category on account of its sociocultural implications, we were left with a record of only 12,000 gender diverse people in all of Bangladesh—around 0.01 percent of the population—as opposed to community estimates ranging in the 1-2 lakhs. The situation was also exacerbated by accounts of census workers refusing to log anyone who did not "appear hijra", once again revealing the desperate need for sensitivity training. How can we begin to work for a community so relegated to the margins if we can't even render a decent estimate of the number of people in it?

Because it is so tragically commonplace for the trans and hijra communities in Bangladesh to be tokenised and used for political, corporate, and development sector clout, they are no strangers to fair-weather allies. Time and again, we are forced to see our towering institutions, with all the necessary resources at their disposal, stagger and stumble their way into half-hearted, tokenistic gestures that can be recalled and apologised for tenfold the moment a meme or hashtag goes viral. This lack of foresight continues to be far more damaging to the communities they seek to help than if they had not been attempted at all. Because these institutions are largely untouchable, the brunt of public wrath and mob violence falls upon those more accessible and vulnerable—the marginalised community itself; not to mention, reactionary forces see any and all concessions as an absolute moral win.

In a landscape replete with odd addendums and outright renunciations, what message does it send when a state and its ministries fail to stand their ground against majoritarian threats? And what message does it send our students, at whom the story and textbook are aimed—that instead of forging empathy, tolerance, and solidarity, they should approach even the slightest hints of difference or deviation from the norm as a personal affront to their own beliefs? That anyone they do not agree with can simply be bullied into submission?

In truth, there can be no progress if we keep failing to recognise the need for comprehensive development measures, and the importance of developing the political will and spine to see them through. "The Story of Sharifa" is just one instance in a dishearteningly long line of such measures, which only serve to highlight precisely why they do not work.

We must let our underserved communities discuss and dictate the terms of their own liberation, rather than speaking for (and over) them as if we know what is best for them; it has become rather evident that we do not let them do so. The very least we owe them is to not compromise on their behalf.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The show trial of Arundhati Roy

Shashi Tharoor,
an MP of the Indian National Congress, was re-elected to the Lok Sabha for a fourth successive term, representing Thiruvananthapuram.

SHASHI THAROOR

Last month, the lieutenant governor of Delhi granted the police permission to prosecute Indian activist and prize-winning author Arundhati Roy under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Back in 2010, Roy said that Kashmir—which was experiencing unrest at the time—is not "an integral part of India." Accusations of sedition quickly followed, but it is only now that she will face prosecution.

Advocating secession is illegal in most countries, and India is no exception. In fact, secession is a particularly fraught topic in India, because the wounds from its previous partition, carried out by the departing British in 1947, still have not healed.

Against this backdrop, Roy's statement was both provocative and unwise. It was also wrong: there is overwhelming historical evidence showing that Kashmir has long been an integral part of India. To claim otherwise suggests either ignorance or innocence, neither of which is desirable when making controversial pronouncements on sensitive topics. As much as I admire Roy as a person and a writer, I do not always rate her political views and judgements highly, and this was a case in point.

Roy defended herself against accusations of disloyalty to her country. "What I say comes from love and pride," she wrote at the time. "Pity the nation that has to silence its writers for speaking their minds." Whether or not one finds her motivations convincing, prosecuting her for comments 14 years after she made them smacks of overkill.

Even in 2010, prosecution seemed excessive—at least to the Indian National Congress, which was then the government party. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), then in opposition, demanded that Roy be prosecuted, the central government (of which I was a minister) was engaged in a peace-and-reconciliation dialogue aimed at restoring normalcy in Kashmir; putting Roy on trial would be a needless distraction.

The prosecution and likely conviction of a popular and respected author like Arundhati Roy, who is well-regarded in the West and Japan as well, will probably backfire on the BJP government. FILE PHOTO: **AFP**

The uproar over Roy's remarks died down soon enough. And while a magistrate's court took note of her statement and registered a case against her, it did not pursue the matter further. The idea was that merely registering a sedition charge would be enough to convey the state's disapproval and convince an outspoken author not to repeat such remarks.

But, today, political calculations have changed. The BJP is in power, and it has a much lower tolerance for dissent than the Congress-led government did. Following an election in which it lost its majority in the lower house of India's parliament, the BJP appears determined to demonstrate that it has no plans to ease up.

By prosecuting Roy under the UAPA, which was designed to combat terrorism—rather than India's colonial-era sedition law, which the Supreme Court put on hold in 2022—the state can bypass the statute of limitations. It seems to be going with Section 13 of the law, according to which whoever "advocates, abets, advises, or incites the commission of any unlawful activity" may face up to seven years in prison, along with a possible fine.

Applying this prohibition to Roy's comment is excessive, to say the least. A few ill-chosen words 14 years ago pose no security threat whatsoever, and seeking to punish the speaker demonstrates a level of pettiness unworthy of a democratic government. Moreover, citing national security concerns—and invoking anti-terror laws—to suppress dissent will lower the bar for free speech across India.

Perhaps we should not be surprised. This is, after all, the same government that calls disagreement "anti-national" and urges its critics to "go to Pakistan," as if there is no room for their views in India. And it was the same government that in 2019 unilaterally divided Jammu and Kashmir—India's only Muslim-majority state—and reduced its status from state to union territory, directly administered by the federal government.

The BJP regularly calls India "the mother of democracy" (without so much as a nod to the Greeks). By prosecuting Roy, however, its government has discarded the well-established principle, on which Mahatma Gandhi insisted, that Indians may say whatever they wish against the government so long as they do not advocate violence.

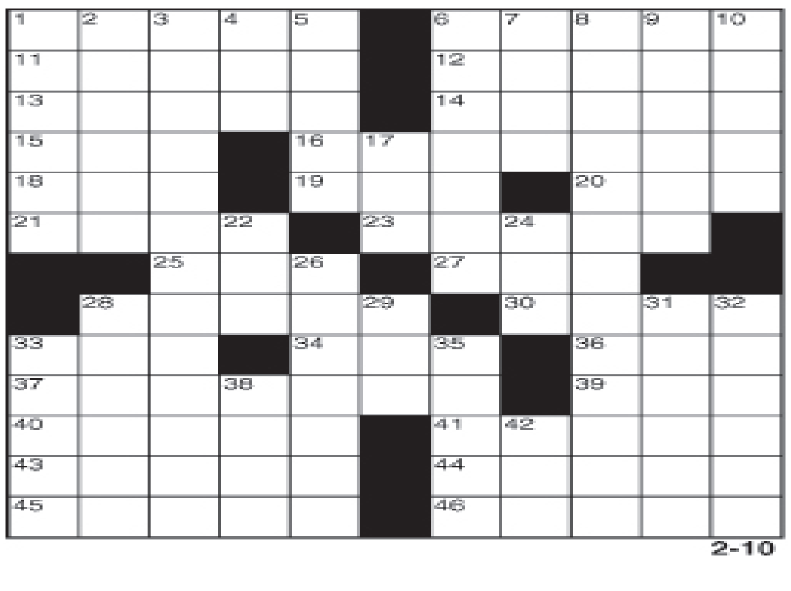
Roy's case risks showcasing all the most unattractive features of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. The BJP wants to send a tough message to dissenters within India: conform or else. But the prosecution and likely conviction of a popular, respected, charismatic author, who is well-regarded in the West and Japan as well, will probably backfire and become more fodder for those who have already downgraded India to an "electoral autocracy" and lowered its press freedom ranking.

Even if Roy is imprisoned only briefly, the images of her being led away will be seared into the world's conscience, much to India's—and Modi's—detriment. After all, as Charles de Gaulle put it, an effective ruler "does not arrest Voltaire." While Roy sits in a prison cell, Modi will be thrown in the global doghouse. It is not too late to wise up and call off the prosecution.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Cellist Casals
6 Steel rod in concrete
11 Dined at home
12 "Skyfall" singer
13 First odd prime
14 Radials, e.g.
15 Singer Waits
16 Try
18 Aussie bird
19 Rap's — Nas X
20 High times
21 Cincinnati team
23 Salon request
25 Phone download
27 1949 film noir classic
28 Takes to the sky
30 Capital on a fjord
33 Decimal base
34 Alias letters
36 Crone
37 Monogram unit
39 Owned by us
40 Ties down
41 Baseball manager Joe
43 Bert's buddy
44 Nay voters
45 Grating sounds
46 Valentine's gift

DOWN
1 Glib talk
2 Not out
3 Bulbs for cooks
4 Fiction
5 "Love Story" actor
6 Upset
7 TV's Falco
8 Summer wear
9 City of Syria
10 Takes a breather
17 Pewter component
22 Massage setting
24 Court
26 Commends
28 Lady of Spain
29 Reggae forerunner
31 Hugh of "House"
32 Fiona, for one
33 Oven feature
35 Church sight
38 Stumble
42 Lennon's love



2-10

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

A	L	E	C	■	■	S	T	R	I	P
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A	M	O	R	■	R	A	N	G	E	R
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S	P	R	E	E	S	■	■	S	I	R
C	O	A	S	T	■	C	O	L	O	R
A	G	T	■	■	G	O	N	E	R	S
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■	■	■	Y	U	L	E	T	I	D	E
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LAW OPINION

The Bangladesh ICT trial process in the British Supreme Court

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Bangladesh established the ICT to render transitional justice, a judicial process that adopts a special and distinctive approach to justice in unique conditions of a society undergoing transition from its violent past to embrace peaceful future. Each post-conflict society is unique warranting measures tailored to suit its own circumstances.

PROFESSOR M RAFIQUL ISLAM

The British Supreme Court (SC) in *Mueen-Uddin v Secretary of State for the Home Department* decided a libel case on 20 June 2024. Mueen-Uddin, a Bangladeshi, has been living in the UK as a citizen. In 1971, he was a member of Islami Chatra Sangha, the student wing of Jammat-e-Islam that politically and violently opposed the independence of Bangladesh. He was alleged to be the head of a para-militia Al-Badar, responsible for the killings of intellectuals on 14 December 1971 immediately before the liberation of Bangladesh (The New York Times, 3 January 1972). Immediately after its liberation on 16 December 1971, Bangladesh announced on 24 December 1971 that the trials of alleged 1971 war crim inals, both civilians and military, would be held (The New York Times, 27 December 1971). Mueen-Uddin left Bangladesh in December 1971 (SC para 12). The ICT tried him in absentia and convicted, which was not appealed to the Bangladesh Supreme Court. In granting the appeal of Mueen-Uddin, the SC invoked a collateral ground that the ICT trial process that convicted Mueen-Uddin was unfair and inconsistent with 'international standard' (SC para 108).

Bangladesh established the ICT to render transitional justice, a judicial process that adopts a special and distinctive approach to justice in unique conditions of a society undergoing transition from its violent past to embrace peaceful future. Each post-conflict society is unique warranting measures tailored to suit its own circumstances. There are qualitative differences in the legal definition and constituent elements of ordinary crimes like murder, and international law recognised war crimes, crimes of genocide, and crimes against humanity. That 'the accused is innocent until proven guilty' is widely followed in national criminal law dealing with ordinary crimes. Does such a common procedural standard exist in trials of international crimes? Prior to seeking an answer, addressing some pertinent narratives of the SC judgment is in order.

The *International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973* of Bangladesh was drafted by world-renowned international criminal law experts who drew heavily from the Nuremberg Charter, judgments, and principles of 1950 to make the Act consistent with then-existing international criminal law standards. That the ICT is not an 'international' tribunal (SC para13) appears to be a misreading as the Act title clearly qualifies the *crimes*, not the *tribunal*, as 'international'. The ICT is domestic and permissible under international criminal law. For an international or hybrid tribunal, the Bangladesh Prime Minister on 27 January 2009 requested, through the UN Coordinator in Dhaka, for the UN help in holding the trial (The Daily Star, Dhaka, 28 January 2009) which did not eventuate due to the strong lobby by Pakistan backed by its allies, the US, France, China, and Muslim and African countries. The polarised UN politics and lobbying tactics of the powerful prioritised impunity over accountability, preventing the UN from supporting the Bangladesh call. What palatable option did Bangladesh have to end impunity and restore justice other than to go ahead all by itself?

The SC mentions Article 47A of the Bangladesh Constitution as barring any challenge against the ICT proceedings (para 13). Such statutory protection to the law establishing special international crimes tribunals is common. Examples include—Nuremberg Charter (Arts 3, 26-29), ICTY (Art 23), ICTR (Art 22), Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL) (Art 10), Regulation of the East Timor Panels (Art 17), Law of the Cambodian ECCC (Art 40new). International crimes and their perpetrators are precluded from the scope of any statutory relief, amnesty, and limitation available to the ordinary citizens, because no derogation from the *jus cogens* prohibition of these crimes is permissible.

The ICT trial of Mueen-Uddin happened in absentia as he opted not to appear for fear of conviction. The Bangladesh criminal law and the 1973 Act permit trials in absentia. Trials in absentia are not necessarily tantamount to a denial of procedural due process. The ICCPR Human Rights Committee (General Comment 13) and ECHR conditionally permits trial in absentia. The Nuremberg Tribunal, Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), Cambodian ECCC Internal Rules 80(4) provide for the continuation of trials in the absence of an accused refusing or failing to be present at his/her trial. The ICTY Rule 80B and SCSL Rule 60A allow trials in absentia when the right to be present is waived by being 'at large and refuses to appear'. The ICTR ruled that an accused might waive his/her right to be present, which does not prevent the case from proceeding in his/her absence (*Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza*, ICTR-97-19-T, Defence Motion to Withdraw, 2 November 2000, para 6). The ICC allows its pretrial in absentia when the accused waives his/her right to be present or has fled or cannot be found after reasonable steps (Art 61(2)). The ICT held the trial in absentia after providing repeated opportunities for Mueen-Uddin to appear in the trial. Not knowing his UK contact address, the ICT had to opt for public notification through media. By not availing the opportunity to be present in the trial, he voluntarily decided not to exercise his right to be present.

'If the [ICT] conviction [of Mueen-Uddin] was the result of an unfair process, then no weight can be attached to it' (SC para 108). This is because 'the ICT rules of procedure failed to bring the law and rules into compliance with international standards' (SC para 17(1), also 21-22). Despite the existence of some past and present *ad hoc* international crimes tribunals' decisions, a consistent body of standardised procedural rules and due process to be followed in all such trials is yet to be developed. This is because each extraordinary crimes trial is different, unique, and case-specific, established sporadically as a *post-facto* pursuit of justice on one-off basis. The statutes of these trials are tailored prospectively to apply retrospectively in their respective fact situation and one statute is not necessarily worthy of adoption in another due to their dealing with dissimilar facts. This special regime of ad hoc international crimes trial procedure has received no consideration in the SC judgment.

The Nuremberg proceedings were widely regarded as procedurally inadequate. Its due process prejudged guilt with limited procedural rules for the accused. Its Charter Article 19 mandated the tribunal to follow an *expeditious and non-technical procedure, not to be bound by technical rules of evidence, and to 'admit any evidence which it deems to have the probative value'*. The prosecution introduced *ex parte* affidavits against the accused regardless of legitimate objections. The US, UK, France, and Soviet Union drafted the Charter under the London Agreement 1945, created the tribunal, appointed tribunal judges (one from each), and controlled its operation. The tribunal jurisdiction extended only to the trials of those who were from the Axis states to the exclusion of alleged war criminals from the Allied Powers. Notwithstanding these procedural inadequacies, the UN Nuremberg principles derived from the judgment constitute the guiding principles of international crimes trials.

Lessons from contemporary international crimes trials suggest no common procedural standard to be followed as they are tailored to suit the specific circumstances of a given trial and it is an evolving process. Commencing in 1993-1994, ICTY and ICTR (closed in 2015) developed, and is still developing their trial procedural rules (Rule 73bis A, B, C, D, E). Their trial processes do not allow victims' participation in the proceeding unlike the 2007 Cambodian ECCC Internal Rules 23. There is nothing in the law that prevents the ICT to develop its own procedural rules and standard as the need arises in course of conducting the trials. If other *ad hoc* international crimes tribunals can develop their procedural rules to cater for varying needs of their trials, so can the ICT. The claim that there exists a uniform international procedural standard in *ad hoc* international crimes trials that the ICT has failed in convicting Mueen-Uddin does not appear to be borne out by the fact and experience of similar trials in contemporary history.

Due process is an important 'means' of ensuring fair trial but not an 'end' in itself. Its standard is not self-defining, nor does it possess any intrinsic value independent of the trial to which it relates. Being a 'means' of fair trial, due process, however passionately stressed, must be understood to facilitate, not to evade or hinder, the 'end' of justice, particularly in trials of international crimes. If justice to the victims is compromised, whose interest does the procedural standard plead for? Illustrative of such miscarriage of justice is the trial of Ieng Sary, who played an important leadership role as the Khmer Rouge foreign minister and standing committee member. The chronic procrastinating trial process prevented the Cambodian ECCC to complete investigation and commence trial before his death in 2013 after over seven years of preparation for his trial. Since his charges were dropped by death, he died as 'innocent'. But the complex trial process preceding his death perpetually deprived his victims of the right to justice. Indeed, the procedural due process should not be the monopoly of the accused; the victims too are entitled to it.

Pertinently, the UK SC itself did not consider (a) the ICT procedural rules, (b) the ICT proceedings followed in the Mueen-Uddin case, and (c) any available positive views on the ICT process. Instead, the SC cited some negative opinions and assertions by individuals, NGOs, and UN body, which suffer from questionable neutrality, credibility crisis, and partisanism. These entities are not judicial bodies, nor are their statements judicial precedents or judicially endorsed record of facts worthy of adoption as admissible evidence. It is difficult to fathom how these subjective statements without testing their probative value can constitute objective evidence in a court of law.

Critics of the ICT process, with their Anglo-American legal background, purport to contemplate their 'procedural standard' as an impartial due process valid worldwide. The portrayal of the ICT trial process as incapable of delivering fair trial for want of compliance with the so-called 'international standard' is grossly exaggerated by an orientalist superiority complex that hails a preconceived trial standard as universal to be followed by all national trials. These views mirror the geopolitical history of international law overwhelmingly dominated by Eurocentrism within which this 'international standard' operates, encapsulating European imperial values, ideals, narratives, vocabularies, and perspectives as its foundation, superimposed by colonial patronage.

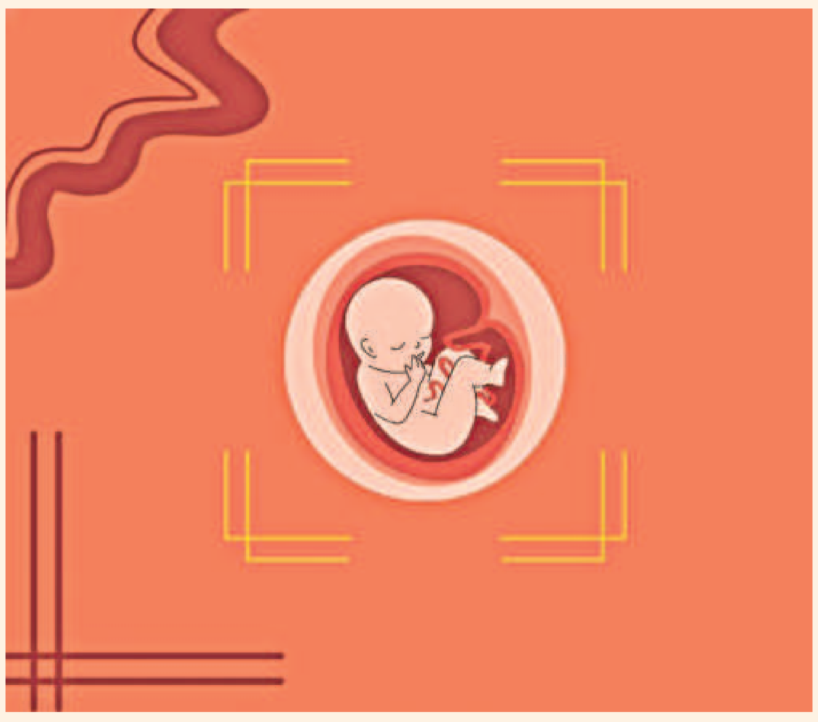
If the alleged procedural inadequacies undermine the validity of the ICT process and conviction, then the validity of all *ad hoc* international and hybrid tribunals from Nuremberg to Cambodia is open to question for their respective procedural limitations and failings. The history of their diverse trial processes rebuts any assertion that procedural inadequacy justifies nullifying or circumventing the trial and conviction for falling short of the supposed 'international standard'.

Grave atrocity crimes are committed predominantly in non-western countries, which do not contemplate the Eurocentric trial process as appropriate to administer justice due to their dissimilar legal values, traditions, and expectations. It is naïve to think that non-western countries would blanketly apply the Eurocentric trial process despite its inconsistency with the local needs and uniqueness, which is precisely reflected in the ICT trial process.

The writer is Emeritus Professor of Law, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

LAW LETTER

Legal implications of prenatal injuries



Prenatal injury refers to such injury that occurs before birth while the fetus develops inside the womb of a mother. Previously, there was a trend of considering an unborn child part of the mother and it was only the mother who could claim compensation for injuries caused to a fetus. Over time, many jurisdictions have crafted scopes for both tortious and criminal liabilities to be claimed by a child for prenatal injuries.

Bonbrest v *Kotz* (1946) is an early decision in this context in the USA. In this case, the district cour of Columbia, recognised the standing of a child to bring forth a lawsuit for injuries sustained thereby while in the womb. The *Bonbrest* judgement was later relied on in several other cases.

The UK provides a valuable example of providing legal protection to an unborn child through the enactment of the Congenital Disabilities (civil liability) Act 1976. This Act allows for actions not only on the grounds of injury sustained by an unborn child but also on grounds of an occurrence which potentially affected either parent of the child to have a healthy child. Tortious liabilities on the ground of prenatal injury have also evolved to some extent in our neighboring country, India.

According to section 316 of the Penal Code 1860, whoever causes death of a quick unborn child shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to 10 years and/or shall be liable to fine. The circumstances of causing such death ought to be such that would otherwise constitute the offence of culpable homicide. Thus, our country provides for criminal liability in case of the death of an unborn child. However, tortious liabilities for injuries to an unborn child still remain an underdeveloped issue here. As a result, cases related to prenatal injuries are rather non-existent in our country. Indeed, prenatal injuries are yet another under addressed area that remind us of the state of tort law within the legal system of Bangladesh and why it requires our attention.

Umme Habiba
Law student,
University of Chittagong.

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DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 12, 2024, ASHAR 28, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon Semifinal
Live from 6:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 1
England vs West Indies 1st Test, Day 3
Live from 4:00 pm

Super-sub Watkins and positive England turn up

- England have now reached the final in two of their four major tournaments under Gareth Southgate (also Euro 2020).
- Ollie Watkins' winner at 89:59 was the latest winning goal scored in the semifinal at the UEFA European Championship/World Cup (excluding extra time). It was also England's only shot on target in the second half of this match.
- England are the first side in European Championship history to reach the final despite trailing in both the quarter-final and semi-final en route.
- Netherlands have now been eliminated from seven semifinal matches at major tournaments (World Cup/Euros), the second-most of any European nation, after Germany (8).
- Xavi Simons' seventh-minute strike was the earliest goal scored in a European Championship semifinal since Alan Shearer against Germany in 1996 (third minute). At 21 years and 80 days, Simons also became the youngest player to score for the Netherlands in the knockout stages of a major tournament (World Cup/Euros).
- Harry Kane's equaliser for England was his sixth goal in the knockout stages of the European Championship, more than any other player in the competition's history.

AGENCIES

Ollie Watkins' 90th-minute winner in England's 2-1 win over the Netherlands in the Euro 2024 semifinal in Dortmund on Thursday night was not only a perfect example of a typical striker's finish, but it also took a huge burden off coach Gareth Southgate as his team was finally able to deliver a much-craved positive performance in the tournament.

It was an incredible finish from Watkins, who came in as a substitute for Harry Kane just ten minutes before that sweet strike, to an evening that began badly for England as Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead against the run of play in the semifinal in Dortmund.

Watkins received a pass from fellow substitute Cole Palmer, who also came on with him in the 81st minute, with his back to goal in the first minute of stoppage time, turned and fired low into the far corner to leave the Netherlands bewildered.

"I'm lost for words really," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker. "I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before, and obviously in such a special moment."

According to Watkins, he had 'manifested' the goal beforehand.

"I said to Cole that we were both going to go on the pitch and he was going to set me up, at half-time," Watkins told reporters.

"It happened, I manifested it and as soon as he turned I knew I needed to make a move. You don't get that opportunity very often so I had to be greedy, I had to take it."

However, unlike Watkins, England coach Southgate might not have manifested taking his side to consecutive European Championship finals as it has rarely been a convincing campaign from this England side.

Thursday's game was an emphatic answer after the criticism heaped on the side for a string of languid showings earlier in the tournament, and sets up a mouth-watering final against a slick-looking Spain, who beat France 2-1 in the other semifinal on Wednesday night.

England had frustrated their followers, looking pedestrian at times in the group phase as well as their knockout games. It was as if they were suffocating at times under a heavy burden of expectation.

Even though there was a contentious VAR call by German referee Felix Zwayer that allowed England to get back in the game through a Harry Kane equaliser from the spot after a brilliant Xavi Simons strike helped the Dutch take an early lead, the individual quality of their players was on full display. They had their opponents pegged back, looking dangerous every time they entered the final third. Phil Foden was exceedingly unlucky not to have England ahead at halftime with some sublime skill but had his effort cleared off the line moments before his long-range effort brushed off the crossbar.

The second period was not as dominant as fatigue set in and the Dutch enjoyed their fair share of possession.

But even then, whenever England moved menacingly forward, a goal looked on the cards.

It was almost to script that they engineered victory just before the final whistle, as Watkins emerged an unlikely hero not long after coming on.

The confidence boost cannot be underestimated, especially as an in-form opponent awaits on Sunday at the Olympiastadion.

When they needed to stand up and be counted, the real England came to the party and, after almost a month of gritty competition, the tournament has two worthy finalists.

EURO 2024 FINAL
SPAIN VS ENGLAND
July 15, Monday, 1:00 am

England debutant Jamie Smith celebrates after reaching his maiden Test half-century during Day 2 of the first Test against West Indies at Lord's yesterday. The 23-year-old wicket-keeper batter put away eight fours and two sixes for a 70-run knock that helped the hosts to take a 250-run lead after they were bundled out for 371. PHOTO: AFP

GM Zia's son to represent Bangladesh in Chess Olympiad

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Tahsin Tajwar Zia, son of deceased Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, will represent Bangladesh in the upcoming 45th Chess Olympiad after winning a tie-breaker to finish sixth in the 48th National Chess Championship at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Tahsin tied with Anata Choudhury for the sixth position with seven points each at the end of the 13-round championship.

A tie-breaker was held yesterday to decide who would finish sixth and claim the fifth and final spot in the Bangladesh team for the Chess Olympiad.

FM Tahsin defeated Ananta with black pieces in the first game and then drew the second match to secure a place in the team.

"I was not thinking about my father's demise or the opponent in the play-off, I just played the game," said the 19-year-old, who wants to represent Bangladesh in Chess Olympiads for many years just like his father.

GM Zia, who passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest during a 12th round match on July 5, finished joint fourth alongside GM Niaz Murshed with eight points each.

As per rule, GM Zia and GM Niaz would've played a tie-breaker to decide the fourth and fifth place and both would've made up the final two spots of the Bangladesh team for the Olympiad.

But after Zia's passing, the sixth place holder, his son FM Tahsin, will take his spot.

FM Tahsin and GM Zia had made headlines back in 2022 by becoming the country's first father-son duo to compete in a Chess Olympiad. After the win, Tahsin revealed how his father wanted to compete in his 18th Chess Olympiad side-by-side with his son.

"My father [Zia] wanted me to play in the Chess Olympiad alongside him just like we had done in the previous one in 2022. He is no longer with us now but I have qualified for the Chess Olympiad."

In the other tie-breaker of the day, International Master Fahad Rahman defeated GM Enamul Hossain Razib to finish as runners-up. Earlier, FM Manon Reja Neer, a 14-year-old chess prodigy, was crowned champion.

ATTACKING GAMBLE pays off for Colombia

REUTERS, *Charlotte*

Even though unusual, Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo gambled to stay on the attack against Uruguay despite going down to 10 men, and it paid off as they emerged with a 1-0 win that set up a Copa America final against Argentina

Colombia took a 1-0 lead before having right back Daniel Munoz sent off in first-half stoppage time of their semifinal in Charlotte, North Carolina on Wednesday.

Down a man for the whole of the second half, Lorenzo opted to keep two forwards on the pitch to create chances instead of sitting back and 'parking the bus'.

"One of the main topics we discuss is that we never want to be one man down. It is almost impossible to maintain performance with 10 players on the pitch," Lorenzo told reporters.

"Teams that were dominating their opponents when they were one man down were eliminated from the tournament. We really analysed that situation.

"With the formation, we only had two options of 5-4, 5-3-1 or to keep it 4-3-2 and create opportunities. We chose that one and God favoured us."

Colombia could have doubled their lead at the end when Mateus Uribe missed two chances, but Lorenzo was just relieved to get the better of Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa.

"I think that to beat Bielsa, you need to walk many miles. He is a referent coach and I really admire him as a person. It was our turn to win, that's all," he added.

Lorenzo also refused to criticise Munoz, who picked up a second yellow card after elbowing Uruguay's Manuel Ugarte.

"Daniel is feeling a bit sad because he's a lion on the pitch and once more he got a bit emotional," he said.

Colombia's victory also set a national record of 28 matches unbeaten and Lorenzo paid tribute to former boss Francisco 'Pacho' Maturana, who went 27 games without defeat.

COPA AMERICA 2024 FINAL
ARGENTINA VS COLOMBIA
July 15, Monday, 6:00 am

Italy's Jasmine Paolini reached her first Wimbledon final with a stirring fightback to beat tearful Croatian Donna Vekic 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10/8) yesterday. The world number seven had never won a main draw match at Wimbledon before this year but managed to secure a second successive Grand Slam final appearance. PHOTO: REUTERS

BKSP provides backdrop for nourishing mentality

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The calm and quiet surroundings of BKSP, the national sports institute in Savar, provided the backdrop for two different teams' preparations heading into two different kinds of objectives yesterday, with the weather making for interesting training conditions.

The U-19s under coach Naveed Nawaz started their proceedings under cloud cover but would wilt under the hot sun later on. On the other hand, Bangladesh women's team, who are set to play in the upcoming Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, went through their gears.

Under Naveed's watchful gaze and optimism, a new U-19 batch containing "some talented players" is taking shape. He had already produced a championship-winning side in his last stint, with cricketers like Shoriful Islam and Towhid Hridoy coming through.

Soon, the women's side came in for their practice game against a combined side of BKSP boys and women cricketers. Their challenges are knocking hard on the doors with Asia Cup to be shortly followed by T20 World Cup at home.

The tone for what the coaches want these players to aspire to was set from the beginning of the practice match. "Go out there and live your life," one of the coaches told the two openers, Dilara Akter and Ishma Tanjim, as they walked into the middle.

Batting disasters have been too frequent in recent months for the Tigresses. There are big leaps needed to recover the mentality that saw them win against South Africa on their soil. But more than just managing disasters, the coaches wanted a change of approach, geared towards modern T20s.

"We want them to just go out there and express themselves," head coach Hashan Tillakaratne, a World Cup winner with Sri Lanka, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The efforts to encourage them have proven to be difficult so far. They were bundled out for 73 in the first practice game on July 9 against a combined side of boys and women team's stars. Yesterday, the start was slow before Shorna Akter and Ritu Moni put some tempo to the innings with late runs as they reached 97 for five in 20 overs on a surface which proved to be on the slower side.

Most of the coaching staff believe that only knowledge can help their star players perform up to potential. However, what was important was the body language of the team. They have remained upbeat throughout their sessions. As rain swept the game away in the second innings, there was hope for brighter days.

Meanwhile, 11 of the U-19 stars had HSC exams, and thus 28 out of 39 players showed up. They went through drills in hot and humid conditions. Their coaches feel that extreme weather will breed a tough mentality, not unlike what the women's team management aims for. Both prepare for different causes, but the cradle of Bangladesh sports provides a stunning environment to focus on goals.

As rain clouds loom over BKSP, both teams remain focused on their respective missions. For the U-19s, it's about nurturing the next generation of cricket stars. For the women's side, it's about reclaiming their place among Asian elites and beyond.

With a blend of youth and experience, fueled by determination and the supportive environment at BKSP, it appears both teams are poised to tackle their challenges head-on.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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Confiscate all properties of Matiur, family

Court orders authorities

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered confiscation of all moveable and immoveable properties of former NBR official Matiur Rahman and his family members in connection with corruption allegations.

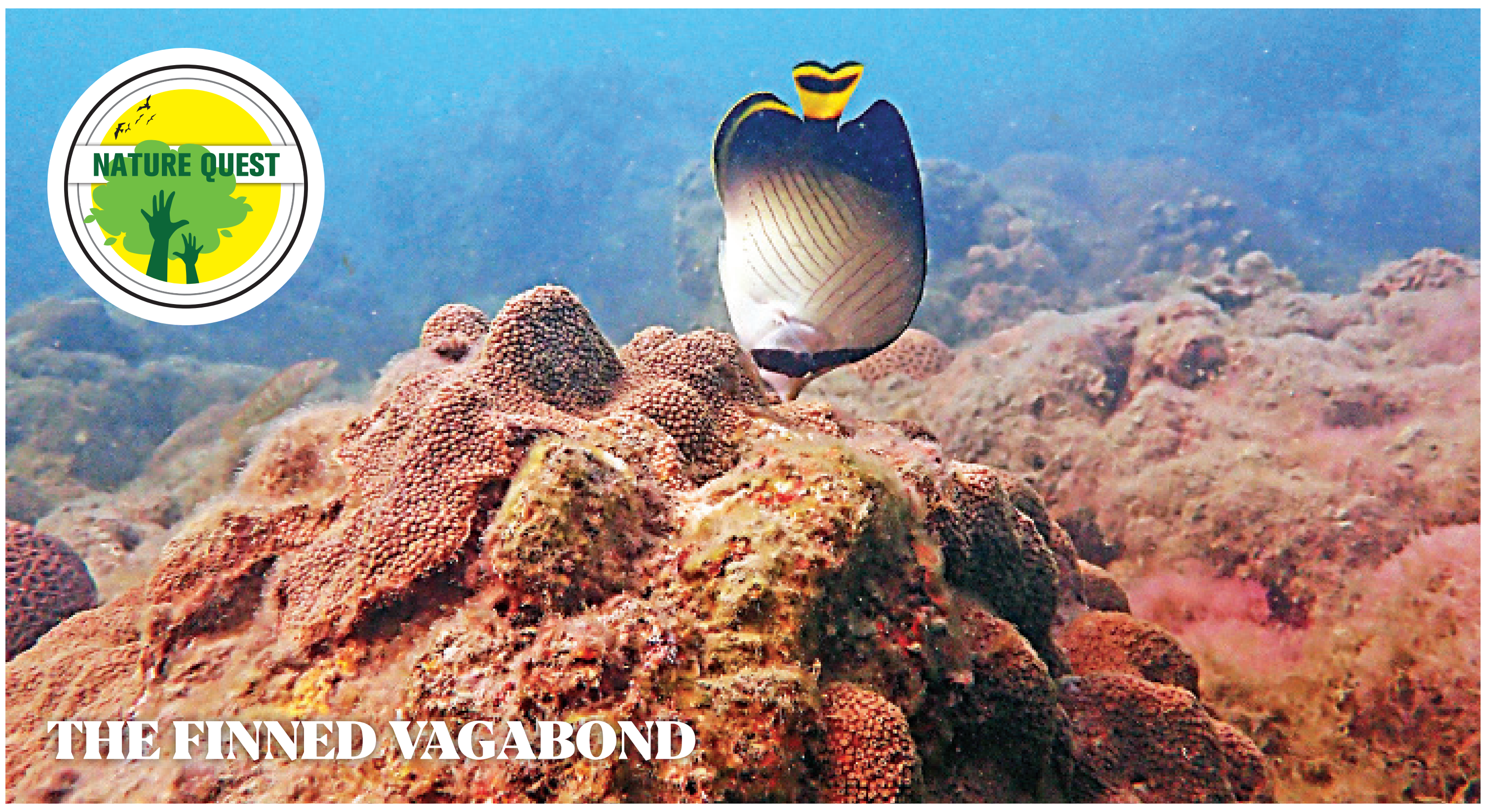
The family members are Matiur's first wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, also the chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura upazila, their son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman, and daughter Farzana Rahman Ipshita, and Matiur's second wife Shammi Akhter Shewly.

Their immoveable properties include 2,212.35 decimals of land in Dhaka's Savar, Mymensingh's Bhaluka, Gazipur, Natore's Singra and Narsingdi's Shibpur, and four flats (total 7,248 square feet) in Dhaka's Mirpur.

They have Tk 13.44 crores in 116 bank accounts. The court also ordered freeze on the 116 bank accounts.

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the orders after Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Md Anowar Hossain, also the investigation officer, filed a petition with the court in this regard.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



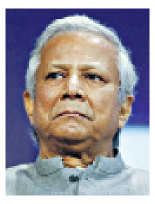
An Indian vagabond butterflyfish looking for food in the corals of the Bay of Bengal in Saint Martin's Island. Found in the Indo-West Pacific region, this particular species of butterflyfish is distinguished by the intricate crisscross pattern on its body. There are over 100 species of butterflyfish across the world's oceans and the common name is owing to the bright colours and striking patterns. These fish are boundless and can be found on practically all coral reef frameworks and in every single tropical ocean. They spend their days tirelessly pecking at corals and rock formations, much like the one in the photograph, in search of coral polyps, worms and other small invertebrates. Alarmingly, at least five species of butterfly fish have been listed as "vulnerable to extinction" due to climate change, reef degradation, and coastal development.

PHOTO: **SHARIF SARWAR**

Stop 'judicial harassment' of Prof Yunus

Says Civicus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Civicus, a global civil society alliance, and the Asian Human Rights Commission yesterday called on the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately end the ongoing "judicial harassment" of Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"Ahead of the Nobel laureate and social activist's upcoming trial this month, we call for his conviction to be quashed and all other charges dropped unconditionally," said a press release.

Prof Yunus is facing over 100 cases on allegations of corruption and labour law violations. He denied the charges, saying that the government was engaged in a judicial harassment

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

GRAFT PROBE

Ctg police recommends dismissal of ADC Kamrul

Sends report to HQ

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, *Ctg*

Chattogram Metropolitan Police has recommended dismissal of its Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Kamrul Hasan after an internal probe found him guilty of misappropriating Tk 13.31 lakh.

The money was allocated for the food bills of the arrestees kept in the lockup of the metropolitan magistrate's court.

Kamrul, who served as ADC (prosecution) and ADC (crime) of CMP, is now attached to the CMP's Public Order Management Division.

Police sources said around Tk 13.31 lakh was withdrawn as food bills from the public exchequer from 2021 to June 2023 when Kamrul worked as ADC (prosecution).

On July 9, a Chattogram court ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all movable and immovable assets, worth Tk 11.34 crore,of Kamrul and his wife following a petition filed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Palestinians in Gaza City remain trapped

Says Hamas-run health ministry amid intense Israeli assault; 50 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Residents of Gaza City were trapped in houses and bodies lay uncollected in the streets under an intense new Israeli assault yesterday, even as Washington pushed for a peace deal at talks in Egypt and Qatar.

Hamas said a massive Israeli assault on Gaza City this week could wreck efforts to finally end the offensive just as negotiations have entered the home stretch.

- Some Gaza City residents ignore order to head south
- Israeli army continues to blow up houses in Rafah
- Gaza death toll rises to 38,345

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency was headed to Cairo for more ceasefire talks. US envoy Brett McGurk was in Israel, where he met Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

Home to more than a quarter of Gaza's residents before the offensive, Gaza City was destroyed during the first weeks of fighting last year, but hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have returned to homes in the ruins. They have now once again been ordered out by the Israeli military.

The Gaza health ministry said it had reports of people trapped and others killed inside their houses in the Tel Al Hawa and Sabra districts of Gaza City, and rescuers could not reach them.

The Civil Emergency Service said it estimated that at least 30 people had been killed in the Tel Al-Hawa and Rimal areas and it could not recover bodies from the streets there.

Despite army instructions on Wednesday to residents of Gaza City that they can use two "safe routes" to head south, many residents refused to heed the order. Some posted a hashtag on social media: "We are not leaving".

"We will die but not leave to the south. We have tolerated starvation and bombs for nine months and we are ready to die as martyrs here," said Mohammad Ali, 30, reached by text message.

At least 38,345 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 50 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said Israeli forces had quit the Shejaia suburb east of Gaza after over two weeks of a new military invasion, in which dozens of people were killed and residential districts were destroyed.

At the southern edge of the enclave in Rafah near the border with Egypt, where tanks have been operating in most of the city since May, residents said the army continued to blow up houses in the western and central areas, amid fighting with Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other smaller factions.

Jubo League leader, two others sued under CSA

They 'insulted' state minister on Facebook

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

A case has been filed against Shamim Al Saiful Islam, organising secretary of Jubo League central committee, under the Cyber Security Act for allegedly insulting Mohibbur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, on Facebook.

Md Mohibullah, who identified himself as the personal assistant of the state minister, lodged the case with Barishal Cyber Tribunal on Wednesday.

Judge Md Golam Farooq ordered the officer-in-charge of Patuakhali's Mohipur Police Station to investigate and submit a report by August 29.

Mohibbur is the lawmaker of Patuakhali-4 (Kalapara and Rangabali).

Two general diaries have also been filed with Kalapara and Rangabali police stations of Patuakhali in this connection.

Two other accused in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

RE-ELECTION BID

Senators raise new doubts about Biden

AFP, *Washington*

A Democratic senator on Wednesday called on US President Joe Biden to ditch his re-election bid, capping a brutal day that saw mounting pressure from high-profile actor and donor George Clooney and party heavyweight Nancy Pelosi.

As the 81-year-old tried to show his leadership credentials at a Nato summit in Washington, domestic calls have been growing for Biden to quit following his disastrous debate performance against Republican challenger Donald Trump.

At least eight House Democrats have openly called on Biden to not seek re-election, but Peter Welch became the first in the Senate to explicitly do so as concerns rise over his age and fitness.

"For the good of the country, I'm calling on President Biden to withdraw from the race," the Vermont senator said in an opinion piece in the Washington Post.

News outlet Axios reported Wednesday that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer had also privately signaled to donors that he was open to replacing Biden on the Democratic ticket.

However, in a statement shared by his office Wednesday evening, Schumer said "I support President Biden and remain committed to ensuring Donald Trump is defeated in November."

Biden has been trying to stem a growing tide of Democrats saying that he cannot win in November, but a steady drip of public revolt is squashing efforts to turn the page on the crisis.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

'Hungry' Colombia up against the biggest beast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

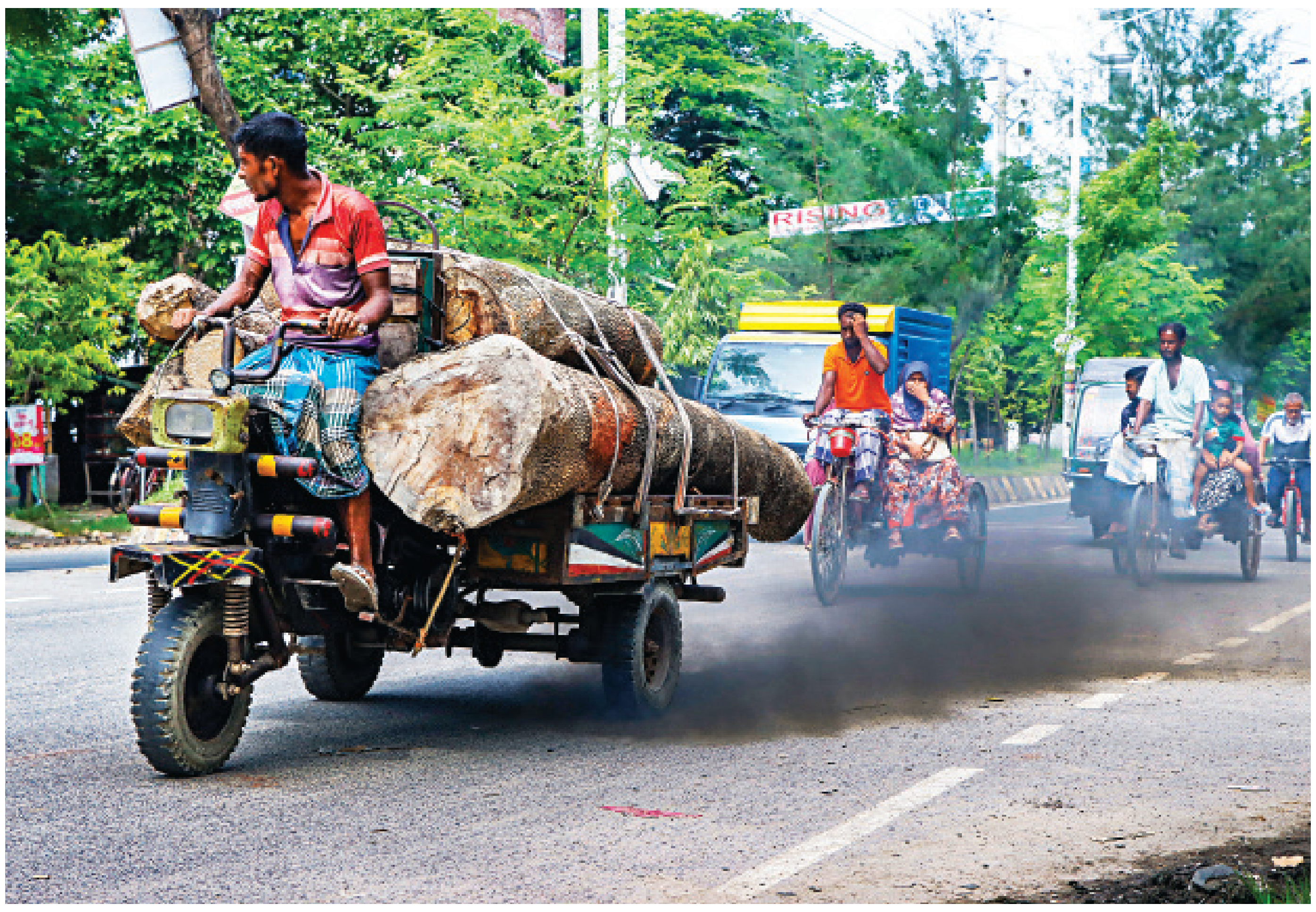
COPA AMERICA
USA

Following a long and challenging journey to reach another Copa America final, 2001 champions Colombia are now one hurdle away from adding the sweetest cherry on top after having achieved a record 28-match unbeaten run.

Los Cafeteros, however, are faced with the task of ousting holders and 15-time champions Argentina – the last team to beat Colombia when the two sides locked horns in a qualifying match for the 2022 World Cup, where Colombia did not qualify while Albiceleste went on to bag the most coveted prize in the sport.

In this edition, Colombia's path to the final has been defined by remarkable resilience and determination. After topping their group ahead of Brazil, they edged

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Spewing black smoke, an overloaded three-wheeler, locally known as Nasiman, plying a road in Khulna city's Boira Azizer Mor area yesterday. Such illegal vehicles contribute to air pollution and often lead to accidents.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

China a 'decisive enabler' of Russia's war in Ukraine

Say Nato leaders in stern rebuke

AFP, *Washington*

Nato leaders on Wednesday said China's deepening ties with Russia are a cause of "deep concern" and accused Beijing of playing a key role in helping Moscow's assault on Ukraine.

China "has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine through its so-called 'no limits' partnership and its large-scale support for Russia's defense industrial base," Nato leaders said in a declaration from their summit in Washington.

Nato leaders urged China "to cease all material and political support to Russia's war effort."

"This includes the transfer of dual-use materials, such as weapons components, equipment, and raw materials that serve as inputs for Russia's defense sector," the declaration said.

China "cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation," the alliance said.

The statement came before the leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea were due to attend the Nato summit yesterday.

China yesterday warned Nato against "provoking confrontation" over its ties with Russia.

A spokesperson for Beijing's mission to the European Union said: "Nato should stop hyping up the so-called China threat and provoking confrontation and rivalry, and do more to contribute to world peace and stability."

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DHAKA SATURDAY JULY 13, 2024

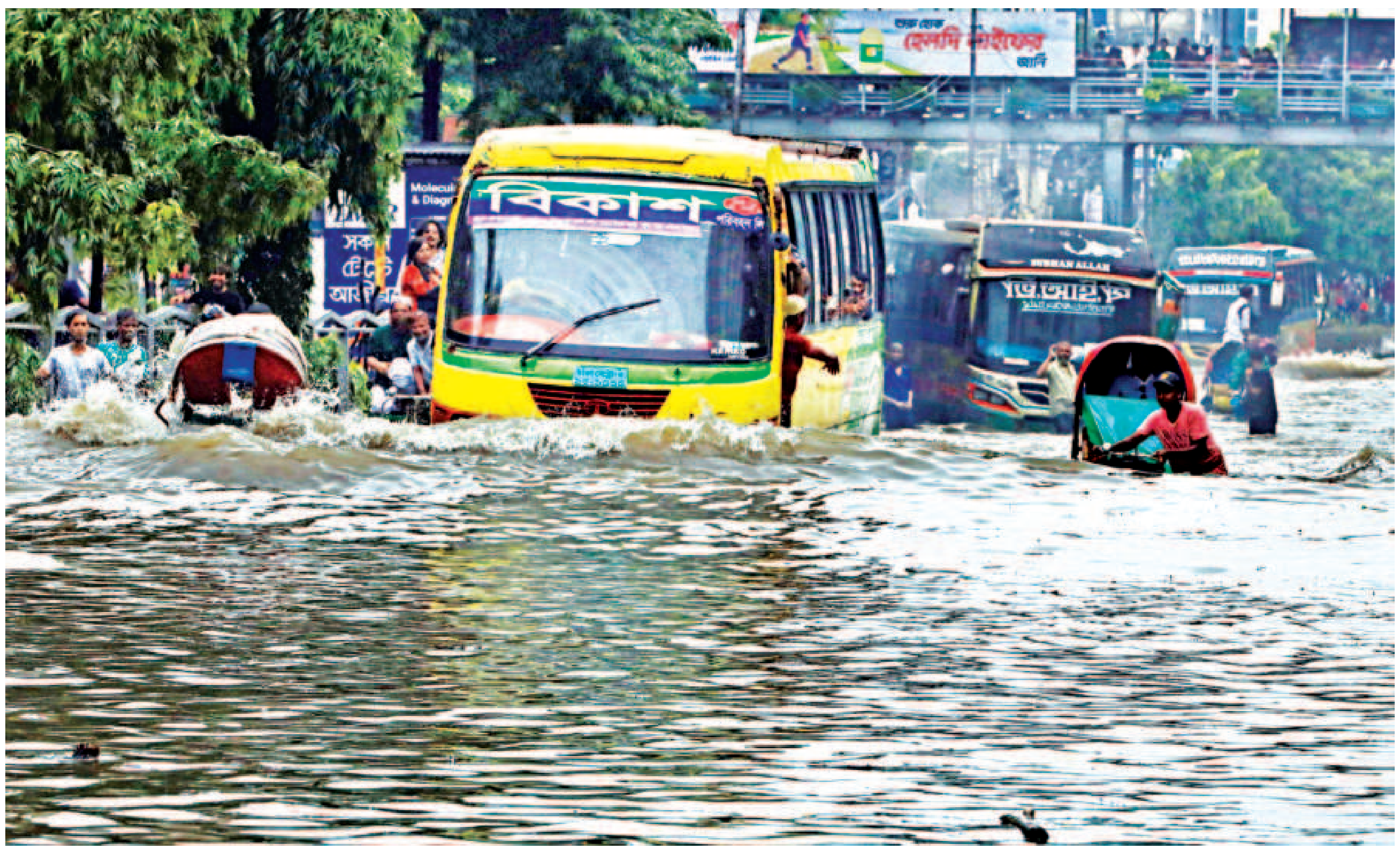
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 171 | ASHAR 29, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 6, 1446 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

Local pharma lights up hope in cancer treatment
WR4

Paolini's first or Krejcikova's second?
P11

Why do the highly educated choose menial jobs abroad?
P8

India's Congress asks Modi to tax billionaires more
P6



As a bus tries to navigate the flooded Dhanmondi-27 intersection, its wake nearly swamps a couple of rickshaws struggling to make headway. Heavy rain yesterday morning caused waterlogging in most city neighbourhoods. More photos on page 3. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Downpour drowns parts of Dhaka

Poor drainage exposed again, many neighbourhoods waterlogged all day

HELEMUL ALAM *and* **MD ABBAS**

Heavy rain flooded streets and homes across the capital yesterday morning and exposed Dhaka's poor drainage system yet again.

The downpour began in the early hours and continued till noon with brief pauses. The Met office recorded 130mm of rainfall in six hours from 6:00am. The rainwater did not recede from many places even in the evening.

People who went out of their homes on the weekend endured immense sufferings, as they had to wade through knee-to-waist-deep water to reach their destinations. Public transport was hard to come by.

Several vehicles broke down on the flooded streets, leading to traffic jams.

The rainwater went into underground parking spaces, reservoirs, and ground floors of many residential buildings. People were seen trying to pump out the water.

Water went into many shops and damaged stored goods.

"Come rain, come the same old sufferings. This has been going on for decades despite promises to solve the waterlogging problem in the city," said a frustrated Sirajul Islam of West Rajabazar area.

> **The rainwater went into underground parking spaces, reservoirs, and ground floors of many residential buildings. People were seen trying to pump out the water.**

"Even after a brief shower, the roads and alleys go under water. The rainwater even makes its way into our homes. We hear so much of development, but this problem persists. Our hardship seems never-ending."

Ain Uddin, who works for a firm, told The Daily Star that he had to change five vehicles to reach his office in Niketan from Kalabagan area.

"My CNG-run auto-rickshaw broke down

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Rains now more intense, in shorter spells

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

While Dhaka typically sees 373mm of rain throughout July, a heavy downpour yesterday morning delivered over a third of that amount in just six hours.

According to experts and meteorologists, the monsoon rainfall pattern is changing across the country, as evidenced by the shorter spells of intense downpours seen nowadays.

While there has been little change in the overall amount of rainfall, climate change is causing a decline in the number of rainy days, they added.

Md Bazlur Rashid, a meteorologist at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, said that incidents of extreme climatic events like longer heatwaves and more rainfall in shorter spells are becoming more common in Bangladesh.

"The total amount of rainfall has decreased about 3-5% in recent years but the frequency of extreme rainfall

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

QUOTA SYSTEM IN GOVT JOBS

Reforms must be well thought out

Experts say 2018 quota abolishment done hurriedly

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR *and* **BAHARAM KHAN**

Any disproportionate quota system usually hurts a merit-based civil service, and any kind of decision to reform the system, in place since independence, should be well thought out, experts say.

The quota-based system should not dominate the public administration at the expense of merit as the nation needs the right people in the right place, they add.

But, according to them, the government decision to hurriedly abolish the quota system in Class 1 and Class 2 jobs in 2018 following a student protest was not well thought out. In the current context, the existing quota system should be thoroughly reviewed and evaluated to avoid new complications.

"You need to keep the quota system for certain groups of people. But it needs to be evaluated from time to time. This is not happening in Bangladesh,"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

> **"It is inappropriate that there will be an abnormal quota for a certain group. On the other hand, there is no scope for abolishing all kinds of quota in public service as the constitution favours the quota system."**
>
> FIROZ MIA
> Fromer bureaucrat

> **"After so many years of independence, it is not reasonable to keep quota of freedom fighters."**
>
> AHMEDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY
> Former PSC chairman

ANTI-QUOTA MOVEMENT

Protesters block roads, ignore warnings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The anti-quota protesters blocked the Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding reforms to the quota system in government jobs and protesting Thursday's police action on students outside Dhaka.

Similar programmes were also held in Cumilla, Chattogram, Rajshahi, and elsewhere as part of the scheduled nationwide rallies on campuses.

Around 5:00pm, several hundred DU students marched from the Central Library to the Shahbagh intersection, where they were later joined by Dhaka College students.

"During our movement, our brothers and sisters were attacked at various universities. Our movement is logical and democratic, but we still faced police action. We demand that the attackers be quickly identified and brought to justice," said Abu Sayeed, one of the key organisers of the anti-quota movement.

Protesters said a press conference would be held today around 6:30pm in front of DU Central Library to announce their next programme.

Also, a meeting of the organisers at different colleges and universities across the country will be held this morning to determine the next course of movement, said Abu Baker, another organiser of the movement.

After holding the short rally, protesters left Shahbagh around 6:00pm.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TIMELINE

OCTOBER 4, 2018
Government scraps quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in civil service

JUNE 5, 2024
High Court rules scrapping of freedom fighter quota illegal

JUNE 9, 2024
Government appeals to the apex court

JULY 1, 2024
Students, jobseekers start demonstrating against quota system

JULY 4, 2024
SC upholds High Court verdict for the time being

SEE PAGE 2

AL to go tough to quell infighting

35 killed in intra-party clashes during first 6 months of this year

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Over the first six months of this year, there were on average more than two incidents of infighting every day in Awami League. These conflicts accounted for 94 percent of the total 440 incidents of political violence during the same period.

Only two of those incidents of political violence occurred when the ruling party men clashed with the activists of its archrival BNP and main opposition Jatiya Party, according to statistics of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid and rights organisation.

In the six months, 35 people were killed due to AL infighting, which is 85 percent of the 41 people killed in political violence.

The ASK data included incidents of violence centring the national, upazila, and union parishad polls.

Faruq Faisal, executive director of ASK, said most of the incidents of electoral violence took place between different AL factions as the party decided to allow its ranks to run to make the elections look participatory amid boycott by major opposition political parties.

According to ASK, around 202 AL leaders, activists and supporters were killed in clashes over internal feuds in six years until May 2024.

This data clearly shows how the ruling party faced opposition from within in absence of activities of its political opponents.

"Awami League has become its own opponent as the major opposition parties are staying away from the polls and streets. The intra-party conflicts are happening mainly over establishing supremacy and gaining financial benefits," Faruq told The Daily Star.

He said conflicts within the AL's grassroots intensified following the party's decision to allow all its aspirants to run as independents in the January 7 parliamentary polls. The situation worsened following the upazila parishad elections.

On the sixth upazila parishad polls,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

1 2 3 4
QUOTA
SYSTEM

With her fist held high, an anti-quota protester adds her voice to the chorus of hundreds chanting slogans during the hour-long demonstration at the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: STAR

EVENING WALK AT CITY PARKS

Where walking is more than just exercise!

RBR

A casual walk around a park in the evening has a charm of its own. Most Dhakaites pump up their feel-good endorphins and energy levels as early as possible and try to leave the evenings for social engagements. However, the city has its share of lazy walkers; people who love light summer breezes and would prefer strolls instead of hard exercise.

There is a pleasant feel to enjoying Dhaka at dusk when the sky is like orange marmalade. Summer sky in a country like ours is in one word: poetic! This is the time when white fluffy clouds with a ring of subdued sunlight around them float against the violet, burnt orange, and golden hues of sundown. Godhuli, as twilight is romantically called in Bangla, is also the right time to take Instagramable photos.

Ramna Park, like many other parks in the city, has beautiful walking tracks as the entire park has recently gone through transformations. Arshan and Paula, a sporty mother-son duo, have chosen evening walks at Ramna as their time to bond. After work and school hours are done and dusted, they walk, stroll, and sit down on old benches and talk about their day.

Paula feels, "Arshan is a teenager and I think these are formative years, when the child needs you. Yes, they would rather be left alone but I want him to know I am there for him. I had to plan a win-win situation for us to relax and unwind after a day's work.

"We are not regulars but we try to go as frequently as possible, even if I have to bribe him with a trip to a café!"

People enjoy walking as part of their exercise and healthy routine and then there are people for whom this is a way to unwind and connect with nature. For them, Ramna Park is like an oasis in Dhaka, offering ample fresh air, lush greenery, and a beautifully curated environment.

It is wonderful to see people forming groups and engaging in various activities, creating a vibrant community. Walking here is a truly enjoyable experience that allows one to find serenity at their own pace.

Mithila, 40, loves her evening walks. "For me, it is strictly me time," she says. "I soak in the serenity of the late afternoons, I love to hear the birds rushing home, I pick wild ferns from the sides of the pond, or I just sit and listen to my '80s pop music."

Like Thích Nhất Hạnh, the famous Vietnamese Buddhist monk, said we need to experience walking as a mindful practice. "When we walk like (we are rushing), we print anxiety and sorrow on the earth. We have to walk in a way that we only print peace and serenity on the earth..."

For me and thousands of people like me, evening walks are mindful walking, walking with love and compassion, and walking for healing.

5 more 'KNF operatives' sent to jail in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bandarban*

Five members of the Bawm community were sent to jail yesterday on suspicion of being members of the armed group Kuki Chin National Front (KNF).

They are Song Lian Bawm, 25, Lalhim Sang Bawm, 37, Lalchan Sang Bawm, 48, Lal Pian Sang Bawm, 36, and Lal Siam Thang Bawm, 38. All five are residents of Lairunpi Para in Bandarban's Ruma upazila.

They were arrested on Thursday during an ongoing joint forces operation against the KNF.

Later, they were presented in court on charges related to the bank robbery and arms theft that took place in Ruma. Subsequently, Bandarban Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Nazmul Hossain sent them to jail, said Court Sub-Inspector Priyal Palit.

As part of the ongoing joint forces operation, law enforcement has arrested and jailed a total of 116 people suspected of collaborating with the KNF militants who carried out bank robberies, assaults, and looted weapons and money from police and Ansar forces in Ruma and Thanchi between April 2 and 3.

A total of 22 cases were filed over these incidents -- 14 at Ruma Police Station, four at Thanchi Police Station, one at Bandarban Sadar Police Station, and three at Rowangchari Police Station.

3 killed in road crashes

BSS, *Jashore*

Three people were killed and nine others injured in two separate road crashes in Jashore's Bagherpara upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Mohammad Siddique Sheikh, 50, of South Srirampur village of the upazila, Sabuj Hossain, 42, of Rajabari village of Nandail upazila in Mymensingh, and Tarek Sardar, 35, of Baga village under Keshabpur upazila of Jashore.

Mritunjoy Biswas, officer-in-charge of Tularampur Highway Police Station, said the collision occurred in Dakshin Srirampur area around 7:30am, when a Jashore-bound truck hit five people on the side of the Jashore-Narail road before plunging into a ditch.

Siddique died on the spot and four others were injured. The injured were taken to Jashore General Hospital, he said.

Meanwhile, in another accident, Sabuj Hossain died on the spot and six others were injured when two pickups collided head-on in Karimpur area of the upazila on Jashore-Narail road around 11:30am.

Of the injured, four were taken to Jashore General Hospital and two others to Narail Sadar Hospital, where Tarek Sardar died while undergoing treatment, the OC added.

Reforms must be well thought out

FROM PAGE 1

Firoz Mia, who retired as an additional secretary of public administration ministry, told The Daily Star.

"It is inappropriate that there will be an abnormal quota for a certain group. On the other hand, there is no scope for abolishing all kinds of quota in public service as the constitution favours the quota system," said Firoz, who also authored several books on public administration.

"The way the government abolished the quota system for government officials from Grade 1 to Grade 13 [in 2018] was not appropriate at all. Almost every country in the world has a quota system in government jobs for disadvantaged groups."

In Bangladesh, the quota system was introduced through an executive order in 1972 and was amended several times. From 1972 to 1976, 20 percent of the government officials were recruited based on merit, and the rest was quota-based. Merit-based recruitment was increased to 40 percent in 1976 which continued until 1985, when it was increased to 45 percent.

In 2012, one percent quota was introduced for persons with disability, reducing the merit-based recruitment to 44 percent.

In 2018, the government issued a circular abolishing the quota system for Class 1 and Class 2 jobs, in the wake of a massive protest by students, who wanted a reform and not an abolition.

Until then, 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas. Of this, 30 percent were for freedom fighters' families, 10 percent for women, 10 percent for people from underdeveloped districts, 5 percent for members of indigenous communities, and 1 percent for persons with disabilities.

In 1996, as the numbers of those claiming freedom fighters' quota positions started to dwindle, the government extended the quota to children of freedom fighters. In 2009, it was further expanded to include the grandchildren of freedom fighters.

The ongoing quota reform movement began after the High Court on June 5, 2024, ruled that the 2018 government circular abolishing the quota system was illegal, effectively reinstating the quota system. The government appealed the decision, and the Appellate Division has issued a status quo on the HC order.

After the HC order, students took to the streets again, waging large-scale protests across the country, demanding a reform of the quota system.

TIMELINE

JULY 7, 2024
Protesters launch "Bangla Blockade"

JULY 9, 2024
Two DU students file petition seeking stay order on HC verdict

JULY 10, 2024
SC orders status quo on the issue for four weeks

"I cannot say why the government took such a decision [to abolish the quota system], because almost every country has a quota system. It was not a well-thought-out decision," AT Ahmedul Huq Choudhury, a former PSC chairman, told this newspaper.

India has a quota system for public service and they call it "reservations system," under which 15 percent of the government jobs are reserved for Scheduled Castes, 7.5 percent for Scheduled Tribes and 27 percent for Other Backward Classes, and 10 percent for Economically Weaker Sections.

Nepal reserves 45 percent civil service seats for women, along with indigenous community, Madhesi, Dalit, persons with disability and people from underdeveloped areas.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka also have reserved positions in government jobs for women, ethnic minorities, and individuals from different regions.

The government should decide on the percentage of the quota upon analysis of the data, but women, ethnic minority groups and persons with disability should be included in the quota system, said Ahmedul Huq.

"After so many years of independence, it is not reasonable to keep quota of freedom fighters. But if the government feels it necessary, there may be a small quota for the freedom fighters but it should be only for the freedom fighters' families that are in a bad condition," he said.

Public administration researcher and former secretary AKM Abdul Awal Mazumder is in favour of abolishing the quota system, except for persons with disability.

"However, the government can have a detailed evaluation before taking a decision in this regard so that it can place its argument to support the decision," he told The Daily Star.

Supreme Court lawyer and constitutional expert Arif Khan said the government can restore reasonable quotas for women, persons with disability, ethnic groups and freedom fighters any time if it wants.

"But now that the matter is before court, the solution will come in line with the instructions given by the court. However, there is no legal obstacles for the government to make a decision from time to time on the issue because the government has to take decisions at different times to carry out executive activities," he told this newspaper.

Talking about the students' demand for quota system reform, Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain said, "If the matter was solely in the hands of the government, we could have considered their demand.

"As it is now a matter pending before the court, steps will have to be taken as per the instructions of the court and we are waiting for that."

Protesters block roads, ignore warnings

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq said he believes students, who have presented their views on the issue of quotas in government jobs, will accept the Supreme Court's directive and return home.

He also warned that the government would be forced to take action otherwise.

"It's the government's responsibility to look after the people's lives and properties. If anyone causes any serious disruption, the government will take action according to the law," the minister said while speaking to journalists at Akhaura Railway Station in Brahmanbaria yesterday.

In another development, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Habibur Rahman said yesterday that any attempts to disrupt law and order would not be tolerated.

"There is an obligation to obey the order of the court. If anyone tries to break the law ... it will not be tolerated," the commissioner said.

The protesting students had announced that they would press on with their demonstrations until the government forms a commission to reform the quota system and the parliament passes a law in this regard.

Rains now more intense, in shorter spells

FROM PAGE 1

in shorter periods has increased," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

A study titled "Changing Climate of Bangladesh: Trends and Changes Detected in Weather Observations from 1980 to 2023 in Bangladesh" found that the average rainfall during this period has not changed, but the number of rainy days decreased in Dhaka.

"In Dhaka, the average precipitation in the 1980-2020 period did not change significantly in any season. However, there is some evidence of a decrease of around 2.7 days per decade in the number of rainy days in the monsoon season," the study states.

Daily extreme precipitation events will likely intensify by about 7 percent for every 1°C increase in average global temperature, according to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report.

"As the world is getting warmer, it is impacting the weather pattern. Now both evaporation rate and atmospheric moisture holding capacity are increasing and that's why we see more rainfall in shorter periods," Prof AKM Saiful Islam, one of the lead authors of the IPCC report.

Experts said incidents of extreme rainfall are being observed more frequently in many parts of the world, especially in the climate-vulnerable countries and Bangladesh is a prime example.

"In addition to this, there is another pattern of the monsoon being delayed, as reflected by the decline in the average amount of rainfall in June and July," said Abdul Mannan, a former BMD meteorologist.

Another study, "Spatio-temporal patterns of rainfall variability in Bangladesh" published in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Global Warming, found a substantial decline in the rainfall in Bangladesh.

It said that the rainfall during monsoon seasons lasting from June to September contributed around 80 percent of the total rainfall.

The study also found that the southeastern region received the highest amount of rainfall, especially the unusually high amount observed in the monsoon seasons of 2014 and 2020. The eastern region received the second-highest amount of rainfall. The northwestern region experiences the lowest amount of rainfall, while the central region receives below-average rainfall.

Downpour drowns

FROM PAGE 1

twice, and I had to walk for half an hour in knee-deep water. I spent around three hours to reach work. It usually takes around 40 minutes."

City planners say it is the inadequate drainage system, not the rain, that floods streets of the capital. Besides, encroachment of canals and a lack of cleaning of drains are among the key reasons for Dhaka streets getting waterlogged, they said.

"Even just after 55 to 60 millimetres of rainfall, Dhaka city's drainage system cannot drain out the water quickly ... ," Akter Mahmud, member of advisory council of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), told this newspaper.

The surface drains on the sides of roads are clogged by waste in many cases, he said.

Usually, the rainwater in the city flows into the rivers surrounding the capital via canals. If the rain continues for a few more days, the water level of four rivers will rise, obstructing the natural flow of water into the rivers, he said.

Rainwater also cannot reach the retention ponds in Goranchatbari, Kallyanpur, and Dholaikhal through canals due to encroachment and clogging of the canals at different points, Akter added.

There are two more water retention ponds on the eastern side of the capital beside the Balu river, the government will have to preserve those by connecting them with canals, he said.

Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon, former BIP president, said after taking the ownership of the canals from Wasa four years ago, the city corporations are yet to recover the canals from encroachers.

For example, he said, Kalunagar canal, a vital channel to remove water from Dhanmondi and Hazaribagh areas, is still not fully functional as the 2.4km canal is blocked by two housing projects.

The condition of Shyampur, Manda, and Jirani canals is almost similar. So, the rainwater of nearby areas cannot be drained out. Some canals at Satarkul are also blocked due to construction of roads, he added.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of BIP, pointed the finger at the unregulated development.

"We have lost canals to development in various areas of the city."

SUFFERINGS

"We are facing the consequences of unplanned development. We are paying taxes, but the government is not improving the drainage system, resulting in the untold sufferings of people like us," said Rafiq Mia, a resident of Green Road.

Almost the entire Green Road and its adjoining areas like Kathalbagan, Free School Street, Bhutergoli, and Kalabagan went under knee-to-waist-deep water.

Rafiq Miah, a microbus driver, said his vehicle broke down near New Market on a waterlogged street, and he was stranded there for over two hours.

"I don't know what the government and city corporations have been doing over the years...," he said.

Meanwhile, many took to social media to let people know about their ordeals and express anger. They shared photos and videos.

Streets near Fakirapool; Nayapaltan; Baitul Mukarram; Shantinagar; Arambagh; Pragati Sarani; New Market; Dayaganj intersection; Sayedabad Bus Terminal; Toyenbee Circular Road; Elephant Road; Matsya Bhaban; Dhanmondi; Karwan Bazar; Farmgate; Bijay Sarani; and East Rajabazar were inundated.

People in Old Dhaka had a terrible day. Areas including Nazirabazar, Kazi Alauddin Road, Nimtali, Tantibazar, Bangshal, and Nawabpur Road went under knee-deep water.

Russia hikes taxes to help fund Ukraine offensive

AFP, *Moscow*

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed off on a package of tax rises worth almost $30 billion, tapping workers and companies to contribute funds for his Ukraine offensive.

Moscow's spending has outrun revenue by tens of billions of dollars since it ordered troops into Ukraine in February 2022, helping the economy defy expectations of a deep recession but also pushing it into rare budget deficits.

Russia ran a budget deficit of around 3.2 trillion rubles ($36 billion) in 2023, equivalent to two percent of GDP.

Putin yesterday signed into law a set of amendments to Russia's tax code that includes increases on income taxes for high earners and corporate taxes paid by businesses in a bid to help plug the fiscal hole.

They were passed by Russia's rubber-stamp parliament earlier this week.

"The changes are aimed at building a fair and balanced tax system," Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said when the proposed changes were laid out in May.

He said the extra funds would bolster Russia's "economic well-being" and go towards a series of public investment projects.

The tax hikes -- which are being presented domestically as "systemic reforms" -- will raise around 2.6 trillion rubles ($29 billion) in 2025 when they come into force, the finance ministry estimates.

CITY DROWNS IN DOWNPOUR

Dhaka dwellers woke up to waterlogged roads yesterday morning amid heavy rainfall. Multiple areas, including many thoroughfares, were inundated while pedestrians had to wade through knee-deep water in many places. According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, a total of 130-millimetre rainfall occurred in the six hours from 6:00am to noon. Commuters who mostly left home for their workplace to provide emergency services and to go to kitchen markets suffered on the roads due to ankle- to knee-deep water and transport crisis. Although traffic was light on a Friday morning, those who ventured out with their cars had to manoeuvre through waterlogged streets. People were seen pulling their vehicles on the submerged roads as those broke down due to the waterlogging. Many shops and houses in different areas were submerged too. The photos were taken in Dhanmondi, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Dhaka University, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Mirpur and Arambagh areas.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS, ANISUR RAHMAN, PALASH KHAN**

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

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Govt sinking Bangladesh on all fronts

Says BNP leader Amir Khosru

UNB, *Dhaka*

Slamming the government for waterlogging in different areas of Dhaka caused by heavy rainfall yesterday morning, BNP senior leader Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said Bangladesh is sinking in all directions due to the misrule and politics of the Awami League regime.

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader said Dhaka is experiencing waterlogging because capable and meritorious individuals are not allowed to participate in the planning and execution phases necessary to address this issue.

"If the administration is run by partisan people, then not just Dhaka, the entire country will sink," he said.

Ganatantra Mancha arranged the discussion at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the founding anniversary of the platform.

Away from the worries and woes of the city, this dragonfly rests on a blade of grass. The photo was taken near the Shayestabad area of Barishal Sadar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Port Road now a death trap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barishal*

The Port Road under Ward 10 of Barishal City Corporation has turned into a death trap, leading to several accidents in recent times.

Even though located in the city's most important commercial area, the road has been in a dilapidated state over the last four years without any step from the authorities concerned to repair it.

"The biggest hilsa wholesale trading centre in the country's southern region is at Port Road. Its sorry state is affecting our business in numerous ways," said Habib, a hilsa trader.

Ganesh Dutta, a wholesale fruit trader, echoed him.

Visiting the road recently, this correspondent saw goods-laden trucks stuck in knee-deep mud in the Launch Ghat area along a 404-metre stretch of the road from Piyanjpatti Junction.

The situation exacerbates during the monsoon.

Traders said easybikes and rickshaws often get overturned on this road, causing injuries to passengers.

The road does not fall under the jurisdiction of the BCC as it is located within the Barishal River Port area, therefore the task of the road's repair and maintenance lies with the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, said Abul Bashar, executive engineer of BCC.

Contacted, Md Asaduzzaman, sub-assistant engineer of BIWTA, said he had sent a proposal for the road's renovation work in last May to the headquarters, but they have not received any instructions yet.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Guava, hog plum growers fear poor harvest

Locals blame unfavourable weather, cyclone Remal

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, *Pirojpur*

Growers of guava and hog plum in Pirojpur and Jhalakathi districts are worried over a possible poor production due to unfavourable weather and the aftermath of cyclone Remal.

In fact, the harvest of seasonal guava in the region has been delayed by a month already.

Guava is commercially cultivated in Pirojpur's Nesarabad and Jhalakathi's Sadar upazilas, while hog plum is grown in all upazilas in the two districts. These two fruits are main cash crops for growers in Nesarabad and Jhalakathi Sadar.

"High temperature during flowering time this year hampered production of both seasonal fruits. Then Remal caused further damage to the trees and buds. The fruits did not grow well due to a lack of rain," said Sunil Biswas, a cultivator from Adamkathi village in Nesarabad.

"Guava harvesting is expected to begin in full swing within two weeks and will continue for a couple of months. This year, however, the harvest has been delayed due to the inclement weather condition," he added.

Wholesale buyers from across the country collect guava from Nesarabad and Jhalakathi Sadar and then transport the fruits by trucks, said guava growers.

Hundreds of large hog plum trees with fruits and buds were uprooted in the two districts as Remal lashed the southern coastal belt on May 26.

Birendranath, a hog plum grower, said, "It takes at least five years for a hog plum tree to become productive, and it will produce fruit continuously for over 20 years. Many trees got uprooted in the cyclone. It will not only lower the output this year but also in future, as it will take years for new trees to become productive."

Swapan Halder, another cultivator, echoed him.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, guava has been cultivated in 846 hectares of land in Pirojpur and 320 hectares in Jhalakathi Sadar.

Also, hog plum has been cultivated on 507 hectares of land in Pirojpur and 140 hectares in Jhalakathi Sadar.

Contacted, Chapal Krishna Nath, upazila agriculture officer in Nesarabad, confirmed a month's delay in guava harvesting. "Normally, guava harvest begins by mid-June every year. This year, it got delayed considerably and will begin mid-July," he said.

Ali Ahmad, upazila agriculture officer in Jhalakathi Sadar, said that the production of guava and hog plum in his upazila will be lower this year due to unfavourable weather and the impact of the cyclone.

'Rohingyas need more int'l support'

IFRC president says Bangladesh must take steps to adapt to climate change

MAMUNUR RASHID

There is a need for sustained international attention and support for the Rohingyas until a solution is reached to get the displaced people back to a safe country, said Kate Forbes, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

"Yes, we want them [Rohingyas] to continue living in a safe space in the future. But that's not going to be today, not going to be next week, it won't even be next month," she told The Daily Star in a recent interview.

"In the meantime, we, the humanitarian sector, the IFRC and other large players, have an obligation to tell the story that is still here. The needs still exist."

Kate Forbes came on a five-day visit to Bangladesh on June 2. She visited the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and travelled to Koyra upazila, which was affected by cyclone Remal.

The IFRC president met with key government officials, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud, to discuss the impacts of climate change and strategies for managing disasters and pandemics.

About her visit to the Rohingya camps, Kate said the Bangladesh government and the people deserve praise for providing a safe space for these displaced individuals.

She said she discussed with government officials as well as ambassadors about the increased conflict within the Rohingya camp and a solution to that.

Speaking about climate change, strengths and weaknesses of Bangladesh's disaster management strategies, the IFRC president said, "One of the main issues here is the lack of innovation. In the past, inadequate forecasting has led to the loss of thousands of lives because people were unaware that a cyclone was approaching. They had almost no knowledge about it."

"We understand that as climate change intensifies, the severity of disasters here is also increasing. Therefore, we need to be prepared, alert the people, and help them adapt to these changes. We must raise awareness among a larger number of people and support those who are at risk so they can develop their plans to tackle these disasters effectively."

She said that Bangladesh's present disaster management system is blunt and emphasised the need for more proactive measures.

Calling upon Bangladesh to adapt the strategies that many parts of the world have made, she said, "We need to look at how we manage rainfalls so that we don't lose our topsoil, and can still plant trees and crops."

It's also crucial to start conversations in schools about the impacts of climate change and how it affects us, she added. "At an individual level, we each have a responsibility in this effort," she said.

Speaking about future activities of the Red Crescent Society in Bangladesh, Kate said they can train more volunteers and engage more people so that they can make a difference.

Man stabbed to death in Dhaka

UNB, *Dhaka*

A 50-year-old man was stabbed to death by unidentified miscreants in Kadamtali area of Dhaka on Thursday night, said police.

Deceased Md Mahbub Alam was a resident of Dakshin Dhania area.

The victim's brother Rafiqul Alam said miscreants stabbed Mahbub in an alley around 10:15pm.

Hearing screams, locals took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where physicians declared him dead around 11:00pm, he said.

The hospital's police outpost in-charge Md Bachchu Mia said the body was kept at the morgue.

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As flood worsens, food crisis

FROM PAGE 5

The local authorities are working to provide continuous support to the flood-affected people in the district. However, it has become apparent that the relief assistance for the people has been much less than required.

Meanwhile, the Brahmaputra was still flowing 31cm above danger level yesterday noon while water levels of the Dudhkumar and Dharla rivers went below danger level by 8cm and 5cm respectively, according to BWDB sources in Kurigram.

"Many schools are now closed due to flooding. The affected students will be enlisted once the schools reopen. New books and study materials will be provided to the students who lost those in floodwater," said Nibez Uddin Sarkar, district primary education officer in Kurigram.

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Abandoned hostels, unbound sufferings

4 residential halls of Khulna Polytechnic Institute lie unused for 15yrs

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

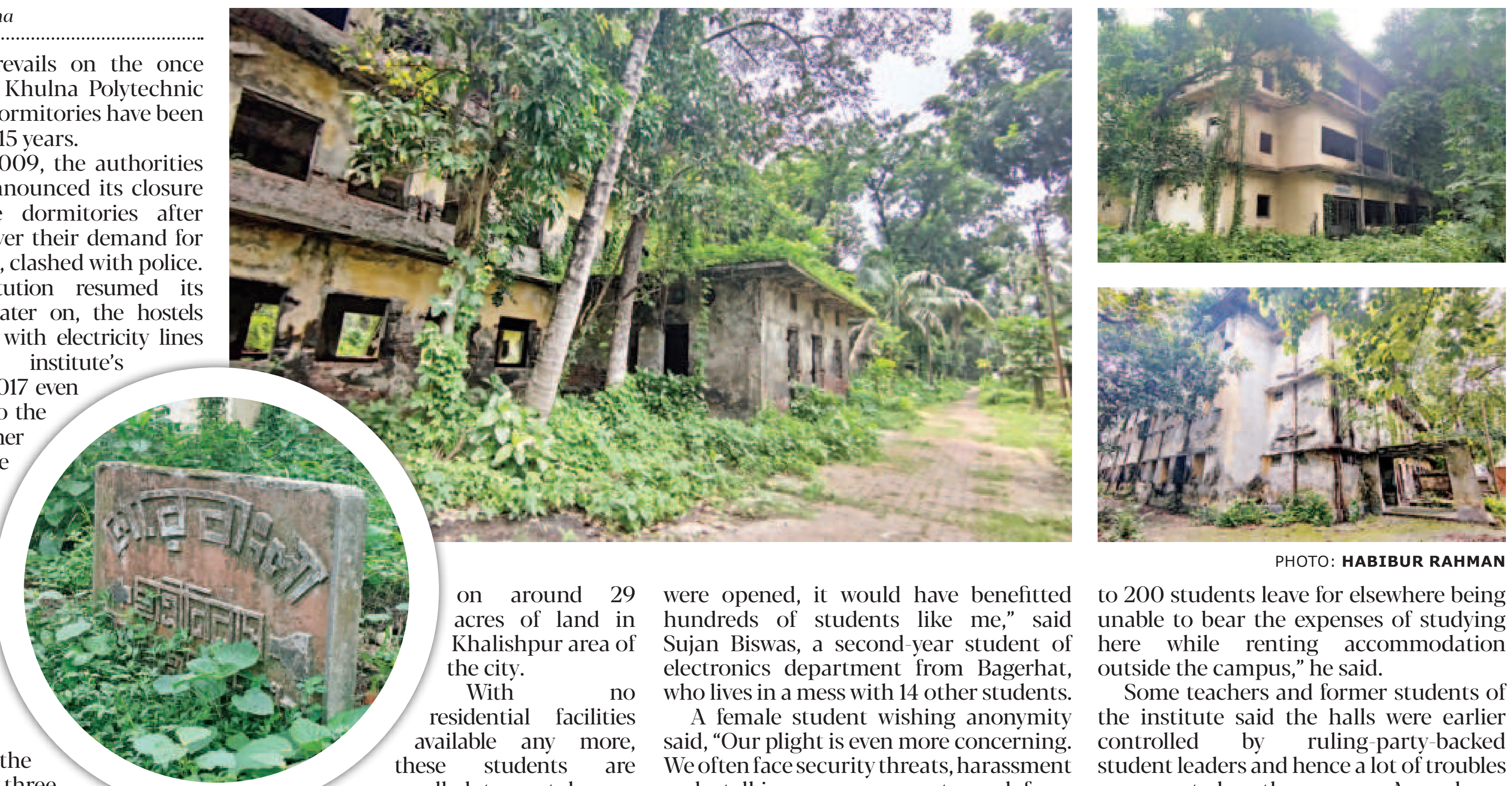
PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

An eerie silence prevails on the once bustling campus of Khulna Polytechnic Institute as its four dormitories have been lying abandoned for 15 years.

On February 8, 2009, the authorities of the institution announced its closure as well as of the dormitories after students, agitated over their demand for cancellation of exam, clashed with police.

While the institution resumed its academic activities later on, the hostels remained padlocked with electricity lines disconnected. The institute's authorities later in 2017 even sent an application to the divisional commissioner to declare the four buildings abandoned.

As such, hundreds of students of the institution have been suffering immensely over the years to manage their accommodation outside the campus.

Meanwhile, the abandoned hostels -- three for male students with 441 seats and one for female students with 60 seats -- have been gradually becoming dilapidated over the years due to a lack of maintenance.

After nightfall, the dark corridors of the dormitories become dens of addicts.

At present, around 4,000 students are studying in nine departments of Khulna Polytechnic Institute, established in 1963 on around 29 acres of land in Khalishpur area of the city.

With no residential facilities available any more, these students are compelled to rent houses or mess in neighbouring areas, spending much more than they had to. Alongside this, they are bearing numerous problems, including harassment of female students outside the campus.

"I am burdened with a monthly cost of accommodation, meal and other expenses totalling Tk 7,000-7,500, which I can barely afford. The situation is the same for most students. If the hostels were opened, it would have benefitted hundreds of students like me," said Sujan Biswas, a second-year student of electronics department from Bagerhat, who lives in a mess with 14 other students.

A female student wishing anonymity said, "Our plight is even more concerning. We often face security threats, harassment and stalking on our way to and from rented accommodations."

Aris Mahmud Nabab, a student of 2018-19 session and also general secretary of Bangladesh Technical Students Council, said they had written to the teachers on numerous occasions requesting for opening the halls, but there has been no response so far.

"Over 1,100 students get admitted to this institution every year but around 150 to 200 students leave for elsewhere being unable to bear the expenses of studying here while renting accommodation outside the campus," he said.

Some teachers and former students of the institute said the halls were earlier controlled by ruling-party-backed student leaders and hence a lot of troubles were created on the campus. As such, no one is in favour of opening the halls.

Contacted, Animesh Paul, principal of the institute, said considering the plight of female students, a hostel with 500 seats will be constructed for them, while a 10-storey academic building will be built in place of the existing four dormitories, along with an 8-foot-high boundary wall around the campus to prevent trespassing.

MIRANZILLA COLONY

Protect harijans, stop eviction

Hindu Parishad urges PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding the protection of minorities and protesting the attack on Miranzilla Harijan colony, Bangladesh Hindu Parishad held a protest rally in Dhaka yesterday.

The programme took place in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club around 11:00am, where speakers strongly condemned the attack carried out by a local councillor on the harijan community, situated in the city's Bangshal, on July 10.

They also sought the intervention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resolve the issue surrounding their eviction.

Sajan Kumar Mishra, spokesperson of the organisation, said, "There is a place for Rohingyas in this country. But it is a matter of regret that people of the harijan community, who have worked to keep this city clean for 400 years, are being evicted."

This is very unfortunate in the independent Bangladesh, he said.

Advocate Sumon Kumar Roy, general secretary of Hindu Parishad, said, "No one has been arrested yet for carrying out such a heinous attack on the harijan community in broad daylight. On the contrary, cases have been filed against the harijans." He alleged that the Hindu communities are deprived of justice now.

"Their value increases only when elections come. The Hindu community is now aware of politics and their rights; they can no longer be used as a vote bank in the coming days," he said, adding that they will give a befitting reply to these injustices by exercising their franchise in the future.

Banshal Mironzilla of Dhaka Protesting the Barbaric attack on Hindu Community and demanding Minority Protection Act.
Human Chain and Protest Rally
Bangladesh Hindu Parishad

Woman's body found in maize field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Police recovered the throat-slit body of a woman from a maize field at Haluapara in Kishoreganj's Katiadi upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Smriti Akter, 22.

Smriti -- who got married to Amin Bhuiyan, an expatriate in Qatar, five years ago -- used to live at her father's house in Haluapara area, said Mohamamd Daud, officer-in-charge of Katiadi Police Station.

He said they are investigating the incident.

Police sent the body to a local hospital morgue for an autopsy, said the official.

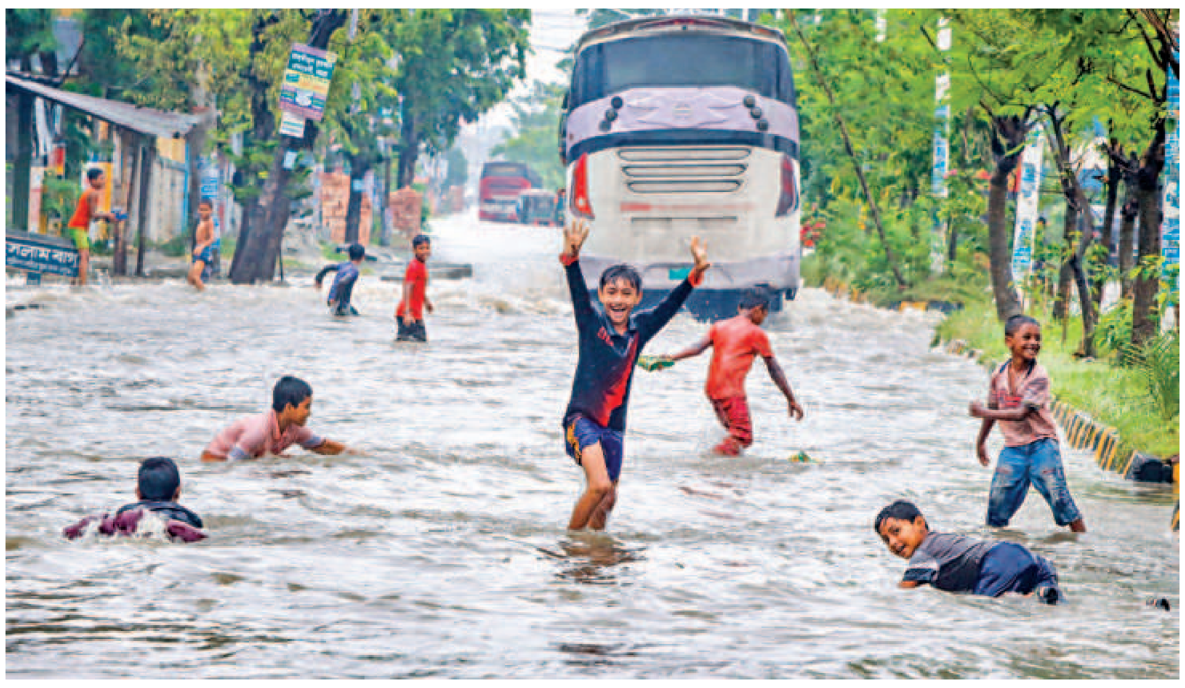
While rain brought misery to the lives of adults across Khulna, these children found joy as they splashed around in the knee-deep water. Over the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, Khulna experienced 89mm of rain, with 55mm taking place between 6:00am and 9:00am. The photo was taken in front of the Metro Police Line School in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

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By ASSET DEVELOPMENTS

As flood worsens, food crisis mounts

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Hundreds of families in Kurigram's shoal areas have been facing untold sufferings amid deteriorating flood situation.

In Uttar Ramana village within Brahmaputra's shoal under Chilmari upazila, all 240 families were compelled to leave their homes, submerged under floodwaters, with their belongings and domestic animals to shelter on an embankment of Bangladesh Water Development Board since July 2.

Inadequate relief assistance means many families are grappling with an acute crisis of food. The children and elderly among them have been suffering the most. Many school-goers have been unable to study, having lost their books and study materials in floodwater.

"Since the flood began, my father has been unable to find work, so we don't have enough food. We are mainly surviving on dry food like puffed rice, that too barely for one meal a day. I can't study either as my books and study materials were lost," said Rumana Akhter, 11.

Nirab Islam, 8, and Khushi Akhter, 11, echoed her.

"We are grappling with food shortage. I have no work now due to the flood situation. I can't afford to buy food, and kerosene oil or candles. We are spending our nights inside this polythene-wrapped shanty amid darkness, with floodwater raging around us," said Khushi's father Faridul Islam.

The scenario is same for 350 shoal villages under nine upazilas in the district.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Due to inadequate relief assistance, many families are grappling with an acute food crisis. The children and elderly among them have been suffering the most.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Damaged roads disrupt connectivity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

The ongoing flood in Sirajganj district left at least three roads badly damaged in Shahzadpur upazila in the past one week, disrupting road communication.

In Chithulia area of Kayempur union under the upazila, around 30-metre stretch of a concrete road was washed away in flood within a day on July 3, affecting around 10,000 residents of nine villages.

A portion of a similar concrete road and an earthen road in Talgachhi area were also damaged.

Contacted, Md Saiful Islam, executive engineer of LGED in Sirajganj, said, "In the present flood situation, it is not feasible to repair the roads properly. Once floodwater recedes, we will assess the extent of damage to the roads and repair those properly to restore smooth road communication."

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 13

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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PAK PARLIAMENT

Ex-PM Imran Khan's party wins reserved seats

REUTERS, *Islamabad*

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday ruled that jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party was eligible for over 20 extra reserved seats in parliament, ramping up pressure on the country's weak coalition government.

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party candidates contested the February 8 election as independents after it was barred from the polls. They won the most seats but the election commission said independents were ineligible for the grant of 70 reserved seats, meant for political parties only.

The commission had ordered the reserved seats instead to be distributed among other parties, mostly to those in the ruling coalition.

"As a political party, the PTI is entitled to its reserved seats," said Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa while reading out the order, which was supported by eight judges and opposed by five of the 13-member full court bench.

The granting of 23 reserved seats does not affect the parliamentary majority of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coalition government,

Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told reporters after the decision.

The ruling coalition still has well over 200 members of the 336-member lower house of parliament. Khan's party strength stood at 84 before the decision, and is expected to rise to over 100.

Under Pakistan's election rules, parties are allocated 70 reserved seats - 60 for women, 10 for non-Muslims - in proportion to the number of seats they win. This completes the National Assembly's total strength of 336 seats.

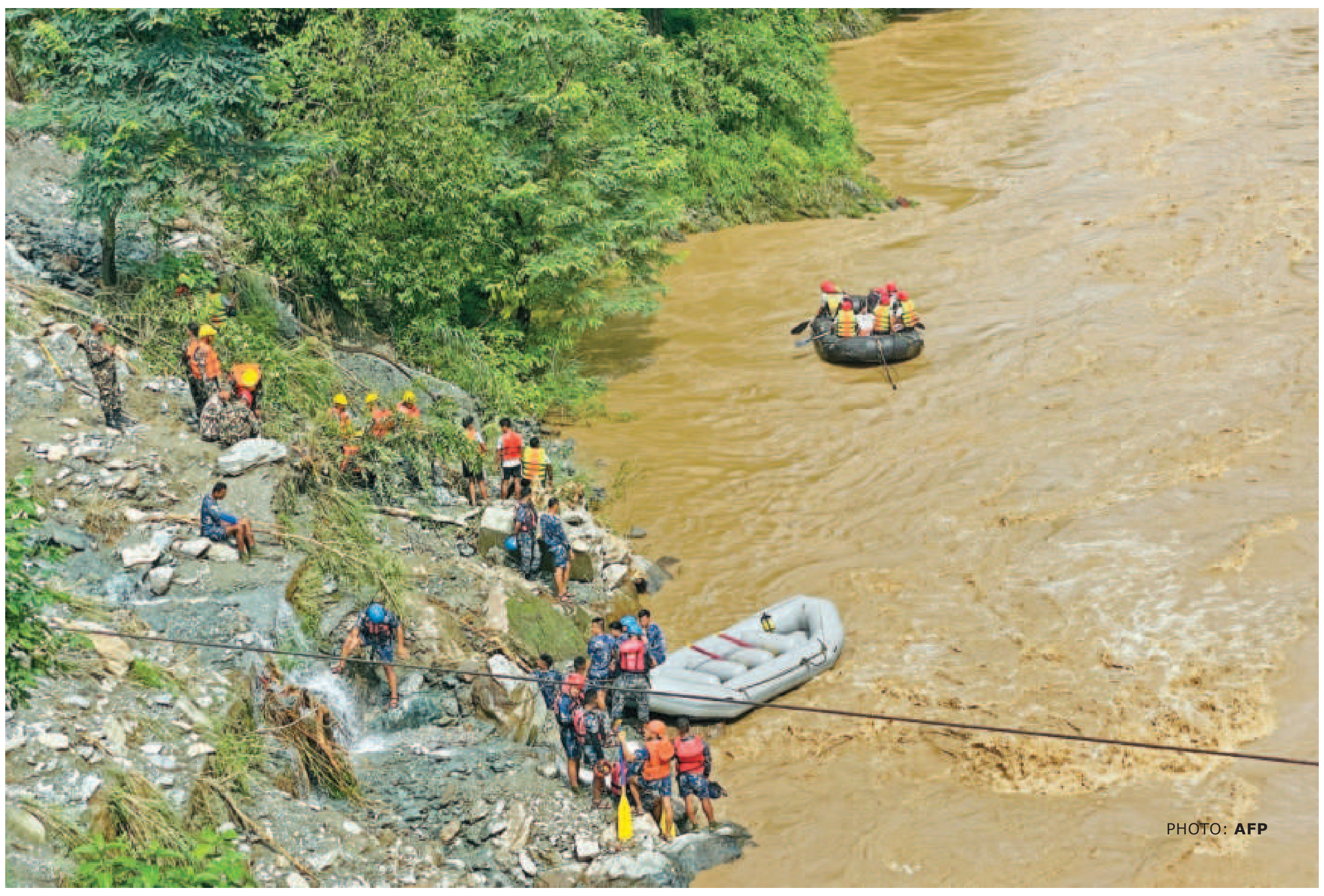


PHOTO: AFP

Rescuers search for survivors in the Trishuli River following a landslide in Simaltar, Nepal yesterday. At least 63 people were missing after the landslide triggered by heavy monsoon rains swept two buses off a highway and into the river, authorities said.

Tax billionaires more

India's opposition Congress asks Modi in a bid to generate funds for stretched public services like education, health

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's main opposition Congress party yesterday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to impose an additional tax on the country's billionaires to generate funds for stretched public services like education and health.

The annual budget will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23 at a time of deepening income inequality and high unemployment despite India's world-beating economic growth of nearly 8 percent and booming stock markets.

Jairam Ramesh, senior Congress party leader, said in a post on X that a 2 percent tax on the wealth of India's estimated 167 billionaires could raise as much as 1.5 trillion rupees ($18 billion) or about 0.5 percent of gross domestic product.

"This could pay for schools, hospitals, renewable energy, and many more essential investments," he said, urging the government to tax the super-rich more.

Wealth concentrated in the hands of the richest 1 percent of India's population is at its greatest level for six decades and its percentage share of national income exceeds that of countries including Brazil and the US research group the World Inequality Lab reported earlier this year.

Jairam Ramesh, senior Congress party leader, said that a 2 percent tax on wealth of estimated 167 billionaires could raise as much as 1.5 trillion rupees.

Opposition parties are pressing the government to take steps to increase spending on welfare programmes after Modi lost his majority in parliament and had to rely on coalition allies to return to office for the third time.

Government officials earlier ruled out the possibility of taxing the wealth of the ultra-rich, arguing it could encourage them to move to low-tax countries.

Congress also asked Modi to clarify what would be India's position at the G20 meeting in Brazil later this month on the issue of supporting a global tax on billionaires, a proposal pushed by Brazil, which holds the G20 presidency this year.

Brazil's proposal, crafted by French economist Gabriel Zucman from the independent EU Tax Observatory, calls for an annual 2 percent levy on fortunes exceeding $1 billion, which could raise up to $250 billion annually from about 3,000 individuals.

Government sources said yesterday India plans to overhaul more than 200 state-run firms to make them more profitable, signalling a departure from Modi's aggressive privatisation programme that has struggled to take off.

Kejriwal gets interim bail in graft case

But he stays in jail due to his arrest in another case

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's Supreme Court yesterday granted interim bail to opposition leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a graft case, but he will stay in jail due to his arrest in another case.

Kejriwal was arrested in March by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), India's financial crime-fighting agency, over alleged corruption in the city's alcohol sales policy.

A fierce critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a former anti-corruption crusader, Kejriwal, 55, denies any wrongdoing and calls the case politically motivated. His lawyers had challenged his arrest in the top court, which referred the matter to a larger bench while giving him temporary relief. "Given that right to life and liberty is sacrosanct, and Arvind Kejriwal has suffered incarceration for over 90 days ... we direct that Arvind Kejriwal will be released on interim bail," Justice Sanjiv Khanna said.

India announces 'Murder of the Constitution Day' remembrance

AFP, *New Delhi*

India said yesterday it would hold an annual "Murder of the Constitution Day" from next year, commemorating a dark historical chapter tied to the family of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief political rival.

June 25, 2025 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, when then-premier Indira Gandhi suspended the constitution in response to a court ruling that threatened her hold on power.

The following months saw thousands of activists jailed, press freedoms suspended and an abusive compulsory sterilisation campaign that forced millions of men to receive vasectomies in an abortive population control effort.

Modi said on social media platform X that the new day of remembrance would "serve as a reminder of what happens when the Constitution of India was trampled over". "It is also a day to pay homage to each and every person who suffered due to the excesses of the Emergency."

Rohingya repatriation looking like pipe dream

FROM PAGE 12

Over the last several years, the Myanmar army violated airspace and bullets landed on Bangladesh territory, leaving people injured. Bangladesh repeatedly protested the incidents.

Bangladesh's physical relation with Myanmar is through Rakhine state, and that configuration is now changing with the non-state actors controlling this border, said Sakhawat, also a former election commissioner.

"Clearly, there is a huge security threat ... the options for Bangladesh are limited."

If the Myanmar junta counterattacks the AA, the situation will only worsen at the border, Sakhawat said. "What would happen if the Arakan Army crosses the border to Bangladesh while fighting? Will Bangladesh take their side?"

As the Myanmar military has conscripted Rohingyas into the force, the AA's position is against them. So, there is a risk of Rohingya-AA direct confrontation, he said.

Another side-effect of the fighting is that drug smuggling through the Bangladesh-Myanmar border may be rampant as the warring forces often make money out of drug sales, Sakhawat added.

Subsequently, Bangladesh must send security reinforcements along the 271 km-long land and maritime border, according to experts.

"We are absolutely troubled by the conflicts and their implications on Bangladesh," said an official of the foreign ministry.

The Myanmar authorities have been warned not to make Bangladesh a casualty of their fighting. "We have beefed up border security measures so that Rohingyas cannot enter our territory," he added.

Bangladesh will not be able to shoot the Rohingyas if they forcefully enter Bangladesh en masse, said Munshi Faiz Ahmad, a former ambassador.

Before that happens, Bangladesh needs to take serious diplomatic initiatives so the Rohingyas can stay in Rakhine, maybe in camps, under international supervision.

He suggested Bangladesh raise its voice at the UN and hold dialogues with the US, India and China regarding the matter.

"We cannot be burdened again and again by the Rohingya crisis created by Myanmar," said Ahmad, also a former chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of International Strategic Studies.

The UN Security should seriously consider deploying UN peacekeepers in Rakhine to maintain peace, said Shahab Enam Khan, a professor of international relations at Jahangirnagar University.

"International law is not only applicable to Bangladesh. Bangladesh has limits too. How long can the people of Bangladesh take responsibility for the Rohingya?"

Bangladesh can support developing a humanitarian corridor, allowing international aid agencies to reach food and other emergency supplies to Rakhine State for the displaced Rohingya, he added.

Sakhawat suggested that it would be best if the UN could arrange places within Rakhine where the Rohingya can take shelter.

"The UN can make a global call on this instead of pushing Bangladesh to take the responsibility," he said.

There are about one million Rohingyas in the camps in Cox's Bazar, with yearly births of 30,000.

Rohingya repatriation could not be possible, even under a tripartite initiative led by China, as Rohingya were not convinced by the guarantee of safety and citizenship in Rakhine.

The NUG, the Myanmar government in exile since 2021, had pledged citizenship and recognition of Rohingya as an ethnic group of Myanmar. However, analysts expect the AA to have stronger autonomy even if Myanmar becomes a federal democracy.

Also, the AA thinks Rohingya are outsiders, so it will be difficult to continue repatriation efforts if the AA controls the Rakhine state.

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said repatriation of the Rohingya under the present conditions in Rakhine is not possible in the near future. However, the government will continue to engage the international community in Rohingya repatriation.

Until then, the burden on Bangladesh is getting heavier, with funding for Rohingya on the wane.

As much as $852 million is needed for the upkeep of Rohingya in the camps in 2024. So far, less than 30 percent of the sum has come through.

"It is important for Bangladesh to establish contacts with the Arakan Army, even if informally. If they control Rakhine, there will be no alternatives to establishing relations with them," Ahmad said.

Nepal PM Dahal loses confidence vote

FROM PAGE 12

Dahal, 69, was forced to either resign or prove his majority in parliament after his largest ally, the liberal Communist Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) party, led by Oli, withdrew support last week.

Oli, who has been prime minister twice before, struck a deal with the centrist Nepali Congress (NC) at the end of June, securing enough seats for a majority, meaning he is poised to govern, but no date has been set for the new government to take office.

Dahal, a former Maoist rebel chief, needed at least 138 votes in his favour in the 275-member house to retain power. A total of 63 of the 258 lawmakers present in the chambers voted for him, 194 voted against, and one abstained.

"The confidence vote sought by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has been rejected," Parliament Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire declared after the ballots were counted.

In his third term as prime minister, which began in December 2022, Dahal changed his main coalition partner three times and had to seek a vote of confidence five times, including the one he lost yesterday.

"The new coalition was necessitated by a need for political stability," UML lawmaker Yogesh Bhattarai said.

In a speech ahead of yesterday's vote, Dahal said Oli's coalition of the two biggest political parties was against democratic practice.

UML is the largest party in parliament and NC is the second largest.

"I am concerned this might lead to regression and authoritarianism," said Dahal, whose Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center) is the third largest party.

Biden faces more calls to quit race

FROM PAGE 12

want someone else, that's the democratic process," Biden said, before shifting to the stage whisper he often uses for emphasis to add, "It's not gonna happen."

Biden perhaps did not reassure those who were spooked by his poor presidential debate performance against Trump on June 27.

At one point, he referred to his vice president, Kamala Harris, as "Vice President Trump". That came just hours after he introduced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "President Putin" at the Nato summit, drawing gasps from those in the room.

Biden occasionally garbled his responses at the news conference, yet he also delivered detailed assessments of global issues, including Ukraine's war with Russia and the Israel's offensive in Gaza, that served as a reminder of his decades of experience on the world stage.

Some Democrats were not reassured.

"We must put forward the strongest candidate possible to confront the threat posed by Trump's promised MAGA authoritarianism. I no longer believe that is Joe Biden," said Representative Jim Himes of Connecticut, who called on the president to end his campaign after the news conference.

A senior campaign official who spoke on condition of anonymity called the performance the "worst of all worlds. Not good. But not bad enough to make him change his mind ... It'll give some enough cover to back him publicly, only to say he's not up for it privately."

On the other hand, Democratic fundraiser Dmitri Melhorn said other donors told him they saw a strong performance from the president. "This is the person who can beat Trump. The mistakes are baked in and the upside is strong," he told Reuters.

AL to go tough to quell infighting

FROM PAGE 1

civil society platform Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) on July 4 said AL grassroots leaders have become further apart as several party men ran for chairman in almost all upazilas. It said the situation may get worse.

Asked about the reasons behind the intra-party feuds, several senior AL leaders blamed party leaders' desperation for winning polls, establishing supremacy, securing party posts, and rivalries between party lawmakers, local leaders, independent MPs and the newly elected upazila chairmen.

They said internal feuds have caused the organisation to reach a point where some leaders cannot even tolerate their party colleagues.

The senior leaders said the AL high-ups are trying to restore discipline, but it might be tough.

Infighting within the ruling party became so grave that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had to ask the home minister to ensure arrests of all those linked to clashes and killings within the AL.

In a meeting on July 8, AL leaders and several ministers said that intra-party conflicts have become the party's main cause for concern.

Sources said the ruling party is going to take some drastic measures. The AL organising secretaries have been asked to identify the party units that have internal feuds and those responsible, and report to the AL high-command.

Top AL leaders will tour different districts, hold talks with the leaders of the troubled units and summon leaders to Dhaka, if required, to end the disputes. If necessary, the party will take organisational actions against errant grassroots leaders, the sources added.

AL Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim said intra-party conflicts within a big party like AL are "quite normal".

"But we will not spare anyone if party discipline is violated. We will do everything needed to restore discipline in the party," he told The Daily Star.

Conflicts within the AL became a common occurrence as different factions clashed over establishing political dominance, rivalries, taking control of illegal sand business, controlling bus and autorickshaw stands, business establishments, land, and party offices.

Rabiul Islam, 42, chairman of Sarapur Union Parishad under Khulna's Dumuria upazila and also a local AL leader, was shot dead on July 6.

Rabiul's wife Shayla Erin filed a case with Dumuria Police Station saying her husband might have been killed over political rivalry.

Police arrested local AL leader Asgar Bishwas in the case. Asgar ran for Dumuria upazila chairman and Rabiul reportedly took a stance against Asgor.

On July 7, HM Suman Haldar, chairman of Panchgaon Union Parishad under Munshiganj's Tongibari upazila and also a local AL leader, was shot dead due to a rivalry over the election to a school managing committee.

Police arrested three people in connection with the murder. The three are involved in AL.

On June 22, at least 30 people were injured in a clash between two AL factions in Rajshahi's Bagha upazila. Of the injured, Ashraful Islam Babul, upazila AL general secretary, died of his wounds on June 26.

Police arrested Bagha municipality Mayor Akkas Ali, also a district AL leader, in connection with the murder.

A recent report by Bangla daily Prothom Alo said clashes between AL or pro-AL men left 51 people dead in Bogura over the last 15 years.

The report cited establishing dominance, rivalries over securing party posts, control over narcotics trade, control over establishments, extortion in the transport sector, and control over sand trade as the reasons behind the clashes.

A top Bogura AL leader said, "No visible steps are taken to end the longstanding intra-party feuds."

He said grassroots leaders and activists used to maintain close contact with their respective unit leaders and also follow their instructions because their recommendations were necessary for them to win party tickets for local government polls.

"But as Awami League decided not to field party candidates in the local government polls, party men who ran as independents created their own groups of supporters. This ultimately weakened the chain of command," he observed.

In Russia, Biden's verbal slip draws mockery

REUTERS, *Moscow*

Joe Biden has shown he is "a pro-Russian candidate being controlled by the Kremlin," Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman joked yesterday, after the US president misspoke and introduced Ukraine's leader as "President Putin" before correcting himself.

Video of the gaffe at a Nato summit in Washington on Thursday featured prominently on news bulletins in Russia.

Biden mixing up the names of his Republican rival Donald Trump with that of Kamala Harris, his vice-president, was also given coverage.

Olga Skabeyeva, a pro-Kremlin TV commentator, posted a clip of Biden's Putin name fumble on her social media feed with a crying with laughter emoji.

"The show from Joe goes on!," she wrote separately beneath footage of Trump/Harris name mix-up.

Palestinians gather as they inspect the damages after Israeli forces withdrew from a part of Gaza City, following a ground operation in Gaza City yesterday. The civil defence agency said that about 40 bodies had been found in an initial search of two Gaza City districts. PHOTO: REUTERS

Musk's X 'deceives' users with blue checks: EU

AFP, *Brussels*

Tech billionaire Elon Musk's X platform is misleading users with its blue checkmarks for certified accounts, and is also violating EU content rules, Brussels said yesterday, in a finding that could lead to hefty fines.

EU regulators are unhappy with the blue badge system under Musk's ownership since anyone can now obtain it with a premium subscription, whereas before it was reserved for verified accounts including leaders, companies and journalists, after approval.

The formal warning against X is the first under the Digital Services Act (DSA), a sweeping law that forces digital companies do more to police content online. It follows a probe launched in December 2023.

X becomes the third company in as many weeks to face the European Union's wrath for violating landmark new rules, after Brussels warned Apple and Meta to change their ways or risk massive fines -- for breaches of a second law known as the Digital Markets Act (DMA).

Musk has overhauled the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, including changing its name, since purchasing it in October 2022.

But his plans for X have put him at odds with Brussels since the EU wants big tech to do more to protect users online and increase competition in the digital sphere. Now the European Commission has told X of its preliminary view that it is "in breach of" the DSA, arguing that the social network "deceives" users with its new blue badge rules.

Iran demands US pay $6.8bn for sanctions impact

AFP, *Tehran*

An Iranian court has ordered the United States to pay almost $6.8 billion in damages for the effect of sanctions on patients with a rare skin disease.

The International Court in Tehran ordered its foe the United States to pay $6.785 billion to patients with epidermolysis bullosa, a disorder that causes the skin to blister easily, the judiciary's Mizan Online website said on Thursday.

Then-president Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdrew the US from a nuclear accord between Iran and several global powers. He reimposed economic sanctions that had been lifted under the agreement.

Washington's measures "deprived these patients of medicines and ointments", leading to "the death of about 20 people", it said.

The trial began in November 2021, when 295 complainants, including patients, took 30 American officials to court for "having participated in the establishment of the sanctions," Mizan added.

They filed the case after United Nations experts in October 2021 cited the impact of the US measures on epidermolysis bullosa patients as an example of "over-compliance with sanctions".

FAMINE IN GAZA

Displaced Palestinians turn to leaves to survive

REUTERS, *Gaza*

Struggling through rubble and buildings shattered by Gaza's offensive, Ahmed Al-Shanbari and three of his sons risk their lives to pick mulberry leaves to eat, a scene being played out across the enclave as Palestinians face a hunger crisis.

"It is scary to walk when the bombing is still happening," said Al-Shanbari, who like many Gazans risks Israeli bombardment in the search for food.

Ahmed's wife Fatima cleans the leaves and boils them over a makeshift stove. "Nothing in it is tolerable, neither its taste nor its colour," she said. Fatima stuffs the leaves with rice and spices, hoping to get her children to tolerate the sour taste. Yet the bitterness remains.

More than 495,000 people are facing the most severe level of food insecurity, says UN-backed global monitor

The mulberry leaves are animal's food, she says. "But what can we do?"

The al-Shanbari family of eight struggles to survive, like many Palestinians in Gaza, where 2.3 million people live in one of the world's most densely populated places facing shortages of food, water, medicine and fuel.

"Ever since the offensive started, we did not taste anything, we're living on the few things we find," said Fatima.

In a July 9 statement, a group of independent human rights experts mandated by the United Nations said that famine has spread throughout the enclave. Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva said the statement amounted to "misinformation".

"Israel has continuously scaled up its coordination and assistance in the delivery of humanitarian aid across the Gaza Strip, recently connecting its power line to the Gaza water desalination plant," it added.

According to Gaza's health authorities, at least 33 children have died of malnutrition, mostly in northern areas which had until recently faced the brunt of the Israeli military campaign.

Gaza remains at high risk of famine as the offensive continues and aid access is restricted, said a UN-backed global monitor called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), last month.

More than 495,000 people are facing the most severe, or "catastrophic", level of food insecurity, the IPC said.

Their statement, signed by experts including the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, condemned "Israel's intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people".

Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva said the statement amounted to "misinformation".

Nigeria school collapse kills several students

Others trapped

AFP, *Jos*

A school in central Nigeria collapsed yesterday, killing several students and trapping others who were heard crying for help under the rubble, a rescue agency and witnesses said.

Mechanical diggers tried to rescue victims while parents desperately looked for their children at the Saint Academy in Jos North district of Plateau State after the building fell in on students taking their exams, an AFP correspondent at the site said.

"I entered the class not more than five minutes, when I heard a sound, and the next thing is I found myself here," Wulliya Ibrahim, one of the injured students told AFP with his mother at his hospital bedside.

"We are many in the class, we are writing our exams."

The National Emergency Management Agency said the two-storey building housing Saint Academy collapsed killing "several students" without giving details.

"NEMA and other critical stakeholders are presently carrying out Search and Rescue operations," it said.

Ukraine downs 5 missiles, 11 drones launched by Russia

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

Ukrainian air force said yesterday it shot down all five Kh-101 cruise missiles and 11 out of 19 drones launched by Russia.

Russia's main target was the town of Starokostiantyniv, an important Ukrainian air base and a frequent target of Moscow's strikes, the air force said in a statement.

Ukrainian air force shot down 11 drones over six Ukrainian regions and did not have the location of the remaining eight drones launched in the attack.

"It is likely that the enemy is using imitators of attack drones to overload air defense. There was no information on casualties or damage," the air force said.

The governors of some of the targeted regions, including Sumy, Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, and Mykolaiv, reported no damage or casualties in their morning statements.

Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday that Russia does not rule out any scenarios regarding the possible resumption of the now-defunct Black Sea grain deal.

On Thursday, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, speaking after a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky, said they had discussed navigational security in the Black Sea, including the grain deal.

Russia allowed the Turkish- and United Nations-brokered deal, which for a year facilitated Russian and Ukrainian agricultural exports via the Black Sea, to expire in July 2023.

Pakistan's first breast milk bank opposed by clerics

AFP, *Karachi*

A hospital that launched the first breast milk bank for premature babies in Pakistan is negotiating for it to be reopened after clerics deemed it un-Islamic, doctors and the national Islamic council said yesterday.

The milk bank in the megacity of Karachi received religious approval in December from a provincial Islamic seminary, but that approval was withdrawn almost as soon as the facility opened in June, forcing it to shut.

"Breast milk is the only way to improve the chances of the survival of premature babies," said Jamal Raza, a doctor and the executive director of the Sindh Institute of Child Health and Neonatology hospital, where the bank was set up.

"People have no idea what this is about. Only premature babies were going to be given this milk," Raza added.

The facility was intended to help premature babies survive in a country where the neonatal mortality rate is 39 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the UN children's agency -- one of the highest in South Asia.

A religious edict, or fatwa, approving the facility was issued in December 2023 by Jamia Darul Uloom, an Islamic advisory body in the province.

However, the government's national Council of Islamic Ideology later questioned whether it risked breaking Islamic codes on kinship, which dictate that husband and wife cannot be breastfed by the same woman.

"The child's family must know who the donors are to not complicate the issue of future marriages between such families," the head of research at the council, Inamullah, who goes by one name, told AFP.

Relatives of construction workers comfort each other as rescuers work at the site of a collapsed scaffolding accident in the Malley suburb of Lausanne, Switzerland yesterday. At least three people were killed and eight injured when the scaffolding collapsed off a 19-storey building under construction in Lausanne, police said. PHOTO: AFP

MIGRANT CRISIS

Four drowned trying to cross Channel

Says French police

AFP, *Lille*

Four migrants drowned in the Channel overnight off France's northern coast while trying to cross to Britain, French maritime police said yesterday.

A navy patrol boat went to the site off of Boulogne-sur-Mer after being alerted that several migrants had fallen into the sea, maritime police told AFP.

Four bodies were pulled from the water, but people were also rescued, the police added.

The UK's new interior minister Yvette Cooper described the deaths as "truly awful".

"Criminal gangs are making vast profit from putting lives at risk," she wrote on X.

"We are accelerating action with international partners to pursue & bring down dangerous smuggler gangs," she added.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

State enterprises must answer for losses

Projected fivefold rise in losses demands proper response

We are alarmed to learn of a projection that state-owned enterprises could end up counting nearly a fivefold increase in losses in FY2024-25 compared to the previous year, as their expenses are likely to far exceed their earnings. This is according to a monitoring cell of the Finance Division that conducted a budgetary analysis of 50 enterprises across seven sectors. Their total loss for FY2025 could be Tk 28,047.97 crore—up from the Tk 5,989.87 crore loss incurred in FY2024—indicating a deeply concerning trend.

The projection, made by a government body no less, is yet another indictment of the widespread corruption and mismanagement besieging government institutions, including state-owned enterprises. Not too long ago, we had a similar indictment when the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) revealed massive financial irregularities in many of these institutions. Their spiralling losses, despite many enjoying monopolistic advantages as service providers, raise questions not only about how they would have fared in a competitive market environment, but also regarding the government's austerity measures, which should have stemmed the tide of rising expenses in them. Evidently, things are as bad as depicted in media reports, and they are now set to get worse.

This is not to say that all government enterprises are underperforming. In fact, according to the monitoring cell, most are making a profit. But the overall picture is marred by the staggering losses of 13 of the enterprises—projected to be Tk 36,144.93 crore in total—significantly eating away at the achievements of the rest. Some of them are well-known for their serial underperformance. Top among them is the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), contributing the largest anticipated loss with Tk 18,103.60 crore, thereby justifying the prediction of two Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) experts, made in a column published in this daily last year, that it was turning into a "white elephant." Another familiar contributor of losses is the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), where the level of irregularities is so massive that it even stunned a parliamentary committee.

We, therefore, demand a thorough review of why these 13 entities are floundering. We can no longer ignore their persistent losses, or that of other state institutions regularly flagged for irregularities. Any intervention must aim to rid them not only of corruption, but also the cycle of poor planning and inefficiencies that have long gone unpunished. The present economic crisis will be harder to overcome with these albatrosses hung around our neck.

Will the 'big fish' finally be caught?

Identify those who supplied and bought the leaked PSC exam questions

For years, we have urged the authorities to investigate the issue of PSC question paper leaks seriously beyond just perfunctory arrests of a few culprits. Thirty incidents of question paper leaks and a decade later, our law enforcement agencies seem to be finally conducting a thorough investigation to find all those involved at various stages of the process. According to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the syndicate of Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) officials and employees was involved in leaking questions of at least 30 recruitment tests. The investigators have also listed the names of at least 24 officials currently working in different government departments, including the cadre service, who were involved in the racket, based on confessions of those arrested. The CID has hinted of involvement of some "big fish."

We are glad that these names are finally coming out, but given the way the investigations into question paper leaks have played out over the last decade, we have every reason to worry that those in the highest echelons of power will eventually get away. The CID has made arrests on multiple occasions before; how is it that they failed to unearth the major ring that has apparently been in operation since 2002? How did transactions worth crores of taka in the banks of syndicate members go unnoticed for so long? A few of those arrested now have been found to be involved in similar leaks before; why were they allowed to get away with not even a slap on their wrists? It's worth asking if law enforcement members themselves were previously involved in coverups in light of the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators so far. Law enforcement agencies must rise to the occasion to unmask the masterminds and their collaborators, no matter their identity.

It is also time we made public the names of those who got the jobs in much sought-after government positions by buying leaked question papers. How can we expect them to serve the country over their own greed if their entry into the profession is marked by such dishonesty? Corruption is now so ingrained into our system that perhaps we no longer even know or care to know the difference between right and wrong. But to stop this country from falling into a deeper abyss, we must do more than arrest a few individuals—we need to weed out the corrupt at every stage of government service.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Theresa May becomes second woman PM of UK

On this day in 2016, Theresa May, then leader of the Conservative Party, became the second woman prime minister of the United Kingdom, replacing David Cameron, who resigned after the country voted to leave the European Union (EU).

Why are highly educated people choosing blue-collar jobs abroad?

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

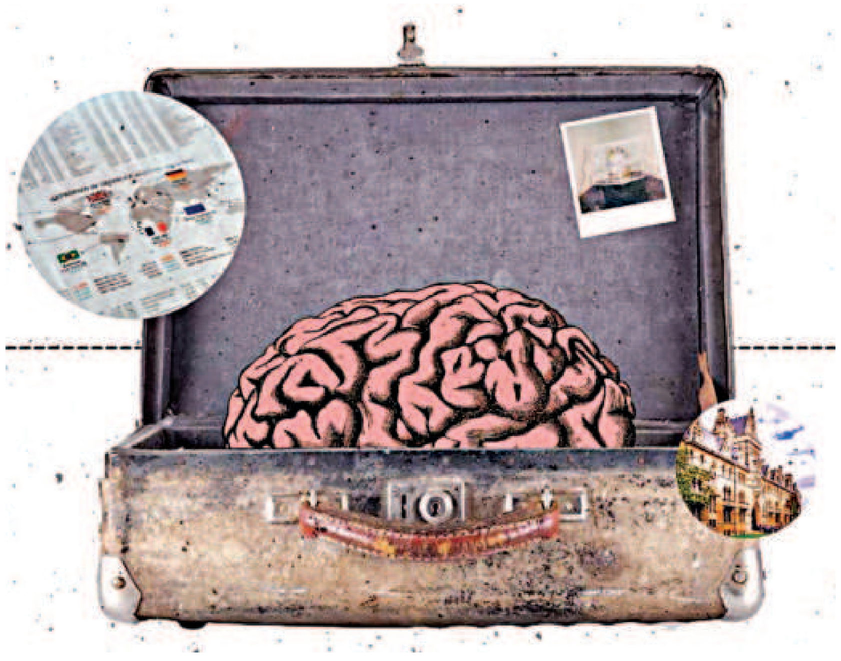
Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

According to the records of a government-initiated overseas recruitment app, Ami Probashi, 50,000 registered applicants for blue-collar jobs such as labourers, drivers, and cleaners hold graduate and postgraduate degrees. More than three-fourths of the 2,477 PhD holders have also listed menial jobs as their options to leave the country. This trend is not just a statistical oddity, but a clear sign of deep-seated issues within our local job market and the broader socioeconomic context. The interest in low-skilled jobs in conventional migrant destinations (e.g., the Middle East, Malaysia, Europe, and North America) demands closer scrutiny.

It is common for expatriates to engage in odd jobs while they are studying or use them as a toehold for better alternatives. However, accepting (read: expecting) jobs that fall short of their academic qualifications and expertise, especially in such large quantities, is concerning. Think of the social cost. In an ideal situation, when highly educated individuals leave their home country to take up low-skilled jobs abroad, that country loses out on the potential contributions they could make to different professional fields.

These individuals, from an opportunity cost perspective, forgo the possibility of securing high-paying, high-status jobs that align with their qualifications. Instead, they are more focused on their immediate need for improved living conditions and economic stability by choosing menial jobs. The opportunity cost is not just personal; it is national. This brain drain stunts the country's growth and exacerbates the lack of qualified experts in critical industries. One might counter-argue that in a country with high unemployment, at least these individuals would become "remittance warriors" and foray into our national development.



FILE VISUAL: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

As the world gets flat, Thomas Friedman argues, the draw from a better economy is natural. According to him, globalisation has levelled the playing field and given everyone everywhere equal opportunities. Friedman has been proven wrong. The migration of highly educated individuals from poorer countries to take on low-skilled jobs in wealthier countries highlights the persistent inequalities and barriers that exist. It reveals that the world is far from flat. Just as the caste system once maintained social hierarchy, the rich world still relies on the poor to perform their "dirty" jobs. A software designer receives a higher royalty for their innovation compared to workers in a manufacturing plant.

Seeing our PhD holders choose menial jobs over research and innovation highlights a flaw in our educational policy. Why can't we engage our graduates with the highest achievements in a productive manner and employ them in the upper echelon? Does it mean our degrees don't matter, at least in many OECD countries?

The more scandals we stir up, the more questionable the reputation of our degrees will become. If a premier institution admits a high-profile candidate for a PhD because of his professional influence and grants him a degree based on a 90-page report, it's inevitable that questions will arise. And job placements for our local PhD holders as stereotypical taxi drivers will always remain a possibility.

I remember meeting one of my old university colleagues in London, a famed scientist who migrated to the UK in a highly skilled category, working as a nightclub bouncer. I never could understand his strange career choice. Maybe Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can help us understand the necessities of such a drastic career shift. In their home country, these highly educated individuals may struggle to meet even their basic needs due to economic instability and a lack of job opportunities. By migrating and taking up blue-collar jobs, they aim to secure their fundamental needs, with the hope of eventually moving up the hierarchy to achieve higher-level aspirations.

However, this is not a sustainable solution. We need to address the root causes of this trend by improving job opportunities, strengthening social security nets, and ensuring the quality and relevance of higher education. And this is precisely why public university teachers are boycotting the Prottoy scheme under the universal pension system. You cannot expect a university teacher with the best possible academic credentials to start a career with a Tk 22,000 basic salary and then have Tk 5,000 taka from their salary deducted for a future pension scheme. Even a private-sector driver with a Class 8 certificate earns more than a university teacher today.

Social security has become non-existent. The lack of safety nets became obvious during the pandemic. Most of us struggle to live hand-to-mouth. We do not have any mechanism to cope with emergencies. In contrast, wealthier countries often provide robust social security systems, making them attractive destinations for migrants seeking a more secure and predictable life. The colleague I mentioned was pleased that his professional sacrifice could ensure better schooling and healthcare for his family members. At least he was making an honest living. He did not pay millions to question leakers or corrupt bosses in order to get a job. He did not become a civil servant thinking of his job as a milking machine that would churn his initial investments into "*mast bhari* cheese."

Other contributing factors that cause people to opt for lesser options abroad include frustrations over opportunities and appreciation, the desire to join family members abroad, or the desire to escape political and social instability at home. A country that treats a film extra or a below-par player with more importance than a scientist, innovator or researcher is likely to lose its talents for sure. Whatever the motivation, the broader implication is clear: our current system is failing to harness the potential of our educated workforce.

The trend of highly educated individuals opting for blue-collar jobs abroad is a wake-up call for policymakers and stakeholders in the country. It underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in our education system, labour market policies, and social security frameworks. We must create an environment where our brightest minds can thrive and contribute to the nation's development, rather than seeking solace in menial jobs abroad.

Let's end the 'princessification' of girls and 'machofication' of boys

Laila Khondkar
is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

A recent advertisement by an English medium school in Dhaka caught my attention: two boys are seen learning mathematics and robotics, while a girl is seen playing the violin. To me, it was a glaring example of gender stereotypes. After all, one might get the impression from the ad that music is for girls and mathematics and robotics are for boys only. Gender stereotypes are preconceived notions about the characteristics and roles of men and women in society. Those who subscribe to those notions believe, for instance, that men excel in engineering while teaching is better suited for women. However, the reality is that, given the right environment, both men and women can succeed in any profession.

A 2020 report on the impact of gender stereotypes during early childhood by the Fawcett Society of the UK, titled "Unlimited Potential," analyses how gender stereotypes limit children's lives, diminish girls' self-esteem, create reading skill gaps among boys, and influence their future career choices. The study observed children aged 0-7 years, a crucial period when they begin to understand their place in the world.

Due to gender stereotypes, girls as young as six years old avoid subjects that require them to be "really, really, smart." About 36 percent of girls aged 7-10 years believe that their appearance is their most important trait. This leads to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. The pressure on boys to be breadwinners and handle any situation with stoicism contributes to higher suicide rates among men. The findings of this report are relevant to most countries, including Bangladesh.

Significant research highlights that challenging these stereotypes in early childhood can be a powerful tool in reducing violence against women and girls. Yet, we have seen a troubling rise in gender-coded products targeting boys and girls. Pink for girls and blue for boys may seem harmless, but the underlying messages are not innocent. Children's dreams are shaped by what they read, see and hear, as well as the toys they play with. Media, including newspapers, television, movies and advertisements, often portray women as weak and dependent, focused on grooming and household chores, and performing caregiving roles. Men are depicted as strong, responsible, and professionally successful. In traditional fairy tales, girl characters are weak, in most cases "rescued" by princes.

A stark division is evident in the toys available to children. Girls are seldom given opportunities to play with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) toys. Boys' toys rarely focus on nurturing or caring attributes, which reinforces a lack of emotional expressiveness. These experiences have lasting impacts, which limit children's future career paths and personal development.

Parents and guardians often assign different tasks to boys and girls. The emphasis on raising girls as "princesses" and telling boys that "boys don't cry" is still prevalent in many families. Parents hold different expectations regarding what boys and girls can achieve. Research shows that parents' ideas about their children's abilities are formed as early as at the age of 11 months. Among other things, this affects children's play. For example, as girls get older, they participate less in sports; and as a result, their skills in it also decline.

Children are born with immense potential. Isn't it a tremendous waste of human capacity to confine them to limited roles? Parents and guardians must carefully choose books, toys, films, and other materials for children to avoid giving them anything that conveys the stereotypes.

Social norms about what girls and boys should or should not do influence parents and teachers, which in turn affects young people's decisions regarding studies and working lives. Traditional beliefs discourage girls from studying STEM subjects and pursuing related professions. Men face resistance if they want to choose professions that require caregiving. Men and women are not able to realise their potential when they feel obliged to conform with gender stereotypes, which is a loss for the entire society.

There should be government directives in Bangladesh to ensure that the media does not promote gender stereotypes, and there should be initiatives to enhance teachers' skills to make them aware of the stereotypes and help them address them through teaching methods. Manufacturers and advertisers must avoid stereotyped schemes in product design and packaging. The messages coded in advertising through gendered imagery and themes must be critically examined and restructured.

The change has already begun. Books and films featuring female characters as brave and in leading roles are being produced, and there is a trend of rewriting old fairy tales. These new narratives present women as ambitious, confident, and engaged in leadership, acting as friends and comrades to men. We need many more such stories that challenge gender stereotypes.

Children are born with immense potential. Isn't it a tremendous waste of human capacity to confine them to limited roles? Parents and guardians must carefully choose books, toys, films, and other materials for children to avoid giving them anything that conveys the stereotypes. If parents equally share household and external responsibilities, children will follow and in the process develop positive notions about the roles of men and women. Teachers should also encourage boys and girls to believe in their abilities. Our goal should be to provide the entire range of experiences and options to all children. We must end the "princessification" of girls and the "machofication" of boys.

Boys and girls should have opportunities to study any subject and choose any profession to realise their dreams. To create this environment, the government, parents, teachers, social workers, writers, artists, media workers, all have to step up and carry out their responsibilities. The foundation for a society based on equality has to be built during childhood.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
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The nine lives of a corrupt public servant

OF MAGIC & MADNESS

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BADIUZZAMAN BAY

Cometh the hour, cometh Obaidul Quader. Part of the charm of the Awami League's long-running general secretary is that he always seems to deliver the most poetic lines about his opponents, even if they aren't entirely original. So recently, after a barrage of high-profile scandals rocked the administration, he set out to outline the government's strategy to curb corruption, using a reference that would seem strange to many: *khela hobe*. Yes, that all's-fair-in-love-and-war inspired mantra that guided Awami League's ruthless campaign against its rivals prior to the 2024 election.

"The game is on again [*Abaro khela hobe*]," Quader declared while addressing a party gathering. "It's on against corruption, plundering, and money laundering. Bangladesh must be rid of corruption." This is not the first time he used a sporting reference to attack corruption. The question is: how does the administration plan to play this game? Will it be like how it played last time, through force and coercion? Or does it have any special plan we are not privy to yet? Details are scarce at this point. So far, beyond rote reiterations of its "zero tolerance" commitment, occasional disciplinary spectacles that hardly qualify as punishment, and lengthy proceedings that may kick the judicial can down the road indefinitely, the administration has betrayed little awareness that it is no longer enough to go after a few rotten apples—it must go after the very system that enables corruption.

We can talk about how corruption has spread its tentacles in every sector, from banking to health to energy to transport to construction to civil aviation. We can talk about how nothing moves without bribery. But for a fuller grasp of how it all works and where it all originates from, we must examine civil service—the system governing public officials—which seems designed from start to finish to foster a partisan and corrupt bureaucracy. But since we are into references, let me use one that aptly portrays the seamless progression of public servants through this system: the cat with nine lives.

We can talk about how corruption has spread its tentacles in every sector, from banking to health to energy to transport to construction to civil aviation. We can talk about how nothing moves without bribery. But for a fuller grasp of how it all works and where it all originates from, we must examine civil service—the system governing public officials—which seems designed from start to finish to foster a partisan and corrupt bureaucracy.

The general idea behind this myth is to celebrate cats' natural suppleness and swiftness allowing them to get out of potentially fatal situations. Now, think of the nine lives granted to cats as the nine or so lifelines or stages through which state officials are supported, sometimes starting even before recruitment and continuing well into retirement. Think of how they are favoured or shielded at every turn. And ask yourself if so many of them turning out to be corrupt or compromised is a coincidence.

Let's delve into these hypothetical lifelines in a public servant's career:

Corruption at pre-recruitment stage

The whole process of corruption in the civil service starts with the cultivation of the idea that government jobs are superior to all others. Power, prestige, money, and job security—nothing beats this lucrative offering, with the private sector proving to be a poor substitute. Hence the mad race for all recruitment tests held under public authorities. Hence the demand for leaked question papers and all those supplying them, even from within the PSC. Hence the metamorphosis of public universities into BCS factories, and their libraries into BCS workshops. Hence the debate on extending the age limit for government jobs to 35 years.

I can go on and on, but you get the message: that the unhealthy competition in civil service recruitment and the lack of private sector alternatives have created an atmosphere that breeds and feeds off desperation. This is where future officials get their first lesson: that corruption can give you an edge over the teeming thousands. So you see some candidates spending lakhs for that golden goose of a job. You see others leaning on the preferential quota system, or leaked question papers, or their political connections. You see Chhatra League leaders locking up university VCs, or the government—forever wary of dissent—delving into irrelevant details like political affiliations during post-exam background checks, thus further undermining meritocracy. How likely are those coming from such a compromised background to respond to Obaidul Quader's plea to "play," and rein in corruption or refrain from corrupt practices themselves?

Post-recruitment privileges and exemptions

There are about 14 lakh government employees spread across the public sector. Once recruited, employees receive lucrative salaries, allowances, and benefits, with a side dish of opportunities for corruption. It's no wonder why certain departments and postings are so highly sought after, or why so many medical and engineering graduates are lining up for BCS general cadre, forgoing once-cherished careers in specialised fields. State officials are granted powers and privileges, sometimes even undeserved promotions, that come with little scrutiny or accountability. Further relaxations of rules governing their activities are on the cards.

For example, the public administration ministry is reportedly set to allow public servants to engage in stock market trading, reversing a prohibition in the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979. If it comes to pass, they will be able to buy or sell shares legally. Why is this problematic? Recall that Matiur Rahman, a top NBR official now under investigation for corruption, allegedly made a fortune through stock market investments, using insider information, both of which are illegal. Many government employees are similarly engaged in stock trading and have demonstrated their willingness to exploit privileged access for financial gain. So, legalising it may open a Pandora's box of unethical practices. Or, think of the proposal to relax another provision in the service rules requiring officials to submit wealth statements every five years, removing an important layer of scrutiny that already stands significantly diluted.

Relaxed penalties for corruption

Those who are honest have nothing to fear from punishment. But when penalties are reduced by relaxing anti-graft rules, it benefits only the corrupt, and this is what the administration has done on a number of occasions. For example, in 2018, an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules (1985) introduced "reprimand" as a penalty for proven corruption, besides other penalties. You often hear of salary reduction, or "closing," or demotion, or transfer—so often the penalties of choice—which does feel like a slap on the wrist given the gravity of some of the crimes, thus further encouraging corruption.

Over the years, we have seen how such anti-graft regulations have been relaxed. In any sector other than public, the punishment for proven corruption would be instant termination. A recent editorial by this daily recounts three incidents where the accused, despite being found guilty of corruption, continue to be in service as they have been spared harsher departmental actions and even legal consequences. What message does it send to the wider public servant community? This policy of leniency provides a safety net for dishonest officials and contrasts sharply with the government's zero tolerance stance on corruption.

Lack of accountability for failures and inefficiencies

Another lifeline extended to government officials is through a collusive arrangement in which departments, and relevant officials, responsible for certain failures are seldom held accountable. You often see people die or suffer terribly because of accidents, disasters, and crimes that can be linked to the mismanagement, negligence or inefficiencies of certain government departments. Yet rarely, if ever, is a higher-up punished or even subjected to a reprimand. There is a tendency to let them off the hook during interdepartmental inquiries.

The case of a former deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, who reportedly got his name removed from a list of accused for misappropriation of funds with the help of several court officials, including a former judge, shows to what extent power can be abused to both commit crimes and protect criminals—both being the same person in this case. But he wasn't acting alone, neither do corrupt or compromised or inefficient officials, as they protect each other. And more often than not, the system allows it. We may recall how the attorney general himself told the apex court a few years ago that the parliament had passed the Government Service Act, 2018 to protect public servants, considering them a "different class of people." The same act had mandated law enforcers to seek "permission" for arresting public servants in criminal cases before the court, in August 2022, scrapped the relevant provision. But this culture of impunity has reached such a state that top officials are often seen directly flouting court directives, with no consequences faced.

Endless opportunities for corruption

The extent to which government officers and even low-level operatives can exploit their positions to engage in corruption, taking advantage of the protection and lack of oversight provided by the system, has again come to light following a series of financial scandals reported by the media. Beside the power they hold, some even post-retirement, what these revelations show is how rampant corruption has been. With so many present and former officials facing court proceedings, there is still a palpable sense that we are only scratching the surface. The iceberg still lies beneath it. Such massive presence not only indicates the normalisation of corruption, but also serves as a boost to the corrupt-minded.

Undeserved rewards and honours

Another lifeline or boost granted to the corrupt is the possibility of getting state rewards and recognition, so long as they are connected to the powers that be. The case of former IGP Benazir Ahmed, who was given state honours despite his controversial record, exemplifies this trend. But we are only getting to know about it now, post-retirement, which raises the question: how many such cases have there been? What really influences the decision to recognise state officers? Their service record, or political connection? Or is it their strategic importance to the government? Whatever it is, honesty is certainly not among the criteria. The implication of handing what serves as a symbolic victory to a potentially corrupt person—and all the way in which they can further shield themselves or advance their careers using such honours—cannot be stressed enough. Over the years, we have also seen how once-revered state awards for writers have been made objects of ridicule because of overzealous bureaucrats lobbying for their own candidature, and they sometimes got their way.

Culture of no resignation

Scandal-hit top officials, politicians, MPs, vice-chancellors or anyone like them rarely, if ever, resign in Bangladesh, even amid public protests. A common refrain among those under pressure to step down from their positions is that they will only do so if directed by the prime minister, indicating a culture where political loyalty supersedes accountability. Their connection and conviction further undermine what few accountability mechanisms we have left, however fragile. But this culture of no resignation does give the corrupt a boost, heightening their sense of inviolability so long as they have the government's support. And they usually do—unless, suddenly and quite inexplicably for the public, they don't.

Retirement benefits

This is another stage where the corrupt win big. Even if it comes to all employees regardless of how ethical they have been during their tenure, it adds to the overall appeal of civil service for the corrupt-minded. Being able to reach the finish line unpunished, and bow out with a fat pension that the majority of the population cannot even think of, is indeed a motivation. A lot can be said about the ongoing debate on the new universal pension scheme—with different, discriminatory hierarchies for government officials and others in the public sector—but that's for another day.

Post-retirement support and opportunities

The last lifeline may come in several forms, including one recently shown by the Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) that extended unquestioning support to Benazir Ahmed as it lambasted the media for its coverage and even seemingly made threatening overtures. The message that other professional bodies likely got from its public statement is that they have a duty to protect their members regardless of whether they are in service or not. General members of police forces, which usually are among the groups most talked about in any discussion on human rights, should be particularly happy for the active role being played by the BPSA to represent them in public forums, but corrupt police officers will take note, too.

But what adds more to the destabilising appeal of civil service in Bangladesh has to do with the enduring influence of partisan loyalty. Loyal retiring top officials may not only see their tenure extended, but also secure cushy positions in some statutory bodies. Some may even transition into active politics, perpetuating the cycle of patronage.

In the end, I must say my analysis is based on the worst-case scenarios and corrupt trends reported in the media, and is in no way a denigration of honest officials who I would like to believe are as many in number as their dishonest counterparts, if not more. But despite the latter's unchecked activities and collusion with unscrupulous entities across all sectors, the government has waxed lyrical at best, like Obaidul Quader did, or totally ignored it at worst. It only shows how entrenched corruption is. To the government, any loss of image or public resources owing to corruption seems to be an acceptable one so long as it has a pliant bureaucracy doing its bidding.

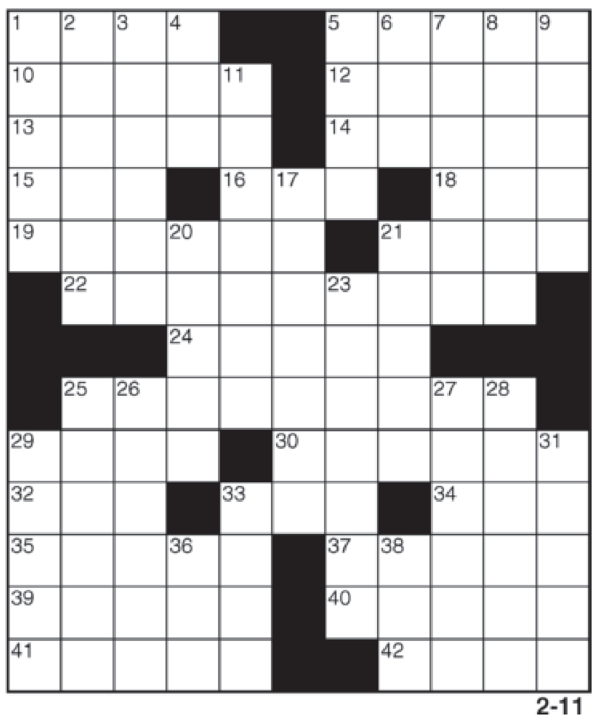
Since independence, at least 16 commissions and committees have recommended reforms to create an efficient, merit-based civil administration, but those have been largely ignored. It is not difficult to understand the reluctance of bureaucratic and political leaders. For civil servants, especially those in high-ranking positions, reforms that promote efficiency, meritocracy and accountability represent a threat to their influence, benefits and promotional prospects. Political leaders also do not want to embrace change as it is easier to maintain control over a weak bureaucracy. But without taking on the system, and the many layers through which it sustains itself, corruption can never be tackled.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Homer's son
5 More polite
10 Dubai rulers
12 Bowl
13 Muscular power
14 Fixes
15 Easter find
16 Broad st.
18 Soak up
19 Fencer's cry
21 Gift toppers
22 Wood slivers
24 Worship site
25 Track athletes
29 Bill
30 Parliament Hill setting
32 Writer Beattie
33 Vein yield
34 Salon stuff
35 "The Kiss" creator
37 So out, it's in
39 Effortless charm
40 Hot spot
41 Moves cautiously
42 Galoots

DOWN
1 Trouble
2 Pedro's pals
3 Total at the register
4 Due follower
5 Newborn's need
6 Fury
7 Curse bleeper
8 Funds
9 Coarse files
11 African tongue
17 Avenue in Monopoly
20 Lewis's partner
21 Floppy top
23 Rags
25 Madrid Mrs.
26 Bamboo eaters
27 Convertible
28 Veer suddenly
29 River boat
31 African lilies
33 Addition column
36 Bar cubes
38 Greek vowel



2-11

YETERSDAY'S ANSWERS

P	A	B	L	O	■	R	E	B	A	R
A	T	E	I	N	■	A	D	E	L	E
T	H	R	E	E	■	T	I	R	E	S
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Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Students and quota holders say REFORM IS NECESSARY

The quota system must be executed in a way that upholds fairness, inclusivity, and equity

A person who has been deprived of benefits can relate to the hardships faced by minorities. To discuss issues like land possession, evictions, and the dearth of quality teachers and educational institutions, we need representation.

AZRA HUMAYRA

The year 2018 saw a surge in student protests that resonated across the country. It began with the demand for quota reform, and, in the following months, the Road Safety Movement took place. The year was full of potential, as the wind of change appeared to sweep across the nation. Students, with their youthful zeal, flooded the streets, their voices echoing the plea for justice and reform. However, their hard work proved to be futile. Our roads, despite the safety movement, are still unsafe. And the quota system, which was abolished, not reformed, was re-established earlier this year.

On October 3, 2018, the Bangladeshi government abolished the quota system for government job recruitment in grades nine through thirteen. On January 20, 2020, the Ministry of Public Administration authorised a proposal to eliminate quotas on direct appointments to eighth grade or above positions in government employment. The Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) agreed to follow these changes in their recruitment procedures.

However, on June 5, 2024, the High Court ruled that the cancellation of the quota system, including the 30 percent quota for freedom fighters in government jobs, was illegal. This ruling was upheld by the Supreme Court's Appellate Division on July 4, 2024, reinstating the quota system for these posts.

Since the beginning of July, students at several public universities, such as Dhaka University (DU), Jahangirnagar University (JU), and Jagannath University (JnU), have staged large-scale protests calling for the overturning of the High Court's ruling to reinstate the 30 percent quota for the descendants of freedom fighters in government employment. Their protests have been anything but discreet; they have orchestrated roadblocks, held impassioned rallies, and leveraged the power of social media to broadcast their grievances to a wider audience.

The question that arises in this storm of discontent is what the students who had quota privileges think about the system. Are they silently wrestling with a sense of loss, or do they perceive the movement as a necessary stride towards a more egalitarian society?

Around 56 per cent of government employment is earmarked for candidates from various quotas. 30 percent went to the children and grandchildren of Freedom Fighters, 10 percent to women, 10 percent to district-based allotments, five percent to members of indigenous communities, and one percent to people with physical disabilities.

Waseka Rahman*, a fourth-year DU student, says, "There is no logic behind the current system. If 56 percent of seats are allocated by quotas, aren't we doing a disservice to the majority of those who do not have them? Intellect should be a top priority. Why should the grandchildren of liberation fighters enjoy quota privileges? There should be no discrimination in government job applications. The quota ratio should be justifiable."

After seeing how the freedom fighter quota affects other students, students who leveraged it during the admissions period are now speaking out against it. "I used the freedom fighter quota, but I didn't know any better at the time. I decided to seize the chance while I could. I still did not get to study the subject I wanted. If I had the chance today, I would not deprive someone of a well-deserved opportunity," Waseka adds.

Upon talking to Abrar Ahmed*, another student who utilised the freedom fighter quota and who has now graduated from the Department of Economics at DU, he states, "It is extremely important to change the quota system now because the predetermined percentage is not even filled." This demonstrates how demoralising the current quota system is for the students who cannot utilise it.

Talking to another student who chose not to use the indigenous quota during the admissions season gives a different perspective on this debate. Hritu Roy, a fourth-year student majoring in International Relations at DU, says, "Being in Dhaka since childhood, I am privileged compared to most people in my (Chakma) community. Even though there is a quota facility during university admission, I did not use it, and I think people like me who had a privileged upbringing should not use quota."

While the movement may be perceived as students advocating for the entire abolishment of the quota system, that is not the case. At its core, the protests are aimed at reforming the current system while keeping fair allocations.

Khingmokay Marma, majoring in Mass Communication and Journalism at DU, speaks about the need for indigenous quotas. She says, "We need indigenous quotas because we are lagging behind. If someone from an indigenous community gets a government job in a higher position with the help of quota, the person may represent their community, encouraging others to come forward for higher education. This also helps guide the future generation. Since the abolishment of the quota system in 2018, there has been no indigenous BCS cadre except a few, due to which many are losing interest in higher education. I have heard such things myself: What will happen after studying so far? There is no possibility of becoming a BCS cadre; it is better to get a job after HSC."

Khingmokay emphasises how the empowerment of one indigenous individual could cause a ripple effect; she says, "When someone is in a good position, they are better able to comprehend community issues and communicate them to decision-makers. A person who has been deprived of benefits can relate to the hardships faced by minorities. To discuss issues like land possession, evictions, and the dearth of quality teachers and educational institutions, we need representation. So, I believe a five percent quota for indigenous people is fair."

Hritu Roy shares the same sentiment; she states, "In higher education, it is important to have minimum quota facilities only for minorities and check whether the right people are availing of them. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts and in most government jobs, there is a huge disparity in the recruitment of indigenous people. Hence, it is necessary to ensure transparency in recruitment based on merit, along with the elimination of the quota system. Otherwise, citizens will be deprived of their fair rights."

Conversations with the interviewees reveal a unanimous call for reformation. Among the protestors is Waseka Rahman, who emphatically supports the movement, stating, "Quotas for indigenous populations, the physically impaired, and women should be maintained."

The students' demands centre around ensuring that the quota system is restructured to benefit those who genuinely need support, such as marginalised communities. They argue against a system that perpetuates injustice and discrimination, advocating for a fairer approach that aligns with the principles of equity and social justice. The underlying sentiment is clear: while reform is necessary, it must be executed in a way that upholds fairness and inclusivity.

In this crucible of student activism, we are reminded of the essence of democracy: an ever-changing debate that must be responsive to its people's needs and ambitions. The students' demands for reform are more than just calls for policy changes; they are also fundamental statements of democratic values, challenging us to envisage a system in which inclusion, equity, and merit may coexist peacefully.

**Names have been changed upon request*

Azra Humayra *is majoring in Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University. Find her at: azrahumayra123@gmail.com*

On female friendships and the value of community

SILWAT QUADER

Individualism is a term often ascribed to Western culture. In such societies, individuals prioritise self-identity – ensuring that their personal needs are met before those of the group. The Western world has adapted well to these principles and has continued to instil such values for generations.

This is in direct contrast to the values that we inherit where individuals are expected to prioritise the welfare of the community. Such an altruistic approach to life fosters a sense of collective empathy and deep companionship, which has traditionally been a key aspect of our culture. One of the most prominent ways this feature has been realised is through friendship between women, evident in folktales, music, and art. Evolving from early relationships with cousins, neighbours, and friends which later solidify into stronger bonds of sisterhood, women play essential roles in each other's lives.

All throughout history, women have relied on each other – going as far to trust each other with their children. While it would be wrong to claim that mutual support to such an extent was entirely absent in Western cultures, it was nonetheless, not as common.

In recent times though, there has been a noticeable shift among women as they have started to move away from focusing solely on individualistic practices. Rather, there is a growing inclination towards collectivism, particularly evident in how women are establishing and fostering stronger connections within their female social circles. In adopting collectivism, some have sought to address the negative impacts of extreme individualism, such as the absence of emotional support during difficult times, which has resulted in recognising the values of collectivism.

Women are cultivating deeper and more meaningful relationships to find emotional nourishment and a sense of acceptance. Feminist movements and mental health campaigns are also emphasising the significance of collective empowerment as well as unity and strong emotional support systems in overcoming challenges. While the negative impacts of hyper-independence have become more prevalent, women hailing from communities whose practices revolve around collectivism, are adopting some values of individualism. After all, self-sufficiency and independence are indeed admirable, and vital survival skills for all. Every woman should possess independence and self-sufficiency to lead life on her terms.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

However, being independent does differ from being an individualist. But why do we appear to prefer individualism? Why do we insist on blending our altruism with individualistic ideas to the point that key features of the former get dimmer down the line?

Instead of opting for one over the other, we can blend both these approaches. Exploring both collectivism and individualism, and not overindulging in either one, provides a healthy balance especially when this exchange of cultural practices is voluntary and not imposed. When it is imposed on us, we get pulled into this whirlwind of individualistic principles, unconsciously forcing us to isolate ourselves from our community. Therefore, cherishing the practices that are more closely intertwined with our roots while embracing the empowering aspects of individualism, helps maintain network of support system that are vital to our well-being.

Silwat Quader *is a student of Economics at North South University.*

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 5
India vs Zimbabwe
4thT20I
Live from 5:00 pm
STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Women's final
Live from
6:30 pm

England great Anderson's one final flourish

- Anderson finished his Test career with 704 wickets in 188 matches at an average of 25.45. He completed 32 five-wicket hauls and picked up 10 wickets in a match on three occasions.
- The 41-year-old is the third-highest all-time wicket-taker in Tests after Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708).
- In terms of Tests played, Anderson is only second to Sachin Tendulkar, who played 200.
- Anderson has taken 123 wickets at Lord's. Only Muralitharan, with 166 at the Singhalese Sports Club Cricket Ground in Colombo, registered more at a particular venue in Tests.
- Anderson holds the record for most caught behind by a wicketkeeper (198) and outfield catches (468) off a bowler in Test cricket.

AGENCIES

James Anderson signed off from international cricket with his 704th and final wicket on Friday, ending a glittering 21-year career during England's emphatic win over West Indies and prompting tributes from teammates and fellow greats.

The seamer, aged 41 years and 348 days, had Joshua Da Silva caught behind on his final day of Test cricket as England won the game by an innings and 114 runs inside three days. He spurned a golden opportunity to make it 705 wickets, shelling a simple catch from Gudakesh Motie, and smiled ruefully at the miss.

It was the only negative for Anderson on a day in which he demonstrated his skill one final time for an appreciative Lord's crowd, repeatedly beating the outside edge with seam and swing.

Anderson, who finished with match figures of 4-58, said he would miss competing at the highest level, adding that there was "no better feeling" than winning a Test match.

Asked what he was going to do next, Anderson -- who is joining the England coaching set-up -- added: "I've not really thought that far ahead.

"I'm going to stick around with these guys for the rest of the summer, try and help the bowling group out as much as I can and we'll see where life takes us after that."

England captain Ben Stokes described Anderson as "an incredible inspiration for so many people" while West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite said he was a "legend of the game", but understandably would not miss facing him.

India great Sachin Tendulkar said on X: "It has been a joy to watch you bowl -- with that action, speed, accuracy, swing and fitness. You've inspired generations with your game."

Anderson has certainly earned a rest, having sent down his 40,000th delivery in Test cricket late on day two, more than any other seam bowler and putting him fourth on the all-time list.

Anderson bowed out with a remarkable 704 wickets from 188 Tests. Only spinners Shane Warne (708 Test wickets) and Muttiah Muralitharan (800) have enjoyed more bowling success at this level, with India batting hero Sachin Tendulkar (200 matches) the lone cricketer to have played more Tests than Anderson.

"It's been quite an amazing week," Anderson said. "I've been overwhelmed with the reaction of the crowd and everyone around the ground, and the lads as well. I'm just proud of what I've achieved.

"Obviously this morning was quite emotional with the two teams lined up, and the reaction from the crowd was pretty special. I'm still trying to hold them (tears) back now but I think I am just really proud," added Anderson after ending his Test career where it started -- with a debut against Zimbabwe at Lord's in 2003.

Olmo focused on winning trophy, not Golden Boot

AFP, *Donaueschingen*

Spain playmaker Dani Olmo is vying for the Euro 2024 golden boot with England's Harry Kane, but said Friday he doesn't care about winning it as long as his team lifts the trophy.

Olmo and Kane are tied on three goals with four other players and if either score in the final on Sunday in Berlin they will likely claim the prize.

However, with Spain angling for a record fourth European Championship, Olmo said the team's target was far more important than his own individual glory.

"It's an extra motivation, if there's even room for that, but look, as long as we win, I don't care if I score or if (Spain goalkeeper) Unai Simon does," Olmo told reporters. "I don't care at all, the important thing is winning the game, but I always have the objective of helping to chip in."

Olmo has also created two goals for his teammates but unlike in the past when that was used as a tie-breaker, the award will be shared by any players joint-top of the charts.

The RB Leipzig midfielder did not start the tournament as part of Spain coach Luis de la Fuente's first choice side but made a strong impact off the bench.

Olmo replaced the injured Pedri in the quarterfinal win over hosts Germany, scoring and setting up the winner for Mikel Merino.

The midfielder also struck against France in the semifinal and has scored in all three knock-out rounds Spain have played.

"In this tournament I feel very good, in a great moment of form, so I have to keep taking advantage of it," continued the 26-year-old.

"It's true (Kane and I) are tied, but there are other players too who have helped us get here, with goals and good play.

"Speaking of goals, Fabian (Ruiz) has two goals, Alvaro (Morata) has one -- if he scores a hat-trick then he will win it, and we'd be just as happy -- it doesn't matter who scores, the main thing is the team." Olmo scored a hattrick for Leipzig as they beat Bayern Munich 3-0 in the German Supercup final on Kane's debut for the Bavarian giants last August.

The England captain has still not won a trophy in his career at club or international level, finishing a runner-up with England in the Euro 2020 final.

Kane, 30, has struggled for form and peak fitness at the Euros despite managing three goals.

"Of course it would be a dream to score a hat-trick (again) and win it," added Olmo.

"But I repeat, the goal is just to win it."

Intensity of training broke me down to tears: Samiul

Samiul Islam Rafi **is the ninth male swimmer from Bangladesh to receive a wild card entry to the Olympic Games and is among the five athletes who will represent the country in the forthcoming Paris Games, starting on July 26. The Bangladesh Navy athlete, who holds three national records in backstroke events, has been training in Thailand under a World Aquatics Federation scholarship ahead of the Games. The 19-year-old recently spoke to** ***The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman*** **about his preparation, expectations and many other related matters. Here are the excerpts:**

The Daily Star (DS): How is your training going on for the Paris Olympics?

Samiul Islam Rafi (SI): I joined the training camp in Thailand in last December. It started in September but I could not join at that time due to last's year Asian Games. I have been training with some 32 swimmers from as many countries and nine of them including me have got the opportunity to take part in the Paris Olympics through a wild card. Right now, I am in recovery ahead of the Games.

DS: How did you feel when you learnt you will compete in the Olympics?

SI: Actually, I was uncertain about getting a wild card. I was working hard to improve my performance in Thailand. When I became the best swimmer at the National Swimming Championship last year, I grew in confidence because if I could earn more FINA points (points assigned to swimmers by World Aquatics), I might get the wild card. You could say that luck was on my side as I earned 686 FINA points after doing better in the 100m freestyle event in Thailand and that helped me get the wild card entry.

DS: Bangladesh swimmers have always just made up the numbers in the Olympics. Will the Paris Olympics be the same?

SI: The swimmers from China, the USA, Australia and other countries who win Olympic medals start swimming at the age of six. Swimmers, aged 20 or above in Bangladesh, can't match the timings of 12-year-old swimmers from those countries. I have been given an opportunity to compete in the Olympics and I want to use this platform to improve myself and deliver something good in the South Asian Games.

DS: Backstroke events are your favourite but you will have to compete in the 100m freestyle event in Paris...

SI: I have become what I am now through backstroke events. But I also compete in the 100m freestyle event. From last February, I have been training under a Russian coach in Thailand and have improved my timing by three seconds. I produced my best timing of 53.12 seconds in the Thailand open in April last.

DS: What are you hoping to achieve in the Olympics?

SI: I know it is quite tough for me to quality for the semifinals. Usually you need a timing of 47 seconds or better to progress but right now I am far off. I think one day I an achieve a timing of 49 seconds if I continue receiving high quality training. I am hoping to bring my timing down to 52 seconds in Paris. I have been working really hard in Thailand, sometimes I have even broken down in tears from the intensity of training. If I can clock less than 52 seconds, all the pain will be worth it.

DS: What is the difference between training in Thailand and Bangladesh?

SI: There is a gulf of difference. The training environment, facilities, schedule and diet are different. For instance, in Bangladesh our training schedule is – training, breakfast, rest period, then more training, lunch and then rest in the afternoon. But in Thailand, it's breakfast first, then stretching, warm-up in pool, training, gym, lunch, sleep, stretching and training. In Bangladesh, we swim nearly 10km per day but over there I swam nearly 20km every day.

Lautaro Martinez, who leads the race for Golden Boot in Copa America 2024 with four goals in five matches, looked sharp and focused during Argentina's training session ahead of Monday's final against Colombia at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida.

PHOTO: **INSTAGRAM**

A friend gone too soon

Scan the QR Code to read Amirul Islam's tribute to Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman

Paolini's first or Krejcikova's second?

AFP, *London*

Italy's Jasmine Paolini has set her sights on capping a "crazy" run to Saturday's Wimbledon final against Barbora Krejcikova by winning a maiden Grand Slam title. Meanwhile, Krejcikova will be hoping to win a second Grand Slam final of her career after winning the French Open in 2021.

Paolini survived the longest women's singles semifinal in Wimbledon history to beat Donna Vekic 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10/8) after two hours and 51 minutes of Centre Court drama on Thursday.

The 28-year-old is the first Italian woman to reach the final of the grass-court Grand Slam.

She will face Czech 31st seed Krejcikova, who enjoyed a shock 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 win over 2022 champion Elena Rybakina in the other semifinal.

It is an astonishing achievement for Paolini, who had not won a Tour-level match on grass until 15 days ago in Eastbourne, and lost in the first round on her previous three visits to Wimbledon.

But 2024 has been a breakthrough campaign for Paolini, who reached her maiden Grand Slam final at the French Open before losing to world number one Iga Swiatek.

"Two Grand Slam finals in a row was crazy to believe, no?" said Paolini.

Paolini is also the first woman to reach back-to-back Roland Garros and Wimbledon finals since Serena Williams in 2016.

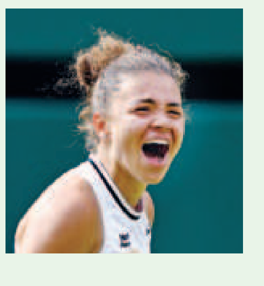
The final is just the second time Krejcikova and Paolini have met and their showdown will be a world away from their first encounter.

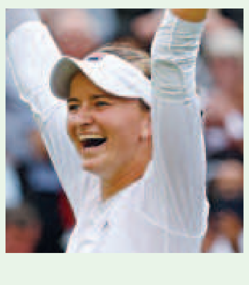
The pair squared off in the first round of qualifying for the Australian Open in 2018, with Krejcikova claiming a straight sets victory.

"It was a very long time ago, it's been a great journey for both of us to reach the Wimbledon final," said Krejcikova, who will be playing her second Grand Slam final.

Krejcikova had struggled with a back injury and illness this year, winning just three singles matches in the five months before finding her form in remarkable style at Wimbledon.

The 28-year-old shocked 11th seed Danielle Collins in the fourth round, former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko in the quarterfinals and Rybakina in the last four.





- Jasmine Paolini is a win away from delivering Italy its first Wimbledon champion.
- Paolini is the first Italian woman in the Open Era to reach the final at two different Grand Slam events, having finished as runner-up to Iga Swiatek on the red clay at Roland Garros last month.
- Either Paolini or Krejcikova will become the sixth woman in the Open Era to win Wimbledon after turning 28, joining Ann Jones (1969), Virginia Wade (1977), Jana Novotna (1998), Marion Bartoli (2013) and Angelique Kerber 2018.
- Barbora Krejcikova will be eying to become the sixth Czech woman to win Wimbledon.
- Krejcikova will be playing in the second Grand Slam final of her career after winning the French Open in 2021.

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Three killed as auto-rickshaw, truck collide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Three people, including two of a family, were killed as a truck and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw collided head-on in Chattogram's Patiya upazila early yesterday.

The victims were Rumi Akter, 30, her five-year-old nephew Fahim, of the upazila, and auto-rickshaw driver Anwar Hossain, 51, of Boalkhali upazila, said Jasim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Patiya Police Station.

The incident took place around 12:10am in Pachuria Military Pool area when the Patiya-bound auto-rickshaw collided head-on with the truck heading for Boalkhali, he said.

Driver and two passengers of the auto-rickshaw were critically injured, said the OC, adding that they were declared dead after being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the auto-rickshaw, but the trucker managed to flee with the truck, said the OC, adding, "We are conducting drives to nab the trucker."

Filing of a case was underway, said the police official.

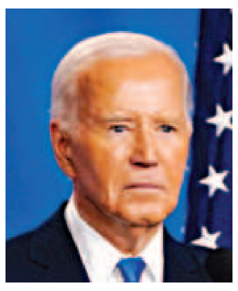
Palestinians mourn over the body of their relative killed in the Israeli bombardment in western Gaza City's Al-Sinaa neighbourhood yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Biden faces more calls to quit race

Donors to hold roughly $90m in pledges if he remains on ticket

REUTERS, *Washington*



President Joe Biden faced more calls from fellow Democrats to abandon his re-election bid yesterday, following a news conference in which he delivered nuanced responses but occasionally stumbled over his words.

It was unclear whether Biden's performance would convince doubters in his party that he is their best bet to defeat Republican Donald Trump in the November 5 election and serve another four-year term in the White House.

At least 17 congressional Democrats so far have called for him to drop out and allow the party to pick another standard-bearer, including some who announced their positions after the Nato news conference on Thursday night.

The New York Times reported that unnamed donors have told a pro-Biden Super PAC that roughly $90 million in pledges will remain on hold as long as he remains in the race.

But Biden made clear that he did not plan to step aside. "If I show up at the convention and everybody says they

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Ambanis hire over 100 pvt planes for wedding

REUTERS, *Mumbai*

The wedding of the billionaire Mukesh Ambani's youngest son Anant Ambani, 29, and his long-time girlfriend Radhika Merchant, 29, is expected to require the use of more than 100 private planes, including three Falcon-2000 jets, to transport wedding guests, among whom are celebrities in the worlds of entertainment, politics, and business.

Rajan Mehra, chief executive of Club One Air, said the Ambanis have hired three of his company's Falcon-2000 jets to ferry wedding guests and expects 100 plus private planes to be used for the events.

"The guests are coming from all over and each aircraft will make multiple trips across the country," he said.

The wedding is the culmination of lavish celebrations throughout the year and according to police, has been deemed a "public event" due to the presence of international and Indian household names.

The couple tied the knot yesterday.

Rohingya repatriation looking like pipe dream

Experts say fighting in Myanmar complicating efforts for their return

PORIMOL PALMA

The issue of Rohingya repatriation is getting more complicated for Bangladesh with the rebel armed group Arakan Army (AA) controlling most of the bordering Rakhine state.

Intensified fighting between the Myanmar junta and AA has also created a serious security threat along the 271-km Bangladesh-Myanmar border, said international relations analysts.

This also puts Bangladesh in an awkward position in terms of diplomatic relations with Myanmar if the AA takes full control of Rakhine.

"Myanmar has virtually no central control over the border with Bangladesh as the Arakan Army controls the majority of it. Thus, our physical border security is already shaky," said M Sakhawat Hussain, a senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance at North South University.

As of now, Bangladesh maintains a diplomatic relationship with Myanmar's military, which took control of the country through a coup in February 2021.

"The question arising now is with whom should Bangladesh communicate when it comes to border security? Is it the Myanmar military or Arakan Army?" said Sakhawat, a retired brigadier general.

Analysts say Bangladesh's relations with Myanmar have remained fraught because of repeated influx of the Rohingya since the 1980s. It deteriorated following the influx of about 7.5 lakh Rohingya in 2017.

> **"The question arising now is with whom should Bangladesh communicate when it comes to border security? Is it the Myanmar military or Arakan Army?"**
>
> **M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN**
> A senior fellow at NSU's South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance

Meanwhile, after the military coup in 2021, the Peoples Defence Force, the armed wing of the National Unity Government (NUG) and other ethnic rebel groups across Myanmar, have taken control of the majority of the country.

Since November last year, the AA captured 10 key towns -- nine in Rakhine and one in adjacent Chin state -- according to a report of the International Crisis Group.

On May 18, AA captured Buthidaung town and seized much of Maungdaw in the Rohingya-majority region. In so doing, the AA now has control over most of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly Rohingya in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, were displaced following the looting and burning of Rohingya homes in Buthidaung and surrounding villages.

According to the UN, about 4,000 Rohingya took shelter near the Naf river close to the Bangladesh border about a month ago. It also called on Bangladesh and other states to provide shelter to those seeking it.

The fighting also forced nearly 800 members of Myanmar's Border Guard Police, military and their family members to take shelter in Bangladesh in recent months. They were later repatriated.

In early June, bullets were fired from Myanmar at boats on the Naf river, which caused some 10,000 Bangladeshis to be stranded on the St Martin's Island.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli forces pull back from parts of Gaza City

Leave behind dozens of bodies, wrecked homes

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pulled back from parts of Gaza City overnight, after a fierce, week-long offensive that met with Hamas resistance, leaving dozens of dead and wrecked homes and roads in the Palestinian enclave's biggest urban area, rescuers said yesterday.

The offensive, 10 months into Israel's campaign to eliminate Hamas, took place as US-backed mediators sought to finalise a peace deal that would free remaining hostages.

The Gaza Civil Emergency Service said teams had collected around 60 bodies of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces over the past week from the area of Tel Al-Hawa and the edges of the Sabra neighbourhood in Gaza City.

Both residents and rescue teams cautioned that while tanks withdrew from some areas, Israeli snipers and tanks continued to control high ground at some locations, and warned residents against trying to return to their homes in those areas.

"There are bodies scattered in the streets, dismembered bodies, there are bodies of entire families, there are also bodies inside a home of an entire family that was completely burned," Gaza Strip Civil Defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal said in comments carried by media in Hamas-run Gaza.

- Israeli snipers, tanks continue to control high grounds
- Hamas accuses Israel of stalling peace talks
- Gaza death toll tops 38,400

NEPAL LANDSLIDE

63 missing as 2 buses swept away

AFP, *Kathmandu*

At least 63 people were missing in Nepal after a landslide triggered by heavy monsoon rains swept two buses off a highway and into a swollen river, authorities said yesterday.

Dozens of search and rescue personnel were combing the site for survivors of the accident in the central district of Chitwan, district official Khimananda Bhusal told AFP.

Bhusal said that the buses were carrying at least 66 people between them but three passengers had been able to escape before they crashed into the Trishuli river and were now being treated in hospital.

"We are not sure of the total number because the buses could have picked up others on the road," he said. "The river has swollen and no one else has been found yet."

The accident took place along the Narayanghat-Mugling highway, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu early yesterday at 3:30 am local time.

One bus was heading from the capital Kathmandu to Gaur in Rautahat district in southern Nepal and the other was en route to Kathmandu from southern Birgunj.

A driver was killed in a separate accident on the same road after a boulder hit his bus. He died as he was being treated at a hospital.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal expressed sadness over the accident in a post on social media platform X.

A large tree fell on the Satmasjid Road in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday after a spell of torrential rain in the morning, disrupting traffic. The photo was taken at 3:00pm.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Nepal PM Dahal loses confidence vote

REUTERS, *Kathmandu*

Nepal is set for a new coalition government led by politician K P Sharma Oli after the more radical Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost a parliamentary vote of confidence yesterday, ending a tumultuous 20-month tenure.

Nepal has been politically unstable since it abolished a 239-year-old monarchy in 2008. Oli's new government will be the 14th since then.

Its politics are closely monitored by its two big neighbours China and India, who have invested heavily in the Himalayan country as they jostle for influence.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Star WR
WEEKEND READ
DHAKA SATURDAY JULY 13, 2024
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The Daily Star
WR1

Dhanmondi these days is a cacophony of people, traffic, events, vendors, schools, hospitals, restaurants, and construction sites. It has transitioned more into a commercial centre than a residential area.

EVOLVING IDENTITY

The changing face of Dhanmondi

Older residents can recall the single-unit houses (some of which remain) and the wide roads that marked the area. In those glory days, this place had a certain quietness, something that is still widely missed.

> We used to sit on the banks of the lake, while my grandfather -- a seasoned angler -- would use pieces of worms as bait for the fish. We would rejoice at the sight of him making a catch! Weekends were spent with family by the lake.
>
> **Atif Adnan**
> A businessman in his mid-40s

MANNAN MASHHUR ZARIF

The place has a chequered history. Compared to other areas of the city, Dhanmondi still retains its residential character to some extent, despite being home to commercial enterprises, educational institutes, restaurants, hospitals, diagnostic centres, and rising apartments.

Many older residents of the locality feel that the flavour of the neighbourhood is lost; the newer residents are divided -- some still consider Dhanmondi an attractive place to live, while others find it just like any other place in Dhaka, a space devoid of characteristics that make a residential area feel like home.

The beginning...

In his book, Dacca: History and Romance in Place Names, Azimusshan Haider mentions the origins of the name -- Dhanmondi.

He states, "It derives its name presumably not from the fact that paddy once used to grow at what now is a posh residential area, but more likely because there used to be a Haat (impromptu market) of paddy (and other cereals) brought from rural areas."

People are well aware of this connection that led to the naming of the place, however, it is a lesser-known fact that the place was a part of Dhaka even in the Mughal era. Dhanmondi Eidgah on road 6/A is a reminder of that glorious past.

Established in 1640 CE by Mir Abul Qasim, during the reign of Subahdar Shah Shuja, son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, it is one of the oldest Mughal establishments in the city.

After the Partition of 1947, Dhaka once again became a capital and there was a need for a new, upscale neighbourhood. The government of hitherto East Pakistan took the initiative to acquire 400 acres of agricultural land, levelled them and allotted plots to notable citizens including ministers, government officials, public leaders, professionals, and businessmen.

The price at that time was a mindboggling Tk 5,000 per bigha!

Dhaka's upscale locality

"I grew up in Dhanmondi in the early 1980s and used to live in a cherished two-storied house of my maternal grandfather, built in the late 60s. Although I was young, I can still recollect the cosy porch and the front yard where he lovingly cultured roses and grew dahlias. Those were truly wonderful days. However, the house has since been torn down to make room for an apartment complex that now accommodates future generations," said Atif Adnan, a businessman in his mid-40s.

Older residents can recall the single-unit houses (some of which remain) and the wide roads that marked the area. In those glory days, this place had a certain quietness, something that is still widely missed.

What made the locality even more appealing was the presence of the lake -- remnants of what was once a flowing waterway. In the distant past, it was an abandoned channel of the Karwan Bazar Nadi that flowed to the Turag river.

The lake was a tranquil, secure, and pristine spot. The rivers have changed their course, but the waterbody remains an oasis amid the urban landscape, a silent reminder of a memorable past. It still serves as a recreational hub and a picturesque setting for morning walks and leisurely boat rides.

As Adnan fondly recalls, "We used to sit on the banks of the lake, while my grandfather -- a seasoned angler -- would use pieces of worms as bait for the fish. We would rejoice at the sight of him making a catch! Weekends were spent with family by the lake. There used to be boats which would take us on leisurely tours around the lake while my grandfather focused on his fishing."

The changing scenes

Tahmina Hossain, 63, is a homemaker and has been living in the area since the early 1990s. She is a first-hand witness to the apartment culture that many claim ruined the "residential nature" of the place.

Gone are the quaint houses with trees in the yard. Children no longer ride their bicycles or play cricket or badminton on the streets during the weekend.

"We moved to a flat from our home in Shantinagar, hoping for better living conditions, and in the last 30 years or so, have witnessed numerous changes in the area -- both good and bad!" she said.

"There has been an alarming increase in traffic congestion. On weekdays, the whole area comes to a standstill once the school hours end. Street looks like a parking lot on weekdays!"

Residents like Tahmina Hossain feel that the inner roads are congested with parked cars due to the lack of designated parking spaces for schools, banks, and offices.

"After the pandemic, renovation of the roads has made noticeable improvements. The revival of the lake has added to that. But it also brings in a lot of visitors to the place, which creates heavy commotion during holidays," said Hossain.

"The place has transitioned more into a commercial centre than a residential area. Almost every local and international brand now has showrooms here, catering to the convenience of the residents. And what should I say of the mushrooming growth of eateries? Sometimes, it feels like utter chaos!" she added.

Sharifuddin, who recently moved here, said, "Despite all the negativities, Dhanmondi remains one of the most secure areas in the city. Yes, it is chaotic, but the easy access to schools and nearby offices still makes it a good place to live, only if one could reduce the high cost of living that comes with staying here."

What the future holds

Tahmina Hossain believes that the rampant commercialisation of the place is hampering the residential nature of Dhanmondi. She points out some of the aspects that were once the highlight of this locality.

In recent times, the diminishing greenery is one of the most talked about aspects of life here. The felling of the trees in Saat Masjid Road has been a stark reminder for everyone in Dhaka, that we are losing an essential aspect of life in this city.

Tahmina Hossain also says, "Despite Dhanmondi's reputation for cricket, football clubs and their sporting activities, there is a notable absence of designated playgrounds for children to play in."

Those who were fortunate, even as non-residents, have memories of the quietness of the place and the wide roads that would serve the people living there. The single plots have now turned into multi-storied apartments and the paved streets are no longer wide enough to support the influx of current inhabitants of the locality.

What was a boon in the past has now turned into a curse for the area. Easy access to good schools, hospitals, and diagnostic centres are now the very establishments crippling the residential nature of the area.

As Dhanmondi continues to evolve, the echoes of its storied past mingle with the realities of its present. Posts on social media by former residents and random citizens of Dhaka illustrate the bygone days. The pictures give a vibe of the warmth and camaraderie of life in the area. How will one see Dhanmondi in the near future? Chances are just like many other areas of the older part of the town, Dhanmondi will soon lose its place as one of the most liveable areas in Dhaka. And that should be our alarm to wake up!

What makes Dhanmondi even more appealing is the presence of the lake -- remnants of what was once a flowing waterway. The lake is a tranquil, secure, and pristine spot. The waterbody remains an oasis amid the urban landscape, a silent reminder of a memorable past.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CREATIVE NONFICTION

PeaceCity alley

We couldn't take home any of the money we saved, though. In shipment cartons, with the clothes came very unwelcome "guests" and infested the homes of the residents of Shantinagar Goli. We spent hundreds weekly on insect repellent. As no spray could fully eliminate the unceasing, cyclic shipments of cockroach, we shared our homes with the survivors amongst them.

AMRIN TASNIM RAFA

The Notorious Loverboy, Slum Boy and Millionaire's Daughter, My Bride or My Mother, My Mother's Body in a Wedding Saree, The World is but a Slave to Money: ranging from melodramatic, to very questionable, to staunch philosophical critiques of capitalism, we could never guess what new film title and its vibrant, maximalist collage-style poster would greet us as our silver Toyota Corolla would swerve into a narrow alleyway and stop in front of a wholesale clothing market. We were home from school.

The entryway to Shantinagar Goli, on which my childhood home stood, was sandwiched between two of these wholesale clothing markets. On top of Gazi Bhaban market stood a 15-floor apartment building, and on Pallwel Supermarket stood Jonaki Cinema Hall, boasting the aforementioned posters on its facade. We rented a 2450 sq feet flat on the 14th floor for 20,000 taka per month from the Gazis. The Gazis were an influential old Dhaka family. According to urban legend, their forefathers had fought off tigers with their bare hands from the land where Gazi Bhaban stood.

I spent my days after school longing for the weekend, when a parent could accompany me outside. No little girl was allowed to go out into these streets unaccompanied. Past midnight on Fridays, we heard sports cars speed out of Shantinagar Goli, the children of the Gazis going out for the night. My parents pursed their lips. Preparations for the Friday prayer started early: road swept clean, open drains closed with lids (which would be stolen by the end of the day), cinema hall posters covered with black fabric, and a long roll of white fabric covering the length of the road; the goli was transformed into a communal prayer space. The mosque was on the main road, and by the time one o'clock struck, all the alleyways in the neighbourhood were filled with panjabi and tupi-clad men arranged in uniform rows, ready for the weekly Jummah Namaz. The story of this street is the story of its coexisting duality.

A good couple of hours post prayer, when the crowds were cleared and the prayer mat rolled up, I clutched Ammu's hand as we swerved and swivelled through the swarming crowds on Shantinagar Goli. Back to back and wall to wall, we passed more apartment buildings: several "Ma groceries"; "Ma's Salon"; a small beauty parlour; a dentist's office; and a tandoori chicken shop where the nice uncle (but a wifebeater behind closed doors) rhythmically rolled out dough, aggressively stuffed it with potatoes, and directly dropped it into bubbling oil, frying endless samosas under open air. Throughout the length of the goli, bundles of electrical wires, tangled and bulging, hazardously hung roughly 12 inches above our heads. As we walked, questions regarding Baba's health and my school were yelled at Ammu from all around, everyone addressing her as bhabi, and Ammu cordially yelled back her answers. In Shantinagar Goli, people from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds shared its constricted space. The story of Shantinagar Goli is the story of flourishing in its unprecedented collaboration.

Finally, at the far end of the street, we approached the hawkers selling second-hand books from wicker baskets—Bangla ones for 20 to 40 taka each, but open to haggling, and the second-hand, locally pirated English books for 100 taka each, fixed price. The hawker uncles demonstrated a metaphor for our society. We valued a language that was once imposed on us in return for the riches of our motherland over the language steeped in the history of our land and our roots. Roughly three kilometres from Shantinagar Goli, students at the University of Dhaka had given their lives during the Language Movement of 1952, for Bangla to be restored as the state language of then East Pakistan. At 10, I lamented what had caused us to lose that glorious sense of pride in who we are and what is ours. The story of this street is the story of its subtle betrayals.

On very special occasions—Eid, birthdays, and the good report card days—we entered a three-storey high-end bookstore selling imported, brand-new English books, starting from 800 taka each. The aforementioned hawker uncles sat at the foot of this building. At this store, I would only buy a book I wouldn't find on the baskets outside.

We shopped for our clothes during Eid from the malls beneath our home, feeling very proud of ourselves when friends and family bought less nice clothing for over three times the price from elsewhere. Owing to the malls in our area being wholesale, we could buy directly from the supplier before they supplied to retailers all over Dhaka. The story of this street is the story of its intricate economic choices.

We couldn't take home any of the money we saved, though. In shipment cartons, with the clothes came very unwelcome "guests" and infested the homes of the residents of Shantinagar Goli. We spent hundreds weekly on insect repellent. As no spray could fully eliminate the unceasing, cyclic shipments of cockroach, we shared our homes with the survivors amongst them. One day, at six months old, as I sat on the kitchen floor while Ammu cooked, I grabbed a scuttling object from the floor with lightning speed. The story of this street is the story of how my first solid food was a cockroach.

The name Shantinagar Goli is ironic, as cockroaches were the least of the sources of o-shanti at Shantinagar Goli. The goli opened into a road on which administrative offices of the Bangladesh National Party stood. BNP was then the only surviving opposition to the Awami League, which has been the ruling party of Bangladesh since 2009. Periodically, BNP would call for strike action. By virtue of its location at the eye of the storm, for the children of Shantinagar Goli, such an announcement meant no school. Party workers would gather before the offices hoisting placards. The police would charge at them with batons and tear gas; the Party workers would return the favour and set fire to many rickshaws, a few buses, and a couple of private cars. The more an uninvolved civilian had to lose from the violence for the sake of it, the higher their chances of being affected would be.

In my naive selfishness of childhood, I would scan the rolling news updates beneath Ammu's nightly soaps, anticipating a leisurely day at home under my parents' protective watch, and rejoice at news of imminent strike days. The story of this street is a story of deriving joy from the most contradictory of sources.

One time, it rained sugar on Shantinagar Goli. But it only fell on me. Aunty on the Other Side of The Street was making a rich payesh, spiced with cardamom, cinnamon sticks, and grated coconut. Rice in the milk boiling on her stove, she realised she was out of sugar. Aunty on This Side of The Street took the only natural course of action, tying a half kg bag of sugar to the end of a pole and extending it towards Aunty on the Other Side of The Street through her kitchen window. Except that a pack of crows attacked the foreign object in the sky, and I was blessed with Divine Sugar.

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

Where we now live, we get missing ingredients promptly home-delivered to cook piping hot meals that lack the warmth of community spirit. The people of Shantinagar Goli kept no score of the ingredients, acts of service, and cooked dishes they shared. The story of this street is the story of its unchecked generosity.

Every year, it became increasingly unfashionable to live in South Dhaka. Businesses and schools shifted to the suburbs, like the localities of North Dhaka, and many families with young children, including mine, went with. I feel that if I were born and raised in these parts, I'd always have playgrounds, better schools, and cockroach-free homes, but never really feel the essence of being a Dhaka-ite and a Bangladeshi. Nor would I be bi-deshi, and live somewhere in between. I'd complain about the country, its traffic and its bureaucracy—as I still do now—but I never would have lived a life so aligned with my country's beating heart. In one of the most densely populated golis of the world's sixth most populous city, the story of this street is the story of my gratitude.

Amrin Tasnim Rafa *is a former Sub editor at the Campus, Star Youth, and Rising Stars pages of* The Daily Star *and a soon-to-be freshman at Kenyon College.*

ILLUSTRATION: **AMREETA LETHE**

POETRY

Lone house around the bend

Your grief rusts the ancient pipes, and rotting awnings over cracked windows. It flows through your bowels and seeps out onto the pavement. Every day, there's a puddle forming by the time the sun hangs low on the horizon.

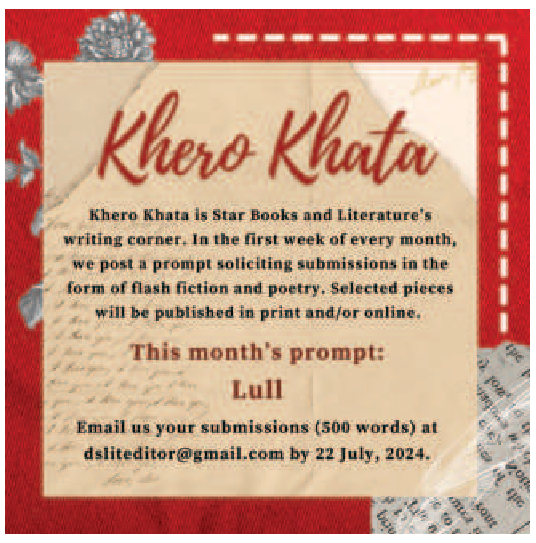
WASIMA AZIZ

Your grief rots the decades old paint and the lakhri no one bothered to replace. Even across the road, it reeks of death.

Perhaps you hold onto memories of the old, when wives wept as one, and men went to war for the country, to war against themselves. Perhaps the rot pervading in their slurred words and heavy breathing never quite left your walls, no matter the layers of paint or mildew.

Take care, old friend. There was a time when your rooms echoed with the laughter of children, as the smell of khichuri wafted through your halls. When, after all the children were put to bed, mothers, fathers, uncles and aunts sat around that ancient dinner table; the mirth in that room more than made up for the kids' going to bed. Those children dreamt dreams of you and are dreaming still.

Wasima Aziz *is an amateur writer living in Chattogram, who recently finished her HSC exams.*



Khero Khata

Khero Khata is Star Books and Literature's writing corner. In the first week of every month, we post a prompt soliciting submissions in the form of flash fiction and poetry. Selected pieces will be published in print and/or online.

This month's prompt:
Lull

Email us your submissions (500 words) at dsliteditor@gmail.com by 22 July, 2024.

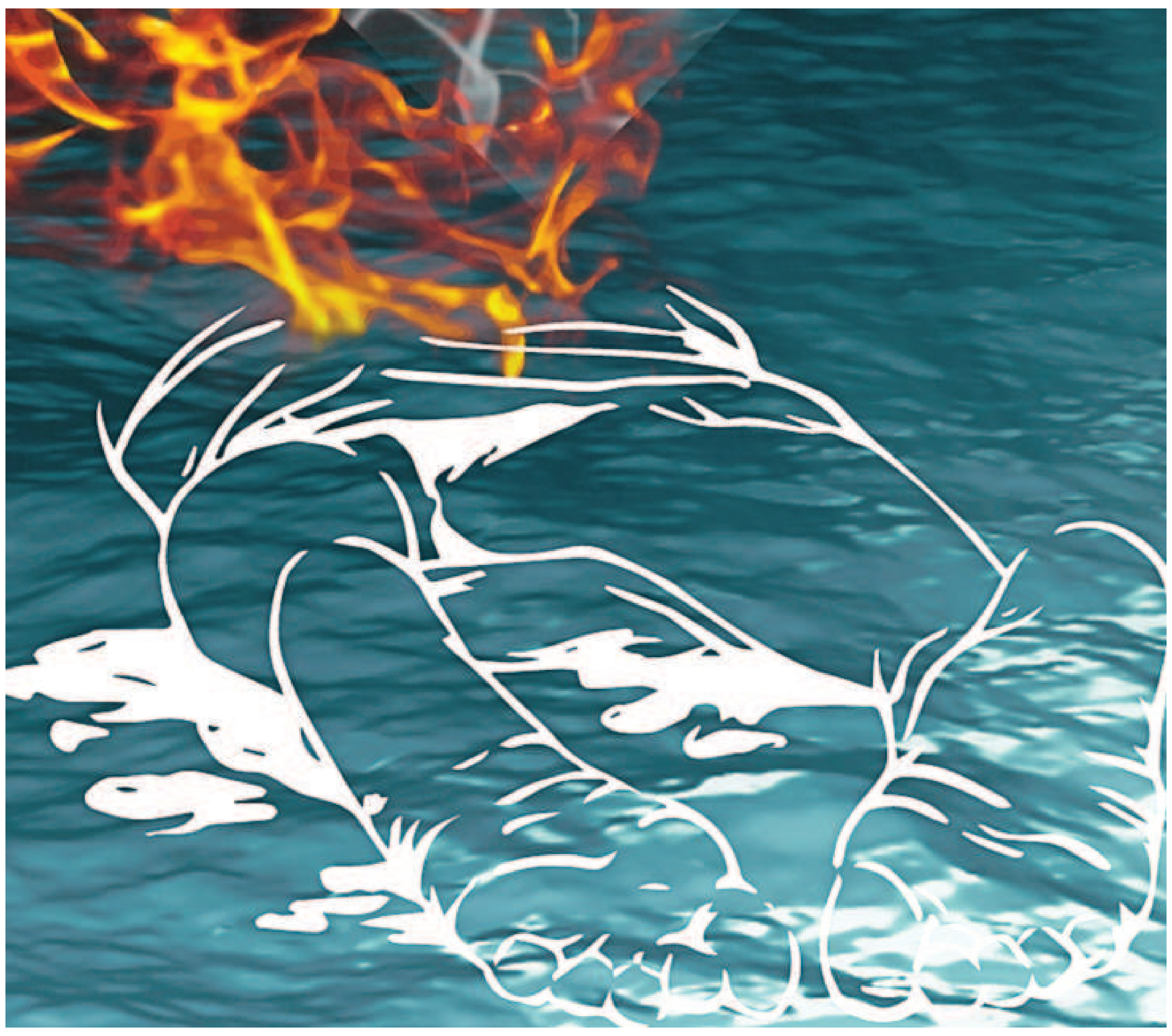


ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

POETRY

The three day wake

IFFAT NAWAZ

'You must bury
yourself
Every three days'
She said,
'Corpses are of
No use
They Will
Rot you instead.'
'You can burn
Also, if you wish
Or immerse your
Dead selves in water
If you so please.'
Then she walked away
And became ordinary
While I pulled out
My shoes,
To head to the river
Where wet soil
Had already dug up
Burial beds
With invisible tombstones
And a torn noose.
The trees were
Speaking differently
After the rain,
I heard them exchange
Something about
Someone's futile burden
Of shame.
They said the
Tug of war between
Orthodox and non
Is pointless and mundane.
'Keep walking'
The leaves motioned,
'Stop eavesdropping
Be touched by everything
But remain uninfluenced.'
I don't know what that meant
Plants were too cryptic at times.
I half slid down
A muddy slope
To watch the river
And its ripples
They taught me
The day's rhythm
I stalled a bit
Then brought out
My dead selves
Tied neatly with
Jute ribbons.
I leaned in close
To grieve my deaths'
Gains and losses,
With short eulogies
I closed them
Into the mouths of
Earth's tiny crevasses.
In the spaces
Where the deads
Had resided,
Two centimetres
Below my skin,
Grass and moss
Rushingly filled in.
My breaths
Were now wildflowers
My toes were
Dew rinsed.
For I fear fire,
I contemplated
The next dead's
Ritual,
The trees commanded
To pause a bit
Before killing
What's not old.
With a new face
I walk back
To a home
That isn't mine
A thousand deaths
Have passed
And a thousand deaths
Wait in line.
Every three days
I will look for a grave
Between olive trees
And green vines
I will be born again
And yet again
Till this voice
Becomes a
Silent wind's
Dutiful chime.
While my
Heart mourns
To rejoice
A deathless
Self's shine.

Iffat Nawaz *is a Bangladeshi-American writer based in Pondicherry, India. Her first novel* Shurjo's Clan *was published by Penguin India (Vintage) in 2022, and was shortlisted for the Best First Book Award by Tata Lit Live/Mumbai Literature Festival in 2023.*

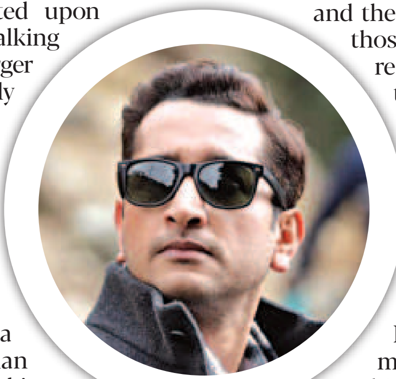
A jack of all trades

An exclusive with Parambrata Chattopadhyay

> **In the traditional context, I haven't been in such a project that is 'larger than life' in a typical notion, but my role in 'Hercules' can be considered close to it. Also, in the last half an hour of 'Chotushkone', the role becomes as such! In fact, my character in 'Ajob Karkhana', at some point, can also be perceived to be one of such roles.**

SHARMIN JOYA

"Music has been a major part of my life since childhood," shared Parambrata Chattopadhyay over the phone, as if he were going through his meteoric career in his own mind. Hailing from West Bengal, his charm worked magic in Bollywood as well. As we moved on with the conversation, he reflected upon his musical journey, whilst talking about the roles that are larger than life, and his recently released Bangladeshi film.



His fourth Bangladeshi featurette, the government funded film ***Ajob Karkhana,*** directed by Shabnam Ferdousi, hit theatres yesterday countrywide. The musical film has given Parambrata a unique experience as a musician himself. The director was looking for someone as her film's lead (Rajeeb), who is in his 40s and can fluently play an electric guitar. "My immediate response after listening to the story was, it is absolutely my story!"

The actor was quick to dive into nostalgia. "Beginning with Rabindranath Tagore, I immersed myself in music, and during my teenage years, I rebelled against other genres and indulged in Western music, particularly English songs. In my mid-20s, my musical taste took another turn, drawing me more towards my own roots -- returning to Tagore, to getting introduced to modern Bangla songs, while simultaneously delving into classical."

Parambrata as Rajeeb in 'Ajob Karkhana'.

The talented artiste feels that the experience of working in ***Ajob Karkhana*** enriched his soul. "I used to look for the research works done on folk musicians and music genres and at that time, I didn't have the real experience of witnessing them performing live, which I had during the shoot. It seemed surreal to me when listening to Jari, Ghatu or Baul songs (in front of Lalon Shah's shrine) in a rustic atmosphere with thousands of people."

Earlier, he was featured in ***Bhuban Majhi***, directed by Fakhrul Arefeen Khan, ***Voyongkor Sundor*** by Animesh Aich, and ***Saturday Afternoon*** by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki.

Farooki's film was unfortunately halted by the censor board, but later it was released on the OTT platform Sony LIV. "Every country, society, and region have their own reality and the administration has to keep those realities in mind. We must respect that. Being a part of the film, I definitely wanted the Bangladeshi audience to watch it. However, there must be some specific reason behind not permitting the film's release and I don't have the right to make any remarks on their decision. Even in India, there were many projects which faced similar troubles. I don't want any outsider to comment on that, so I won't make any remarks either."

Parambrata added that after it began streaming in Sony LIV, he received numerous phone calls and messages, appreciating his work. "I believe the film has already reached its audience."

During his visit to Dhaka, Param celebrated his birthday and met the press many times, where a common question he had to encounter was regarding Shakib Khan and ***Toofan***'s release. Did it make him uncomfortable at any point?

"Absolutely not! I am elated and proud of the success of the film and those associated with the production are close to my heart. I am affiliated with SVF for my next two projects with them, and I believe we will have a collaboration with Chorki as well. I have also known Alpha-i for a long time. Apart from all these, I worked for Hoichoi as well for the next season of our acclaimed series ***Parnashavarir Shaap,*** which is coming soon."

To the actor, the roles that are larger than life depend on the extent of the project itself, also the perspective of how one sees it. "If you look from an American perspective, it will be different from the European perspective. In the traditional context, I haven't been in such a project that is 'larger than life' in a typical notion, but my role in ***Hercules*** can be considered close to it. Also, in the last half an hour of ***Chotushkone***, the role becomes as such! In fact, my character in ***Ajob Karkhana,*** at some point, can also be perceived to be one of such roles, as it tells the story of a person who is on a journey of reaching towards his soul."

Since Parambrata had to catch a train in a few minutes, the conversation needed to be concluded. Being an actor, director and musician, he has gained a lot of popularity. However, when asked to his director self --what can make the collaborative productions between both Bengals more effective and more viable for both industries?--he replied, "The bureaucracy and the administrative procedures should be laxer from both sides. Also, the people who are involved in the project need to be equally invested."

Parambrata bid me farewell, sharing that he would be returning Dhaka soon by the end of this month, after completing his pending works in the USA and Mumbai.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Srikanth

Amazon Prime
My Lady Jane

Bongo
Ladies & Gentlemen

Hoichoi
Pariah

পারিয়া
VOL.1
EVERY STREET DOG HAS A NAME

Disney plus
Descendants: The Rise of Red

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

প্রদর্শনী
টিনের তলোয়ার
ticket
+88 01897205737
www.prangonemortheatrebd.com

Play 'Tiner Tolowar'
July 17 | 7pm
Bangladesh Mahila Samity, Bailey Road

Photo Fest Asia 2024
THE EXHIBITION

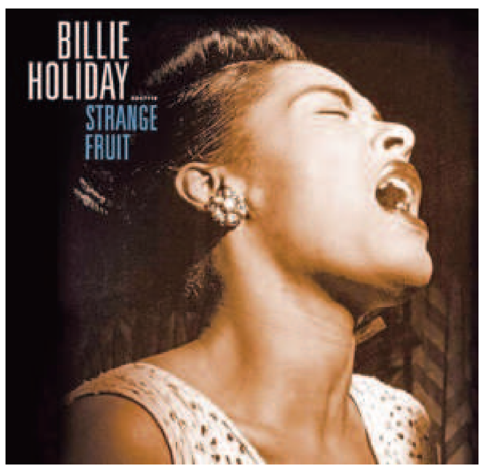
Photo Fest Asia 2024
July 18-20 | 10am-10pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

Khatak
the story of an unknown giant

Screening & Exhibition: 'Khatak' & 'Rays of Hope'
July 18 | 4pm
British Council Bangladesh

WHAT'S PLAYING

Strange Fruit



Strange Fruit, performed by Billie Holiday, stands as a groundbreaking and haunting protest song that redefined the intersection of music and social commentary.

Holiday's restrained yet powerful delivery transforms Abel Meeropol's poignant lyrics into a chilling indictment of racism and lynching in America. The song's stark imagery and Holiday's emotive vocals create an unforgettable listening experience that forces the audience to confront the brutal reality of discrimination.

The track defies easy musical categorisation and has slipped between the cracks of academic study. It is too artsy to be folk music, too explicitly political and polemical to be jazz. Surely no song in American history has ever been so guaranteed to silence an audience or to generate such discomfort.

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

SHARVARI WAGH

Sharvari Wagh, the ***Munjya*** actress, can be termed as the latest sensation with her captivating performance and scintillating dance moves in the film and its item song ***Taras***.

The talented actress has also landed a remarkable opportunity to star alongside Alia Bhatt in YRF Spy Universe's first female-led film, ***Alpha***.

Recently, Sharvari shared a stunning picture of herself wearing a golden-olive satin skirt paired with an olive-green sequined top. She complemented her look with moderately natural makeup, featuring brown smoky eyes and nude lipstick to complete the ensemble.

1-MINUTE REVIEW

'SRI CAN!'

The Srikanth Bolla journey

Srikanth, directed by Tushar Hiranandani, portrays the exceptional life of Indian industrialist Srikanth Bolla, a visually challenged self-made entrepreneur. Born to parents, who considered burying him alive as a newborn, his story is a testament to resilience and success.

Stricken and wrought with hardships and obstacles strewn his way, Srikanth (Rajkummar Rao) proves his mettle time and again. As he grows, he displays remarkable intelligence, solving equations verbally, finishing exams ahead of peers, and defeating sighted opponents in chess.

When barred from studying science in Higher Secondary, he legally challenges the Indian education system and wins. He, however, abandons his dreams of additionally pursuing cricket, having earned a scholarship from MIT.

The film tries to break from the typical biopic format. In the second half, Srikanth's power-hungry behaviour and use of his disability for gain are briefly explored but quickly resolved. The story then reverts to evoking admiration for the protagonist.

Rajkummar Rao skillfully portrays a visually impaired character, supported ably by actors like Jyothika and Sharad Kelkar.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Local pharma lights up hope in cancer treatment

JAGARAN CHAKMA

> **Bangladesh has achieved tremendous improvement in cancer treatment and anti-cancer drug manufacturing, said Golam Mohiuddin Faruque, president of Bangladesh Cancer Society**

The pharmaceutical sector of Bangladesh has achieved many milestones over the past 14 years. Not only do local companies now meet 90 percent of the country's demand for medicines, but the products are also exported to around 150 countries, fetching hundreds of millions of dollars.

However, among the most significant strides the sector has made is its advancement in the manufacture of life-saving cancer medication.

In the last 14 years, pharmaceutical companies like Beacon, Eskayef, Renata, Incepta, Healthcare, and Techno Pharma produced more than 110 varieties of oncological drugs.

Around 17 local companies are manufacturing anti-cancer drug products. Thanks to their bold initiatives, patients in Bangladesh can now access cancer drugs at affordable prices, which have brought down the cost of treatment.

Monjural Alam, chief executive officer of Beacon Medicare, said the prices of such drugs in Europe and the US are beyond the purchasing capacity of many patients.

"There is a scarcity of life-saving drugs worldwide. When the drugs are available, they are usually beyond the reach of common people. To this end, we have established a facility within our company to serve global patients," he said.

Before 2009, there was scepticism regarding Beacon's ability to manufacture sophisticated cancer drugs. However, the plant has become successful, and patients can buy life-saving drugs at reasonable prices.

Claiming that Beacon pioneered the manufacturing of cancer drugs in Bangladesh, he said it now meets around half of the local demand for cancer drugs.

Before 2010, Bangladesh relied entirely on imports for oncology drugs. This means only patients from financially solvent families could afford cancer treatment due to the exorbitant cost of medicines. Today, it not only meets domestic consumption but also serves as an exporter in the global market.

"This achievement was made possible by the dedication of local pharmaceutical companies and the trust placed by doctors and patients in local products," Alam said.

According to manufacturers, local companies produce around 99 percent of oncology drugs, yet some patients still resort to imported drugs or unofficial imports.

Recently, pharmaceutical companies have been affected immensely due to the supply chain disruptions and the dollar crisis against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war. The situation is improving following the collaborative efforts of the government and drug manufacturers.

It provides medicines worth Tk 3 crore to poor patients annually.

Beacon plans to establish a second oncology plant to meet the increasing global demand for cancer drugs. The company is also considering setting up a palliative care centre to alleviate the suffering of patients.

A relative newcomer to the scene is Eskayef Oncology, which commenced its journey in 2018. However, the company, which boasts advanced technologies, has expanded its footprint beyond Bangladesh in no time.

It is one of the few Asian companies to have secured approval from the European Union Good Manufacturing Practice (EU GMP) to produce anti-cancer medicines. This is recognised by 27 nations of the EU and is considered a passport for entry into the global market.

"This recognition facilitated the entry of our drugs into the EU market and various other countries," said Mohammad Mujahidul Islam, executive director (marketing and sales) of Eskayef.

Eskayef is currently exporting products to over 60 countries.

"Thanks to modern technologies, facilities, and unwavering dedication, Eskayef Oncology is committed to delivering affordable and globally standard anti-cancer products to patients both at home and abroad," he said.

Prof Golam Mohiuddin Faruque, president of the Bangladesh Cancer Society, said Bangladesh has achieved tremendous improvement in cancer treatment and anti-cancer drug manufacturing.

Bangladesh exported cancer drugs worth Tk 1,000 crore in 2023. The amount was around Tk 500 crore in 2019. Local sales of cancer drugs have reached Tk 800 crore to Tk 1,000 crore as demand is increasing by an average of 15 percent each year, according to the manufacturers.

Prof SM Abdur Rahman, chairman of the pharmacy department at the University of Dhaka, said Bangladesh's pharmaceutical companies have set up world-class manufacturing plants equipped with sophisticated machinery, enabling them to produce top-class drugs.

He thinks there is no doubt that Bangladesh's oncology products will dominate the world market, meeting global standards, quality, and cost-effectiveness.

There are areas of concern.

After 2026, when Bangladesh graduates from the group of least-developed countries, local pharmaceutical companies will have to follow patent guidelines while manufacturing drugs, including oncology products. If medicines are produced following the patent rights, the drugs will be costlier in the local market.

To avert the situation, Bangladesh initially tried to extend its Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver by six to nine years and then up to January 1, 2033. However, at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva in June 2022, global leaders did not extend the TRIPS deadline for graduating LDCs.

Under the current agreement, drug-makers in LDCs can produce any generic medicine without having to follow patent guidelines until January 1, 2033. But the benefit is not applicable to graduating LDCs such as Bangladesh.

Beacon's Alam, however, said it would be applicable for only new molecules, which comprise few drugs. "So, the pharmaceuticals sector will not face significant challenges after graduation."

Full-fledged cancer treatment facilities need of the hour

JAGARAN CHAKMA

High-quality cancer drugs are produced in Bangladesh. Oncologists and physicians are also available. However, the country is lagging in putting in place an adequate number of full-fledged facilities to treat patients suffering from such diseases.

The missing link exists although cancer patients are on the rise in Bangladesh in line with global trends and hospitals and clinics have flourished.

Cancer is already a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020, or nearly one in six deaths. The most common cancers are breast, lung, colon, rectum and prostate cancers, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Cancer cases are expected to rise 77 percent by the middle of the century, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a specialised branch of the WHO, said in February, highlighting the growing burden of the disease.

There are predicted to be more than 35 million cancer cases during 2050, up from the estimated 20 million in 2022, the agency said.

The increase reflects both population ageing and growth, as well as changes to people's exposure to risk factors. Tobacco, alcohol and obesity are key factors, along with air pollution.

Currently, Bangladesh has 13 lakh to 15 lakh cancer patients, while around two lakh new patients are diagnosed with the diseases each year, figures from the National Center for Biotechnology Information showed.

There are around 240 oncologists in Bangladesh. Treatment is available in 19 hospitals, and 465 beds have been set aside for chemotherapy at the oncology and radiotherapy departments.

"There is no shortage of oncology surgeons or specialists in Bangladesh," said Prof Golam Mohiuddin Faruque, president of the Bangladesh Cancer Society.

Besides, locally manufactured generic versions of oncology drugs are similar to the products made by multinational companies in terms of quality.

"However, there is a lack of radiation therapy facilities at hospitals as it is very expensive," he said, adding that it costs around Tk 40 crore to set up such units.

Currently, 40 radiotherapy facilities, including those at government hospitals, are available against the need for 300, Faruque said. Private hospitals treat 67 percent of cancer patients while the rest receive services from state-run hospitals.

According to Faruque, patients could see an oncologist for only Tk 10 at a government hospital or for Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500 at a private hospital.

Drugs have also become easily available during the last decade as pharmaceutical companies have taken initiatives to manufacture oncology products. "As a result, the cost of treatment has come down by two-thirds during the decade," Faruque said.

Since the number of cancer patients is rising, the government is building treatment facilities in eight divisional hospitals, which may be commissioned next year.

Training general physicians on cancer warning signs and setting up early detection centres at medical colleges and the district level are underway. Piloting of cervical cancer vaccination has recently been completed.

The International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), BRAC, Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Bangladesh Cancer Society, ASHIC Foundation, Amader Gram, AK Khan Healthcare Trust, and Chattogram-based Cancer Support Society (Cansup) run programmes for early detection.

Bangladesh has agreed to reduce premature mortality from cancer as part of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Industry people say improving the cancer treatment scenario overnight is not an easy task. However, policymakers should show their interest in expanding the facilities and pushing the agenda forward since cancer diseases have huge health and financial impacts.

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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 14, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 172 | ASHAR 30, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 7, 1446 HIJRI | 16 PAGES : TK 15.00

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Govt may go for quota reforms

But won't act before disposal of the issue at the apex court

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE *and* **MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR**

- Protesters to march towards Bangabhaban today
- Boycott of classes, exams to continue
- 'Unofficial talks' with protesters going on
- Law enforcers to stay alert, show tolerance
- Case filed against unnamed demonstrators

The government is considering a "logical reform" in the quota system in the public service, but it will not take any initiative to that end or give any assurances until the matter is resolved by the Supreme Court.

It may form a commission to discuss the possible reform upon completion of the legal procedure at the apex court, highly placed sources in the government told The Daily Star yesterday.

Representatives from different agencies and the ruling party are already holding "unofficial talks" with the protesting students, seeking to get their views on the "right percentages" of quota in government jobs. Agency officials and AL leaders are also urging them to be tolerant and mindful of the public sufferings stemming from their street protests.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mohammad Ali Arafat, state minister for information and broadcasting, hinted at a "logical reform" of the quota system after a final court verdict.

"Everything changes, and reforms are carried out in the course of time. This can happen on the issue of quota in government jobs too," he said.

"The government will take an initiative in this regard, but only after the conclusion of the court proceedings. There will be an acceptable solution once the legal process ends. Until then, the protesters should wait."

Though several ministers and AL

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Shop owners in the capital's New Market had to put all their products out to dry yesterday as the market was severely waterlogged due to incessant rains the day before. Goods in most of the shops there were damaged by the rainwater. PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Univ teachers to carry on strike today

Say meeting with Quader 'went well' but they're yet to make final decision

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Public university teachers will continue their work stoppage today as their meeting with the government representatives yesterday failed to yield any decision regarding the pension facilities.

> **There was a confusion that the "Prottoy" pension scheme will be effective from July this year, but in fact it would be in force from July next year.**
>
> **Obaidul Quader**
> Road transport and bridges minister

Speaking to reporters after the meeting at the Awami League president's Dhanmondi office in the capital, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the teacher leaders were yet to make a final decision on withdrawing their strike.

Prof Abdur Rahim, joint secretary general of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA), said, "Our movement will continue tomorrow [today]."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

DHAKA CITY CORPORATIONS

Waterlogging forever?

Tk 730cr, myriad steps over 4 years go down the drain

SAJJAD HOSSAIN *and* **DIPAN NANDY**

PREMIER cemeNT
ঢালাইয়ের রাজা

Despite many initiatives and spending over Tk 730 crore over the past four years, Dhaka city corporations have failed to make any visible progress in mitigating the waterlogging problem.

Heavy rains last Friday left at least 22 areas in the capital submerged, causing distress to residents and commuters. Even after 36 hours, several areas remained under water.

The city corporations officially took over the responsibility for canal and drainage management from Wasa on December 31, 2020.

Four years and Tk 730 crore later, a lack of effective planning and proper management has left the waterlogging problem still unresolved.

"The drainage system is impaired due to poor design, weak maintenance, and various road construction activities," Mujibur Rahman, a former Buet professor, told The Daily Star.

"A lack of necessary maintenance has left the drainage network mostly blocked."

Two city corporation officials, speaking anonymously, said the funds were used for decluttering canals, canal-drains, and box culverts, as well as for removing accumulated waste.

However, they acknowledged that after a few days of cleaning, the canals quickly became clogged again.

On Friday, the Met office recorded 130mm of rainfall in just six hours from 6:00am, leading to extensive waterlogging across the city.

Areas such as Dhaka University's Zahurul Huq Hall and Curzon Hall areas; Swamibagh; Bakshi Bazar; Khaje Dewan; Mugda; Maniknagar; Gopibagh; Lalbagh; and the Buet campus were found submerged till yesterday.

Experts and environmentalists

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SOUTH GAZA

Israeli strike on 'safe zone' kills 90 Palestinians

REUTERS, *Gaza*

An Israeli airstrike killed at least 90 Palestinians and injured 300 others -- the deadliest toll in weeks -- in a designated humanitarian zone in Gaza yesterday, the enclave's health ministry said.

Gaza's civil defence agency said the shelling had prevented its teams from reaching victims in the tent city of Al-Mawasi, where tens of thousands have sought refuge.

The targeted site is a designated humanitarian area to which the Israeli army has repeatedly urged Palestinians to head to after issuing evacuation orders from other areas.

Reuters footage showed displaced people, including women and children, fleeing in panic, some holding belongings in their hands.

Many of those wounded in the strike were taken to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Star BUSINESS

'Govt short of taka, USD for financial distress'

The government does not have adequate taka and US dollars to implement the budget because of the financial distress, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, yesterday.

"Due to the crisis of the taka and the US dollars, the government is now unable to pay the bills for various sectors, including energy sector," he said.

Bangladesh is becoming dependent on debts day by day, said Mansur, adding that borrowing capacity from internal sources is gradually decreasing as banks are facing a liquidity crisis.

STORY ON B1

An excavator removes illegal structures on Toyenbee Circular Road in the capital's Motijheel yesterday during an eviction drive by the Dhaka district administration. The drive was carried out to recover this Debottor (endowed) property from grabbers and hand it over to the Hindu Kalyan Trust. PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Fishers worry over poor hilsa catch

P5

Rain of Love, Rain of Sorrow

P9

CONGRATULATIONS!
Granddaughter of Bangabandhu
Tulip Rezwana Siddiq
has been elected as a Member of the British Parliament for the fourth consecutive time and has been appointed as Minister for Cities.
And
Sylhet's pride
Rushanara Ali
has been elected as a Member of the British Parliament for the fifth time and has been given the responsibility for policy development in the Housing Ministry.
Both expatriate and native Bangladeshis are proud of their achievements.
Probashi Palli Group
Probashi o Shodeshider jonne

Even 24 hours after Friday's heavy rains, many areas in the capital remained waterlogged exposing the poor drainage system. These photographs were taken yesterday afternoon in the Buet Staff Quarters, *left*, in front of DU's SM Hall, *top right*, and on Husseini Dalan Road in Old Dhaka.

PHOTOS: **RASHED SHUMON, AMRAH HOSSAIN, PALASH KHAN,**

Govt may go for quota reforms

FROM PAGE 1

leaders publicly issued warnings against blocking the roads and highways, police have been asked to show restraint and go soft on the demonstrators until they resort to vandalism, said police sources.

A top official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they were instructed to show maximum restraint and not to engage in any confrontation with the students.

"But police will be on high alert to avoid any unpleasant situation," the official said.

The government will continue the pressure on the protesters to keep them off the streets, as the countrywide demonstrations and transport blockades are affecting the public.

Warnings by ministers and filing of cases against unnamed demonstrators are part of that strategy, government sources said.

Meanwhile, the protesters yesterday announced fresh programmes for today. Instead of blockade, they will bring out processions, march towards the Bangabhaban and DC offices, and boycott classes and examinations across the country.

According to sources, the students have softened their position to avoid possible police action since they want to continue the protests until their demands are met.

Addressing a press conference at Dhaka University yesterday, Hasnat Abdullah, a student of the university and one of the coordinators of the anti-discrimination student movement, said they will march towards the Bangabhaban today to submit a memorandum to President Mohammed Shahabuddin.

He said their peers in districts will also hand over memorandums to respective deputy commissioners for placing them to the president. And their boycott of classes and exams will continue too.

"The government is making plans and preparations to suppress our movement. We have been protesting peacefully," said Nahid Islam, another organiser of the protests.

The government should have resolved the crisis through discussions with the students at the beginning. If anything goes wrong, it must shoulder the responsibility, he said.

Meanwhile, police yesterday filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station against unnamed protesters on charges of vandalising police vehicles and assaulting law enforcers during a demonstration in Shahbagh on Thursday.

Khalilur Rahman, a driver of the transport department of Rajarbagh Police Lines, filed the case.

DMP Additional Commissioner (detective branch) Harun Or Rashid said they are investigating if any infiltrators are trying to take advantage of the situation and divert the movement in other directions.

Students at public universities and colleges, along with jobseekers, have been demonstrating against the quota system in government jobs for the last two weeks. They occupied key city intersections, major highways, and rail lines.

The protests began after the High Court on June 5 ruled that the 2018 government circular abolishing the quota system was illegal, effectively reinstating the quota system. The government appealed against the decision, and the Supreme Court has issued a status quo on the HC order.

In 2018, the government issued a circular abolishing the quota system for Class-1 and Class-2 jobs, in the wake of massive protests by students, who wanted reform and not an abolition.

Until then, 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas. Of them, 30 percent were for freedom fighters' families, 10 percent for women, 10 percent for people from underdeveloped districts, 5 percent for members of indigenous communities, and 1 percent for persons with disabilities.

According to sources, a good number of AL leaders also favour quota reform.

During unscheduled discussions at the party president's Dhanmondi office yesterday, some leaders said there is a groundswell of public support for the quota reform demonstrations, and any police action on students will fomentanti-government sentiment.

During the discussions, an AL leader said some people are labelling all the agitating students as "children of razakars", but this is not fair. Such sweeping generalisations might backfire, the leader pointed out.

Talking to this newspaper, several other AL leaders also said it was time to reform the quota system.

The Public Service Commission data shows that before the quota was abolished, only around 9 percent of the posts set aside for freedom fighters' families were filled and the rest 21 percent remained vacant, they say.

"If this is the reality, then why should the government take a beating for the 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren. Even many Chhatra League leaders support the protesters," an AL leader told The Dily Star, wishing anonymity.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader at a press conference yesterday put emphasis on the necessity of the quota system in the country's current context.

Mentioning that quota system in government jobs exists in a number of South Asian countries, he said the participation of women and members of marginalised communities in Bangladesh's public services steadily declined in recent years in the absence of quota system.

Finding hope in hair!

FROM PAGE 12

of women in groups, processing the hair that was bought from across the country.

Hafizul Islam, the owner of Antor-Aniq Hair Fashion in Nawabganj, has been involved in the business for last eight years.

"Our workers travel all over the country to buy hair from villages, towns and cities. These are then brought to the factory and processed. After processing, the loose hair is sent to many places in the country and even other countries, including China. There, the processed hair get the final polish and are sent again to different countries, including Bangladesh, to be manufactured into wigs."

He estimates that around 200 people from 15 villages are employed in his factory in Nawabganj alone, with approximately 17,000 women benefiting from this industry in the upazila under 250 traders like him. He informed that there are many more hair processing centres in other parts of Dinajpur.

The impact of the hair processing industry extends beyond employment.

Villagers like Afzal Hossain gets to earn an extra Tk 2,500 a month for renting his space out to accommodate a hair processing centre in Nawabganj's Jagannathpur.

"To be able to rent out a space in such a rural area is a rare opportunity," he said.

In Chirirbandar's Ranibandar Bazar area, at least 10,000 men and women were seen working in hair processing. Those whose skills are far more enhanced than others can earn up to Tk 15,000 to 20,000 per month. However, the number of such workers is still low.

Rasheda Begum, who works in a centre in the area, explained the process, "We sort, clean, trim, and bundle the hair ... Then it's dyed, washed and dried in a separate factory, and graded to make Remy hair, which is highly valued in the market."

Remy hair is where the cuticles are kept intact and facing the same direction and are not stripped, making it the highest grade of real human hair extensions.

The market value of processed loose hair varies significantly, with prices ranging from Tk 5,000 per kg of 6-inch hair to Tk 8,000 per kg of 22-23 inches.

Rashidul Islam, another hair processing factory owner in Chirirbandar, attributes the sector's rapid growth to both local initiatives and foreign investments, particularly from China.

However, despite the industry's promise, workers' wages are still comparatively low.

Anwara Begum and Shahida Banu expressed concerns over the adequacy of their earnings amidst rising living costs.

"We work hard, but Tk 80-120 per day isn't enough to support our families anymore," Anwara lamented.

Laila Banu, vice chairman of Chirirbandar upazila and an entrepreneur, also emphasised the need for better wages and protection for the workers.

"The industry is profitable and is contributing to our economy, but the workers deserve a fair amount of money for their hard work. They also need better working conditions as many of the centres end up becoming unhygienic."

Motiar Rahman, who rose from being an unemployed villager to a successful entrepreneur employing 100 workers in his factory in Chirirbandar, said it was sometimes a hassle to source good quality and proper lengths of hair, and appealed for government support to import hair from other countries to further boost the industry.

As the hair processing industry in Dinajpur continues to grow, it brings with it both opportunities and challenges.

"Its transformative power is evident in the changing lives of thousands of villagers but also highlights the need for fair labour practices, adequate wages and protection for the workers to ensure its sustainable growth and equitable benefits for all those involved," Laila Banu said.

Israeli strike on 'safe zone'

FROM PAGE 1

the nearby Nasser Hospital, which hospital officials said had been overwhelmed and was "no longer able to function" due to the intensity of the Israeli offensive and an acute shortage of medical supplies.

Separately, at least 20 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack on a prayer hall at a Gaza camp for displaced people in west Gaza City, Palestinian health and civil emergency officials said.

Over 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, according to the enclave's health ministry.

In a statement, Hamas said the Israeli claims that it had targeted Mohammed Deif, the military chief of the group, were false and aimed at justifying the attack.

Deif has survived seven Israeli assassination attempts, the most recent in 2021 and has topped Israel's most wanted list for decades over the deaths of dozens of Israelis in suicide bombings.

The Israeli military said that the strike against Deif also targeted Rafa Salama, the commander of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade.

The Israeli army said operations were continuing in southeast Gaza City as well as "targeted, intelligence-based" missions in Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip.

Univ teachers to carry on strike today

FROM PAGE 1

Teachers from over 35 public universities under the FBUTA have been abstaining from work since July 1, protesting the introduction of the "Prottoy" pension scheme. They also demanded the inclusion of professors in the "super grade" (equivalent to the pay grade of a senior secretary) and introduction of a separate pay scale for public university teachers.

The same day, the Inter-University Officers' Federation also joined the movement boycotting work.

Quader, also the AL general secretary, yesterday said there was a confusion regarding the "Prottoy" pension scheme to be effective from July this year, but in fact it would be in force from July next year.

Prof Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan, secretary general of the FBUTA, told journalists that their talks with the government representatives "went well".

He said they would decide their next course of action after consulting the leaders of the teachers' associations and all federations.

Under the Prottoy pension scheme, 10 percent of the monthly basic salary of an employee, up to Tk 5,000, will be deducted and given to their pension fund. Besides, there will be no one-time gratuity for retirees.

However, under the present pension system, no money is deducted from the employees' salary and it also allows a five percent annual increment of the pension and encashment of the earned leave.

Teachers claimed that their financial benefits will be reduced in the new system.

STALEMATE CONTINUES

The two-week movement has halted the activities of almost all public universities across the county. Students fear that this may lead to session jams.

As public universities officials and employees abstain from work, many current and former students cannot collect or submit the necessary documents.

Farid Hossain, a former Rajshahi University students, yesterday said he needed to send his original educational certificates to a university abroad to attend classes there this month, but he could not get those as the administrative building was shut down for about two weeks.

Many other public university students could not collect documents as almost all administrative and academic activities were suspended.

The RU authorities postponed their undergraduate admission process on July 1 citing "unavoidable reasons". They also deferred the start of the first-year honours classes.

Students at Comilla University have expressed frustration at the stalemate. No classes were held at the university for about two months since early May, following a conflict between the teachers and the vice-chancellor over an untoward incident at the latter's office.

Israt Jahan Bonna, a final year (honours) student of English, told The Daily Star, "The university was reopened on June 23 after about two months, but the academic activities are being hampered again due to the teachers' movement."

Moniruzzaman, an associate professor and also a former student adviser at the university, on Thursday said, "The classroom is the proper place for both teachers and students. As they are waging movements [over pension benefits and quota in government jobs], valuable time is being lost."

The undergraduate admission seekers have also been affected as the admission process and orientation of students at the Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, and Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology have been postponed.

Former UGC chairman Prof Abdul Mannan said bringing university teachers under the universal pension scheme was not a wise decision.

"The government should have consulted the teachers before making the decision."

Terming the decision discriminatory, Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmad, co-chair of the Education Policy Formulation Committee, said, "The authorities should have addressed their concerns first because a country cannot move forward if the issues of the teachers and the education sector are not taken into consideration."

AKM Rifat Hasan, an associate professor of management at Jagannath University, said the students and teachers are trying to change two systems (quota in government jobs and pension facilities).

"The government must make a decision soon. Otherwise, there will be a possibility of session jams," he told The Daily Star.

Waterlogging forever?

FROM PAGE 1

argue that the city corporations need to adopt more effective planning and management strategies to address this issue.

Mujibur blamed the filling up of waterbodies, canals, and lakes, as well as the poor drainage network for the persistent waterlogging.

He added that climate change will bring on more intense rains for shorter periods, which will further worsen the situation.

"The city corporations need to enhance their capacities, develop skills, increase manpower, and implement institutional reforms.

"A master plan is needed to restore canals and waterbodies, and create a primary drainage system."

Dhaka currently has a network of 2,211 kilometers of drains, with 961km in the south and 1,250km in the north. Before the city corporations assumed responsibility, efforts to stop waterlogging were primarily focused on open drains.

Now, the corporations are responsible also for canals and drains, requiring substantial financial investments.

In the last four years, the DNCC spent Tk 370 crore, and the DSCC spent Tk 360 crore. Despite these efforts, areas like Shantinagar, where around Tk 100 crore was spent, still experience severe waterlogging.

Experts said many canals, once crucial for drainage, have been encroached upon and narrowed over time. After independence, Dhaka had 57 canals, but this number has decreased to 26, most of which are in poor condition.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said some areas still face waterlogging due to waste accumulation in the drains, adding that strict action will be taken against those who dispose of waste into canals and drains.

DSCC Chief Executive Officer Mizanur Rahman said that habitual dumping of polythene and plastic wastes by city dwellers is another key reason for the poor drainage.

He added that ongoing development projects by various service agencies also contribute to the problem.

A 2019 study by Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) revealed that Dhaka has lost 4.38 percent of its waterbodies over the last 20 years.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of BIP, said a lack of qualitative change in urban planning and management is a major reason behind waterlogging.

He stressed the need for public involvement in initiatives to address the issue.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, criticised the authorities concerned for not taking appropriate legal action against the housing companies that encroached lowlands.

She called for comprehensive plans to resolve the problem and urged the city corporations to focus more on nature-based drainage systems.

Sharif Jamil, member-secretary of Dhoritro Rokkhay Amra, another environmental organisation, said, "Spending money without identifying the proper reasons [behind waterlogging] leads to the money being wasted. No project can solve waterlogging problems without considering the importance of nature.

"If the projects don't solve the problem, then the corporations should identify the reasons for their failure."

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Want country to progress in every sector

Says PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated the government's commitment to creating facilities across various sectors to ensure the country's comprehensive advancement in the future.

"We want the country to progress in every stratum, including sports, in the coming days," she said while giving away prizes to the winners of the Sheikh Hasina Interbank Football Tournament 2024 at the Bangladesh Army Stadium.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of sports in fostering a competitive spirit and self-improvement.

"Through sports, education and cultural activities, everyone will have the opportunity to flourish and showcase their creativity. This is why we prioritise sports," she added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over the trophy to the winners of the Sheikh Hasina Interbank Football Tournament 2024 at the Bangladesh Army Stadium yesterday. In the final match, Islami Bank PLC defeated Standard Bank PLC 2-0 to become the champion. Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman and Bangladesh Association of Banks Chairman Nazrul Islam Mazumder were present at the event. PHOTO: **PID**

QUOTA REFORM

Govt cannot do anything until court settles issue: Arafat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Information Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday said there is no scope for the government to form a commission on quota reform or make any announcement since it is a sub judice matter (ongoing in court).

"After the Appellate Division verdict, there is no opportunity for the government to form a commission on quota. It will be unconstitutional to reform the quota system or make an announcement in this regard. The agitators are demanding a solution to the quota problem in parliament, but court matters cannot be resolved through the executive branch," Arafat said.

He made the remarks at a press briefing at the Dhaka District Awami League office in Tejgaon.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

> **I think that from time-to-time issues like quotas can be modernised or updated by taking into consideration changes in conditions and circumstances, among other factors.**

Student, Indian national die in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and 12 others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from a news agency and our local correspondent.

In Sylhet, an eight-year-old madrasa student died after being run over by a pickup in Gowainghat upazila in the afternoon, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Zobayer Ahmed, son of Rahim Uddin of Abdul Mahal village in West Alirgaon union and a student at Abdul Mahal Madrasa, said Mehedi Hasan Sumon, inspector (investigation) of Gowainghat Police Station.

Locals said Zobayer was crushed under the pickup while he was crossing the Gowainghat-Sarighat road in front of his madrasa after class hours. He died on the spot.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

5,619 students killed in road crashes in 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 5,619 students have been killed in road crashes in the last five and a half years since 2019, the Road Safety Foundation said at a press conference yesterday.

The organisation said a total of 34,478 people were killed from 2019 to June this year, meaning 16.29 percent of all road crash victims were students.

Of the students who were victims of road crashes, 2,783 (49.52 percent) were either bikers or their pillions, they also said.

The foundation revealed the information marking the 13th anniversary of Mirsharai Tragedy Day.

At least 45 people, including 42 students, were killed on July 11, 2011 when a truck carrying 60 students skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch at Abu Torab in Chattogram's Mirsharai upazila.

The students were returning home following a school football match held in Mirsharai stadium.

The foundation demanded that the government observe the day nationally, to make students aware about road safety issues.

Speaking at a press conference at their Dhanmondi office, the foundation's Chairman Prof AI Mahbub Uddin Ahmed said the rate of students killed in road crashes is very alarming.

He said 2,641 (47 percent) victims were between 5-17 years old -- from different schools and madrasas -- while 2,978 (53 percent) were between 18-25 years old and were students of different colleges and universities.

Of the student victims, 1,534 (27.30 percent) were pedestrians and were killed by hit and run of vehicles, while 721 (12.83 percent) were travelling on vehicles, he said.

Around 497 (8.84 percent) were bicycle riders and 84 (1.49 percent) were killed after their clothes or scarves got stuck in auto-rickshaws, he also said.

He added that 611 students were killed in the first six months of this year, while 1,153 were killed in 2023; 1,437 in 2022; 1,006 in 2021; 719 in 2020 and 693 in 2019.

Also, 833 students were killed in the last five and half years after being hit by trains while crossing the tracks carelessly.

They found seven major reasons behind the road crashes including -- faulty roads and vehicles; lack of knowledge about safe road use and recklessness among student bikers.

The organisation also gave seven recommendations including the suggestion for a campaign at every institution about road safety, as well as halting operations of unsafe vehicles.

Saidur Rahman, executive director of the foundation, was present at the briefing, among others.

REASONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Faulty roads and vehicles	Awareness campaign at every institution
Lack of knowledge on safe road use	Halting operations of unsafe vehicles
Recklessness among student bikers	Strict monitoring by authorities

FRIDAY WATERLOGGING

Four die from electrocution in the capital

STAR REPORT

Four people died due to electrocution amid heavy rains in different areas of Dhaka on Friday.

The deceased were identified as Md Alauddin, 18, and Rasel Das, 27, employees of a furniture shop in Pallabi; Abdur Nur, 35, a mason in Bhasantek, and Aiyub Ali, 45, a painter in Kotwali.

In Pallabi, Alauddin and Rasel were removing furniture and materials as water entered their shop during torrential rain on Friday afternoon.

Suddenly, both of them were electrocuted and got unconscious.

Locals took them to Kurmitola General Hospital where duty doctors declared them dead, said Abdul Aziz, sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station.

Alauddin hailed from Tarakanda upazila in Mymensingh and Rasel from Chattogram.

In Kotwali, painter Aiyub was electrocuted at Agarbati lane near CMM Court on Friday night as he was returning to his Sutrapur home after work, said his son Rafiqul Islam.

In an unconscious state, he was first taken to a nearby hospital in Old Dhaka and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Now more names come up in probe

Says DB chief

STAR REPORT

DB chief Harun-or-Rashid yesterday said many more names have come up during investigation into the murder of Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar.

He also said some of the masterminds are hiding abroad. "But the police are not summoning and harassing anyone unnecessarily. No one involved in the murder will be spared," he added. He said this during a press briefing at the DB office.

He also said two individuals believed to be directly involved in the murder of Azim remain in the custody of Indian police.

"So far, we have arrested nine people in connection with the incident, and of them two are still in India," Harun said.

DB was able to apprehend the perpetrators who happened to be in Bangladesh quickly, Harun said.

The detectives came up with multiple theories since Azim was killed around two months ago.

Initially, law enforcement officials said the MP was killed due to a gold smuggling-related feud, placing suspicion on a fellow lawmaker and a powerful businessman -- both allegedly part of the same syndicate as Azim.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

MP AZIM
MURDER

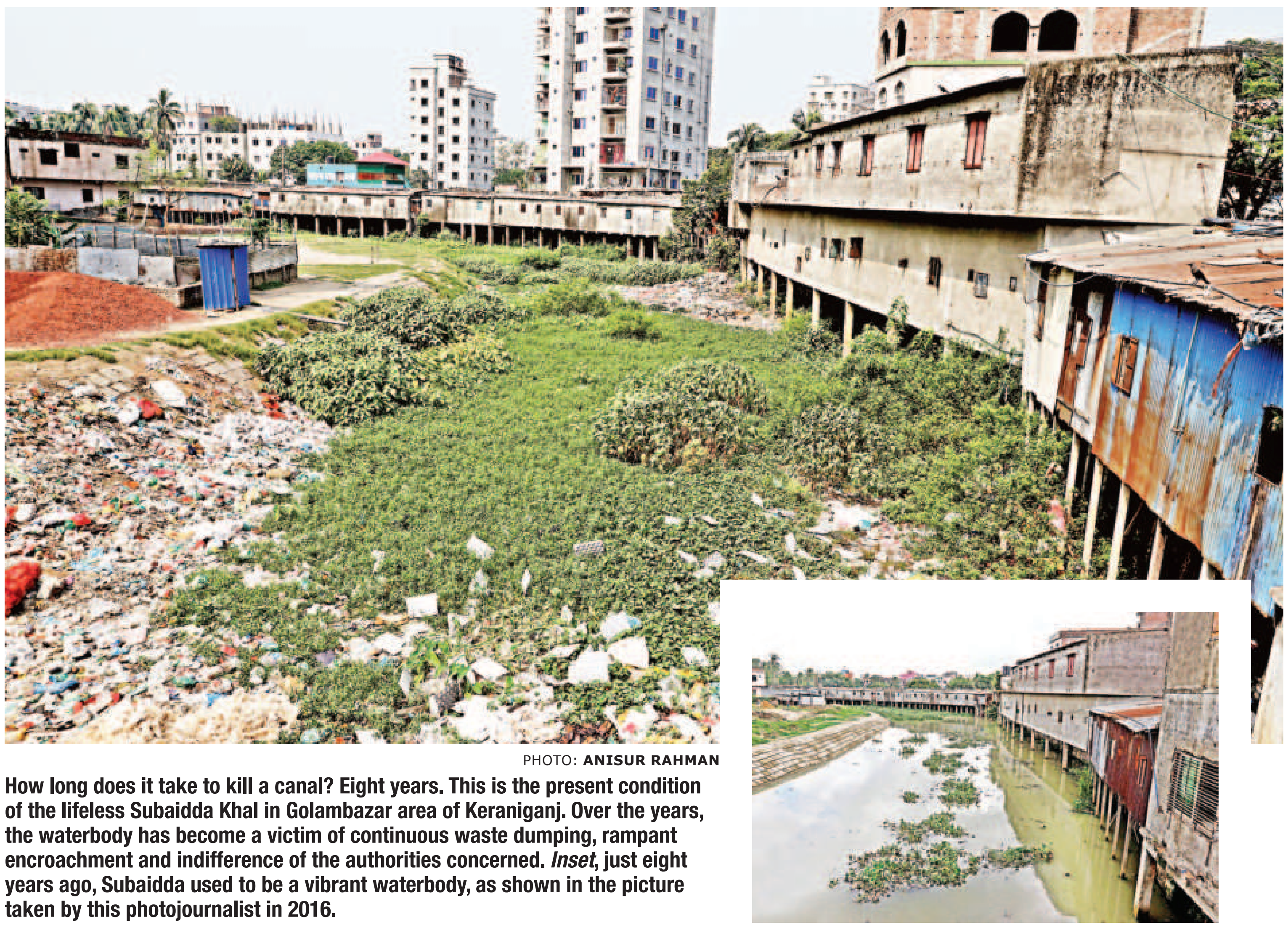


PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

How long does it take to kill a canal? Eight years. This is the present condition of the lifeless Subaidda Khal in Golambazar area of Keraniganj. Over the years, the waterbody has become a victim of continuous waste dumping, rampant encroachment and indifference of the authorities concerned. *Inset*, just eight years ago, Subaidda used to be a vibrant waterbody, as shown in the picture taken by this photojournalist in 2016.

Death anniv of Shajahan Siraj today

STAR REPORT

Today is the fourth death anniversary of Shajahan Siraj, a key organiser of the 1971 Liberation War, said a press release.

On this day in 2020, he passed away in Dhaka, at the age of 77.

On the occasion, a wreath will be placed on his grave at Banani graveyard in Dhaka in the morning, on behalf of Shajahan Siraj Welfare Trust. Qurankhwani and a food distribution programme will be held at the orphanages run by Anjuman Mufidul Islam.

In Kalihati, wreaths will be laid at the deceased's mural.

Besides, scholarships will be given among the poor and meritorious students at Shajahan Siraj College in Kalihati.

Siraj, a veteran politician,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

MUGHAL-ERA MOSQUE IN LALMONIRHAT

Steps yet to be taken for restoration

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

The Department of Archaeology had published a gazette notification on August 1, 2022 mentioning that it would take measures to preserve the Puran Jame Masjid, a Mughal-era mosque in Saptibari Gilabari village under Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

However, even after 23 months, it has yet to take any step to this end.

In fact, not even a signboard declaring the mosque an antiquity has been placed on its premises.

According to the DoA and locals, the mosque was built in 1565 during the Mughal-era on seven decimals of land. It is 42 feet in length and 16 feet in width and has 3 minarets above the main gate in front of it. There is also an ancient well on the mosque's premises.

"The mosque is nearly 600 years old. Its historical significance, especially being a specimen of Mughal-era architecture, is immense. We were happy when the DoA issued the gazette declaring the mosque an antiquity and announced to take measures to preserve it. However, it is disappointing that nearly two years have passed but no effort has yet been made to this end," said Mahfuj Avin, a local resident.

Ershad Alam, president of the mosque's management committee, said DoA officials had visited the mosque numerous times before issuing the gazette recognising its historical significance, but they have not taken any steps to preserve it yet."

Habibur Rahman, custodian of the DoA in Rangpur division, said, "We have not received any instruction regarding preservation of the mosque so far. We will take steps if we receive any instruction from the higher authorities."

Contacted, Naheed Sultana, regional director of DoA in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, said the mosque is the second most ancient structure in Lalmonirhat district.

"We have got the allotment to preserve the mosque. It is unfortunate that a signboard has not been placed in front of the mosque yet. I will find out why it didn't happen. All necessary works to preserve the mosque will be done in the current fiscal year," she added.

QUESTION LEAK

Lalmonirhat AL leader expelled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila Awami League Vice President Mizanur Rahman has been expelled from the party for his involvement in the question leak of PSC examination.

The decision came following an emergency meeting of Aditmari upazila AL held at party office yesterday. A notice was issued in this regard, signed by upazila AL President Mohammad Ali and General Secretary Rafiqul Alam.

The notification said, "Mizanur Rahman has been expelled from the post of vice-president of the upazila AL for being involved in activities that are anti-organisational, disorderly, criminal and undermine the dignity of the organisation."

Aditmari upazila AL President Mohammad Ali said Mizan has been accused of being involved in the ongoing PSC exam question paper leak. Hence, the notice was issued expelling him from the party.

Saber seeks UN support to empower vulnerable countries

UNB, *New York*

Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury has called upon the United Nations to be more responsive to the needs of developing countries, especially the most vulnerable ones in addressing those challenges.

He said for Bangladesh, issues like sea level rise, salinity intrusion and glacial melt are matters of survival.

He said this during his meeting with Amina J Muhammad, deputy secretary general of the UN, at a bilateral meeting held at the UN Headquarters in New York yesterday.

During the meeting, the deputy secretary general and the environment minister deliberated on the devastating impacts of climate change, ongoing conflicts, and other global challenges that are hindering the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and emphasised the need for strengthened international collaboration to overcome these obstacles.

They also discussed how to amplify the voices of the global south in climate negotiations, especially in Conferences of Parties to secure more funding to tackle the impacts of climate change and support their green transition.

Earlier, the minister met UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and discussed areas of mutual cooperation.

Aside from that, the minister also met Chun Kyoo Park, head of the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, to discuss potential cooperation in the areas of waste management.

Saber is in New York on an official visit from July 11 to 16.

ATTACK ON MIRANZILLA COLONY

Harijans stage demo in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

People of the harijan community living in Chattogram demonstrated in the port city yesterday, protesting the attack on their fellows on Miranzilla Harijan Colony in Dhaka's Bangshal area on July 10.

During a protest rally, they warned to stop cleaning waste from roads for an indefinite period if the government does not ensure exemplary punishment of the attackers.

They also demanded the security of harijans across the country.

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad arranged the rally in front of Chattogram Press Club.

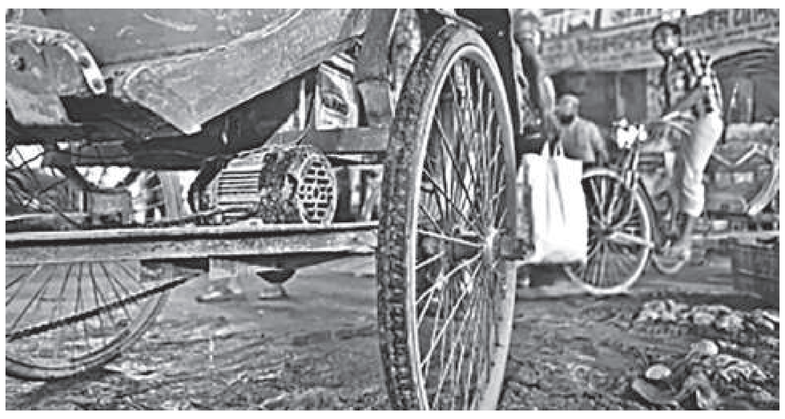
Badal Chandra Das, chief adviser of Jhautala Harijan Community, said, "If we don't clean the waste one day, there is no way to walk on the streets of the city."

He said, "Although we serve people day and night, in return, we have to suffer torture at the hands of political people. We are being treated like dirt."

"We will stop waste cleaning for an indefinite period if the authorities do not take steps to punish the attackers and to stop the attack on our brothers [harijan community]," added Badal.

No battery-run rickshaws on main roads: DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Traffic Division yesterday said they would not allow battery-run rickshaws and other slow-moving vehicles on the main roads in the city.

"There is no scope to drive the auto-rickshaw on the main roads but a misconception grew among the drivers after the prime minister recently allowed them to operate in the city considering human aspect," DMP Joint Commissioner (Traffic-South) SM Mehedi Hasan said during a press briefing at DMP media centre.

He said they are making the drivers aware that they have to operate on the small and feeder roads, not on the main roads.

"We have already started the process of designating some smaller roads for these vehicles. We have already selected some roads in the Dhanmondi area. These vehicles are no longer running on the main roads in Mirpur," he said.

Replying to another query, Mehedi said they have made the footpaths free from hawkers in some parts of the city. Sometimes, the hawkers return to the footpaths even after eviction.

Footpaths are only for pedestrians, he said adding, they are trying so that hawkers cannot return to the pavement that was already freed.

Student, Indian

FROM PAGE 3

The body was sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

The pickup driver fled the scene.

In Bagerhat, an Indian national lost his life and at least 12 people were injured as a bus hit another in Fakirhat, reports our Bagerhat correspondent.

The accident took place on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Faltita area, said police.

Shridhar Ganguly, 45, son of Bhim Ganguly from Kolkata, succumbed to his injuries on the way to a hospital, said Sheikh Nuruzzaman Chanu, officer-in-charge of Mollahat Highway Police Camp.

Want country

FROM PAGE 3

Hasina also mentioned the government's initiative to construct mini-stadiums in every upazila, named Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium, to ensure year-round competition at the upazila level. "We are trying to make people more attentive to various kinds of sports," she said.

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman and Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) Chairman Nazrul Islam Mazumder also spoke at the event.

Constructing

FROM PAGE 5

"The municipal authorities are entrusted with responsibility to protect and maintain the town's waterbodies. Instead, they are trying to fill up ponds, prioritising markets over environmental conservation. They must abandon this commercial mindset," she added.

Contacted, the mayor said, "The main purpose of constructing the market is to increase the municipality's revenue. However, we will try to build the market without filling up the ponds entirely."

Govt cannot do anything

FROM PAGE 3

Addressing the issue of discrimination in government jobs, the state minister argued that quotas do not undermine merit but are essential for ensuring representation of the underprivileged.

"Merit should be evaluated; this claim is correct. But apart from evaluating merit, the backward population cannot be underestimated or neglected," Arafat asserted.

He urged the protesters to wait for the government's response following the court proceedings on quota.

Arafat emphasised that the government remains positive about addressing the quota issue, but criticised the students protesting against the quota system for repeatedly revising their demands and misleading the people.

"I think that from time to time issues like quotas can be modernised by taking into consideration changes in conditions and circumstances, among other factors," he added.

He argued that the protesters' demands to resolve the quota issue through the executive branch reflect a misunderstanding of the legal process.

Arafat noted that the protesters seem to lack a clear understanding of the quota system and have been making inconsistent demands.

"The question now is whether they [protesters] have any other problems beyond the quota change movement," he said, adding that the government's intentions align with the protesters' demands, but some individuals are interpreting the situation differently.

Arafat also expressed concern over the involvement of what he described as an "anti-national force" in the movement, which he claimed is diverting the agenda of ordinary students.

He also stressed that the contributions of freedom fighters should not be dismissed.

Death anniv

FROM PAGE 3

read the manifesto of the country's independence in presence of Bangabandhu and millions of others on March 3, 1971.

He was also the commander of the Bangladesh Liberation Force. He was elected member of parliament five times in his 60-year-long political career.

Siraj was known as one of the "four caliphs" -- Shajahan Siraj, ASM Abdur Rob, Abdul Kuddus Makhon and Nur-e-Alam Siddique -- of Liberation War.

Siraj was one of the key figures of Swadhin Bangla Biplabi Parishad, a secret organisation formed by Bangabandhu in 1962 with an aim to liberate the country from Pakistan.

Four die

FROM PAGE 3

doctors declared him dead.

In Bhasantek, Nur's tin-shed house at Dewanpara was flooded with rainwater and he was removing water with a pump.

Suddenly, he got electrocuted. Locals took him to Kurmitola General Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Bhasantek Police Station.

The four bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

On Friday, heavy rain flooded streets and homes across Dhaka, exposing the city's poor drainage system yet again.

People, who went out of their homes on the weekend endured immense suffering, as they had to wade through knee- to waist-deep water to reach their destinations.

A nuisance on school

FROM PAGE 5

government, the contractor is keeping the construction materials on the school ground without permission.

The school, established in 1989 on 37 decimals of land, currently has 185 students and six teachers, said Jahangir Alam, an assistant teacher.

"A lot of smoke and burnt smell comes to the classroom, making it difficult for us to attend classes. If this continues longer, we may become ill," said Jannat Ferdous, a fifth-grader.

Md Mizanur Rahman, chairman of the school's management committee, said he has been trying to communicate with the authorities concerned on this issue.

Contacted, Shahid Biswas, contractor of the road project, said they kept the construction materials and equipment on the school ground having found no other suitable place.

"We are trying to vacate the place as soon as possible," he added.

Md Khalequzzaman, upazila education officer, said they were aware of the matter and have directed the contractor to take the materials away from the school premises.

Probe, trial pending

FROM PAGE 5

Ahsan, recently transferred director of CMCH, said he was aware of the issue.

"For pending post mortem, DNA and forensic reports, the forensic department of the hospital is responsible and they need to step up," he added.

He said, "We have developed a special software for issuing medical certificates, which is now in the trial stage. Hopefully the situation will improve once it is launched."

Now more

FROM PAGE 3

The probe into the gold smuggling issue remained stalled. Since then, the investigation has taken many twists and turns.

Suddenly, political rivalry came into the mix as a possible reason for the murder following the arrest and confession of Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League.

Suspects appeared and were held from far-flung corners of the country, each with a purported motive for the MP's demise. Adding to the confusion is the mystery surrounding the remains found in a Kolkata apartment.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 14

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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Tender Notice

Project Name	Padma River Crossing Portion of Payra – Gopalganj – Aminbazar 400kV Double Circuit Transmission Line (2nd Phase)
Tender Name	The Procurement of Service of Land Acquisition and Compensation
Date & Time for Purchasing Tender Document	July 14th, 2024 at 10:00-July 21st, 2024 at 10:00
Tender Closing Date & Time	July 21st, 2024 at 18:00
Office Address	Plot #59-B (6th Floor), EHL Loqman Hossain Center, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh.

Further information and detailed documents is available to collect by visiting the Office. Interested bidders shall submit bidding documents by mail to following address: liru@payra-cecc.com; weibenxia@payra-cecc.com

Engr. Md Hasib Uddin Talukder
Manager (Project Management)
Mobile: 01716837912
Email: hasib.ceccdhaka@gmail.com

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Today is the Seventh Death Anniversary of Mrs. Pratima Das Gupta of Baridhara Diplomatic Zone, Dhaka a prominent social worker and philanthropist. All relatives, friends and well wishers are cordially requested to keep her in their prayer.

Dilip Das Gupta – Husband
Sangita & Suparna – Daughter

এম এম জুট মিলস্ লিঃ
বাঁশবাড়ীয়া, সীতাকুন্ড, চট্টগ্রাম
ই-মেইলঃ mmjmltd@gmail.com

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এম এম জুট মিলস্ লিঃ এর ব্যবহার অনুপযোগী কাঠ/লোহা/স্টীলের/বৈদ্যুতিক/নিরাপত্তা সামগ্রী "যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে" ভিত্তিতে বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত আগ্রহী প্রকৃত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নির্দিষ্ট সিডিউলে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। সিডিউলের মূল্য ১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য। দরপত্র সিডিউল (ক) বিজেএমসি আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়, সাত্তার চেম্বার, ৯৯, আগ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম এর হিসাব বিভাগ (খ) মিল কার্যালয় হতে আগামী ২২-০৭-২০২৪ইং পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ক্রয় করা যাবে এবং একই স্থান সমূহে ২৩-০৭-২০২৪ইং, বেলা ১২.০০টা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র বাক্সে দাখিল করা যাবে। ঐদিন অর্থাৎ ২৩-০৭-২০২৪ইং, বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকে) দরপত্র বাক্স খোলা হবে। দরপত্র সিডিউলে বিস্তারিত উল্লেখ থাকবে।

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GD- 45

Date: July 14, 2024
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Description, Pre-Proposal Meeting, submission time & date:

SL	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Pre-Tender Meeting Schedule and Place	Last date of Tender Submission
1	Solar Power Energy	IFT/SCI/CXB FY-24/(Manual)/01	Zoom Meeting: 18/07/2024 https://zoom.us/j/95776997387?pwd=wczlN3YMxclmWg2YAHKnpasLbwjpN1.1	August 4, 2024, on or before 11:00 pm.

Special Instruction:
a) All activities in connection with the said procurement of Services/Goods/Works will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies.
b) SCI reserves the right to accept or reject part/whole of any or all the application without assigning any reason.

Director - Procurement & Supply Chain

These fishers could catch only a handful of hilsa in the Meghna even though it is the peak season.

PHOTO: STAR

HILSA ELUSIVE

Fishers rue lack of fish in rivers; officials say situation to improve soon

SUSHANTA GHOSH, *Barishal*

Fishermen from Bhola, Barishal and Kuakata are returning empty handed from the rivers in the coastal region due to a lack of hilsa in the waterbodies, even though it is the harvest season of the fish.

Many of them had taken out loans to take their boats and trawlers to the rivers for catching hilsa, and are now worried about how they will pay back the loans and remain afloat with their families under the circumstances.

According to the Department of Fisheries, the hilsa season got delayed a bit due to heat and climate change, and more fish will be in the rivers a few days later.

"I could manage to catch only around 2-3 kilogrammes of hilsa in the last four days, which we had to eat while staying on the trawler in the Meghna river. As such, I returned empty handed. I wonder how I am going to return the money I had borrowed," said Russel Majhi, a fisherman from Tulatali village under Bhola Sadar upazila.

Monir Majhi, another fisher, said that it costs Tk 3,000 including oil to go to river once. "Six of us went to catch hilsa, but we returned empty handed," he added.

Fisherman Md Jasim Mia said hilsas are avoiding the rivers as ships from Chattogram are using this river route.

Some other fishermen said siltation and pollution of the rivers and presence of a huge number of fishing trawlers are reasons why hilsas are not entering the rivers from the Bay.

Nuru Majhi, president of Mahipur Fishermen's Association, said there is no hilsa at Kuakata, Alipur and Mahipur fish landing stations. He said around 50,000 people in this region, engaged in hilsa catching and trading, are now in dire straits.

According to sources at the Divisional Fisheries Office in Barishal, there are 4.21 lakh registered fishermen in the division.

Although at least 2,000-3,000 maunds of hilsa were expected to arrive daily at the 25 fish landing stations in the division, even half of it has not been received, the sources also said.

"It is not true that there is no hilsa at all; the number, however, is much less than expected. The situation may change in a few days when more hilsa will enter the rivers once the temperature of water becomes favourable for laying eggs," said Nripendra Nath Biswas, deputy director of the Barishal divisional fisheries office.

DELAY IN MEDICAL REPORTS

Probe, trial pending for 965 cases

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, *Ctg*

Investigations into at least 965 cases filed with different police stations under Chattogram Metropolitan Police are currently halted due to delay in issuance of medical reports in connection with the cases by Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

As such, the trial procedures of the cases also remain pending with different metropolitan courts in Chattogram.

According to medical, police and court staffers, these reports are crucial for any case, as they can change its whole merit.

Sometimes the medical staffers take bribes to manipulate the reports and thereby change police investigation.

The matter came to light after judicial magistrates openly spoke up about the matter at the police-magistracy conference on March 6, although investigation officers have been facing the issue for a long time.

This correspondent talked to at least 15 sub-inspectors and inspectors of 16 police stations under CMP in this regard.

The officers alleged that the IOs even have to bribe hospital officials Tk 500-5,000 based on the category and merit of the cases to get the necessary reports including post mortem, and DNA, forensic and medical certificates.

Most complaints regarding delayed issuance of medical reports and bribery are against the casualty and orthopaedic departments of CMCH.

The casualty department provides reports on physical assault, serious injuries or stabbing while the orthopedics department gives reports on broken limbs or other serious injuries.

The cases filed under the penal code with police stations and courts require medical certificates for police reports.

"I had to bribe medical staffers Tk 500-2,000 to collect medical certificates to submit my investigation report on time," said an SI of CMP's West Zone, wishing anonymity. Several other police officers of different zones of CMP echoed him.

In 2022, the CMCH authorities launched a probe into allegations of bribery against an assistant registrar of the casualty department. He allegedly used to take bribes from IOs on the basis of the case's merit.

The officers alleged that the IOs even have to bribe hospital officials Tk 500-5,000 based on the category and merit of the cases to get the necessary reports including post mortem, and DNA, forensic and medical certificates.

At the police-magistracy conference, Rabiul Alam, chief metropolitan magistrate of Chattogram, urged the authorities concerned of CMCH to issue the pending medical reports as early as possible.

"It is a critical issue. We are working together to resolve the matter," said Nishkriti Chakma, deputy commissioner (crime and operations) at CMP Headquarters.

Contacted, Brig Gen Shamim

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

A seven-year-long waterlogging woe

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Rasulpur area of Tangail Sadar upazila has been experiencing waterlogging over the past seven years.

The menace ensued after debris from a road construction project was dumped at the mouth of a canal flowing through the area, obstructing its flow and hindering its ability to drain away water.

As such, students of Rasulpur Bachhiron Nechha High School and Rasulpur Government Primary School, traders at Rasulpur Market, and dwellers of numerous houses in the area have been suffering immensely due to waterlogging every time it rains.

In monsoon, their sufferings know no bounds as the situation becomes exacerbated.

In 2017, when the road connecting Tangail with the Bangabandhu Bridge through Sadar upazila was turned into a four-lane one, the contractors dumped the debris at the mouth of the canal, alleged locals.

Since then, waterlogging in the area has been a persistent ordeal.

"Every time it rains, students are compelled to tread through muddy water while entering or leaving the school premises. In monsoon, their sufferings worsen as waterlogging becomes persistent throughout the season," said Md Abdul Mannan Sarkar, headteacher of Rasulpur Bachhiron Nechha High School.

Rashed Rahman, president of the school's managing committee, said, "We have written several times to the local lawmaker, Tangail's deputy commissioner, Sadar upazila parishad chairman, and Bangladesh Water Development Board executive engineer, seeking remedies to the problem."

However, no step has been taken to this end yet, he added.

Sajjad Hossain, executive engineer of BWDB in Tangail, said, "We are aware of the problem but the local administration and public representatives will have to take steps in this regard."

Contacted, Md Kaiserul Islam, deputy commissioner of Tangail, said the schools' authorities informed him about the matter. "Necessary steps will be taken in this regard after investigation," he added.

Constructing market by filling up two ponds

Habiganj mayor's move draws flak

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Habiganj Municipality Mayor Ataur Rahman has announced to construct a multi-storey market in the town by filling up two ponds.

He said this in the latest municipal budget announcement for FY 2024-25 unveiled at a press conference on July 8.

The announcement has drawn flaks from different quarters, including town dwellers and environmentalists, as it comes at a time when numerous areas in the town are facing a scarcity of freshwater alongside waterlogging problems.

Also, filling up of any waterbody is prohibited in the Water Conservation Act, 2000.

The two ponds, one being 60 decimals in size while the other one acre, are located in Tinkona area of the town in front of the Water Development Board's Habiganj district office.

Protesting the mayor's announcement, residents have organised various programmes.

Confirming the matter, SM Farhad, member secretary of Sacheton Nagorik Committee in Habiganj, said a memorandum has also been submitted to the deputy commissioner of the district for steps to prevent filling up the ponds for constructing market.

Shah Shaheda Akhter, coordinator of BELA in Sylhet, said they also sent a letter to the officials concerned on April 15.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

নদী ধ্বংস করা যাবে না
স্মারকলিপি প্রদান

Two die after falling sick in septic tank

UNB, *Kushtia*

Two people died and another was injured after falling sick inside a septic tank at Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Liton Hossain, 30, a cleaner, and Rajon Hossain, 30, a neighbour who went to rescue Liton, said Mahabubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station.

The injured is Rajon's younger brother, Mizan Hossain, 18.

The incident occurred at the residence of Mosharraf Hossen of Bagowan village in Mathurapur union around 8:00am.

Locals and fire service members took them to Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared Liton and Rajon dead.

"In the morning, Liton, who was working in the septic tank next to our house, started having difficulty breathing. My brother went to rescue him. Later, my brother also started having breathing difficulties. Then, I got injured while trying to rescue my brother. Later, we were rescued and taken to the hospital," said Mizan.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to Kushtia Sadar Hospital for autopsy, added the OC.

The playground of Kharashuni Government Primary School in Jhenaidah has been turned into a site to store construction materials for the last couple of months.

PHOTO: STAR

A nuisance on school ground

Students suffer as construction materials remain piled up

AZIBOR RAHMAN, *Jhenaidah*

The premises of Kharashuni Government Primary School in Jhenaidah Sadar upazila has remained occupied since last Ramadan, storing materials of a road construction project by the district administration.

As a result, the students are unable to use the ground for assembly and sports activities, while the smoke and smell of bitumen and sound of stone crushing add nuisance during school hours.

"The contractor kept the construction materials on our school ground in last Ramadan without my permission, and has not removed those even though months have passed already. The UNO and primary education officer in the upazila have been informed, but no step has been taken in this regard yet," said Md Jomir Hossain, headteacher of the school.

"The students and teachers are having a hard time engaging in academic activities amid this nuisance. Also, they are being deprived of the scope to play on the ground during recess, as the entire land remains occupied by construction materials and equipment," he added.

Locals alleged that since the project is being initiated by the

A lot of smoke and burnt smell comes to the classroom, making it difficult for us to attend classes. If this continues longer, we may become ill.

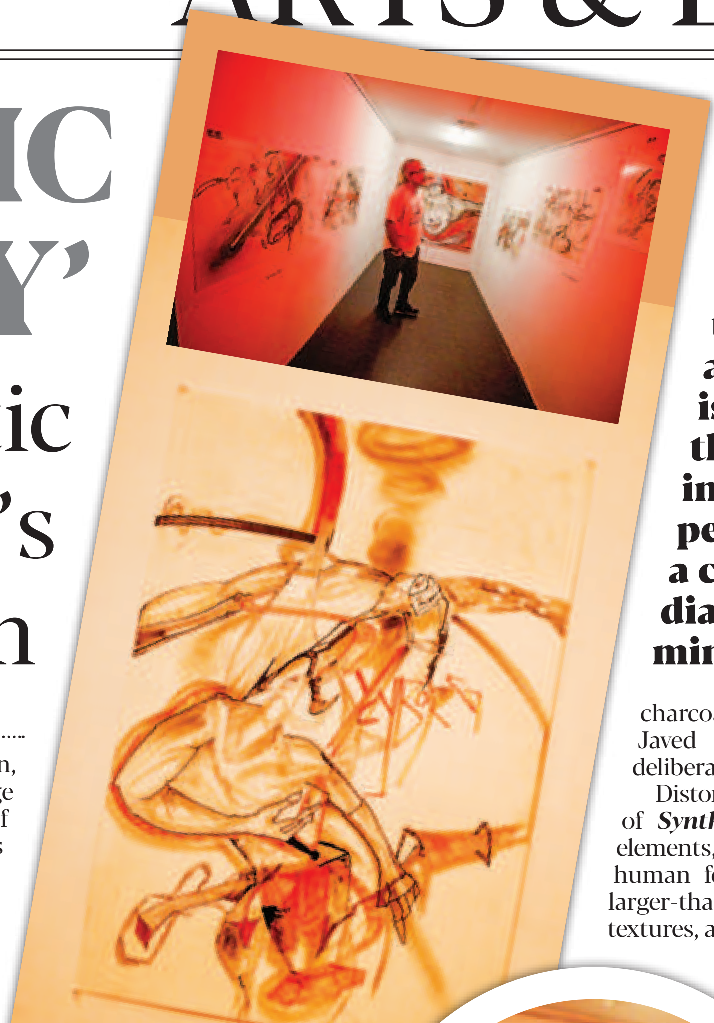
JANNAT FERDOUS
A fifth-grader

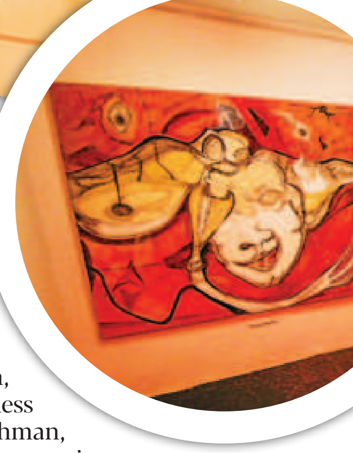
SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'SYNTHETIC REALITY'

Javed Jalil's artistic inquiry into mind's mechanism





Reflecting on the exhibition, Javed told The Daily Star, "The exhibition seamlessly integrates into my daily existence. It provides a stage for my artistry while I stay immersed in the next phase."

PHOTOS: **THABIT AL BASHAR & COURTESY**

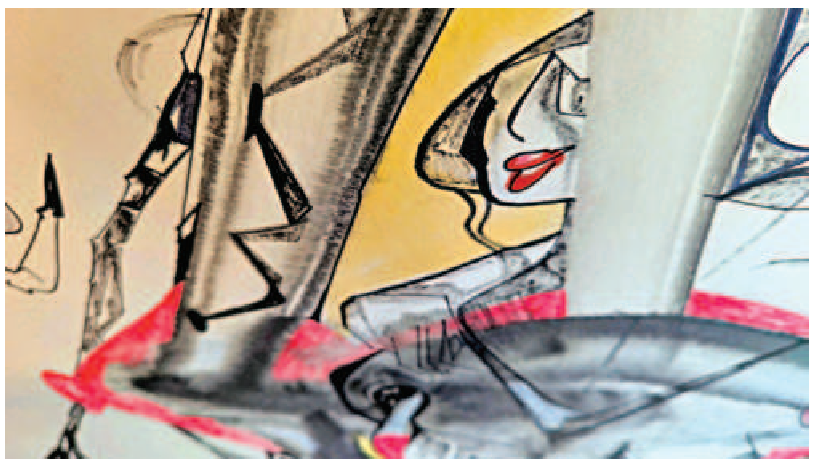
What defines a thought? Is it a solitary idea or several notions intertwined within themselves? Can a thought exist in isolation? Perhaps, thoughts are hardly innate, rather they are perceived uniquely in a continuous chaotic dialogue within the mind.

FAHIN RAHMAN AUNGKITA

Javed Jalil's second solo exhibition, ***Synthetic Reality*** provokes one to engage in an existential crisis with the reality of thoughts. With a series of 27 paintings made using oil and dry media on canvas, the exhibition is the first part of his project labeled "The RED".

Lit up in a warm and soft hue of red, a journey through the gallery hall is a stimulating experience. In the same palette of red, white, and grey with accents of yellow and black, every piece of art unravels an eventful arena accompanied by short titles to give the viewer a headway to their train of thought.

Upon entering the gallery, one would be greeted with ***Observer Being Observed***, then ***Movement of Thought*** followed by ***Lonely Question***, ***Touch of a Dragonfly***, ***Unknown Acquaintance***, and more, in the journey through paintings. The exhibition revolves around the idea that thought is not natural, it is inherently artificial- hence the tag "synthetic" in the title.



Last Friday (July 12), a warm inauguration ceremony was held at Kalakendra with tea and snacks. The special guests included Mubin S Khan, deputy editor of The Business Standard, and Sohel Rahman, an I/O psychologist and managing director of Asian Tiger Capital Holdings. Javed Jalil, a regular of Kalakendra's artistic ventures, was responsible for every detail of the exhibition, from selecting the pieces to arranging the lighting and placement. This is one exhibition where the artist took care of everything without a curator.

Mubin S Khan described the exhibition as the heart of Javed's imagination, revealing his mind clearly. Sohel Rahman was pleasantly surprised by the techniques and composition of the artworks. He said, "His technique is extraordinary, making oil paintings look like charcoal, pastels, and pencil drawings. Javed also achieves perfection in the deliberate distortion of the paintings."

Distortion is evident in the paintings of ***Synthetic Reality***, with crosshatching elements, animal figures, and exaggerated human features. The art gives thoughts a larger-than-life presence with bold lines, timid textures, and fluid shapes.

The artist said, "If you view something under a microscope, something mundane may suddenly seem monstrous to us yet nothing in it has changed except the view. My work is a projection of how we choose to define the monstrosity."

The paintings, from ***Mating of a Pen*** to ***Barb Wire Driving***, vary widely in focus. Complementing the paintings is a video installation reflecting the simultaneity of thought. Though conceptually diverse, the artworks explore how the human mind works. Javed compares it to driving, where multiple thoughts merge, making it hard to separate one from another.

Reflecting on the exhibition, Javed told The Daily Star, "The exhibition seamlessly integrates into my daily existence. It provides a stage for my artistry while I stay immersed in the next phase. I envision ***Synthetic Reality*** as an ongoing exploration, with 'The RED' marking just its initial chapter."

The exhibition is set to run from July 12 to 27 at Kalakendra, Lalmatia, from 4pm to 8pm daily.

Rahat Fateh Ali to grace Bangladeshi stage this July

Pakistani musician Rahat Fateh Ali Khan is all set to perform in Dhaka on July 20 at the United Convention Center. He announced the concert on Facebook on July 11. The event is organised by Buy Here Now (BHN).

Tickets for Rahat Fateh Ali Khan's concert are priced at Tk 10,000 each, with sales starting tonight at 8pm. BHN's Assistant Manager Touhidul Islam, told The Daily Prothom Alo that only one ticket category is available.

Rahat Fateh Ali Khan is renowned for his Qawwali, Ghazals, and Bollywood playback singing.

Ferdous meets Nachiketa for the first time in Dhaka

Renowned West Bengal musician Nachiketa Chakraborty enchanted the audience at the ***Dhaka Melancholy*** concert held at Hatirjheel Amphitheatre on Friday (July 12), leaving them spellbound.

In a special moment, actor and MP Ferdous Ahmed joined Nachiketa on stage for the first time at a concert. He shared photos on social media, and captioned, "Finally shared the stage with my dear Nachiketa *da* in Dhaka."

Ferdous concluded the post with, "This meeting feels like sudden rain! Nachiketa *da* is an incredible musician. ***Hothat Brishti*** was his debut film. Forever grateful to you, *da*."

The post was admired by fans of both stars.

COUNTRYWIDE

Akhalia facing pollution, grabbing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Mindless dumping of waste into the Akhalia river in Mymensingh's Phulbaria municipality has been going on unabated for years.

Though local residents urged the authority concerned on several occasions to take proper step to stop the menace, nothing has been done so far.

Locals said the municipal authorities itself have been dumping garbage into the Akhalia river for the last 10 years as proper management of tonnes of garbage is still a far cry.

Phulbaria Municipality was established in 2001, but the municipality authorities are yet to select a designated spot for waste dumping since its establishment 23 years ago.

Moreover, as there is no dustbin in the municipality area people throw away waste materials to the river according to their will.

Several rivers including Akhalia, Khiru, Banar and Bajua flow through Phulbaria upazila and these rivers are considered as lifeline of agriculture and ecological balance of the locality.

Among the rivers, Akhalia that facing serious pollution and grabbing is flowing through Phulbaria municipality, locals lamented, adding that a section of people even cultivate Boro paddy in the river bed during the dry season, obstructing the flow of the river at different points.

During a recent visit to the municipality this correspondent saw huge garbage are being piled up along the riverbank in Bhalukjaan area.

One of the local residents, preferring not to be named, said the municipality staff themselves have been dumping household garbage in the area for the last couple of months.

On the other hand, the piles of garbage often washed away into the river even after a slight rain, polluting the river that falls into the Brahmaputra river after crossing adjacent Trishal upazila.

Shahjahan Sikder, a former councillor of the municipality, said once the river was a great source of water for irrigation and native fishes as well, but now the river has turn into a narrow canal.

AB Siddique, an incumbent councillor, said if the river is not protected from pollution and grabbing right now, local environment and ecological balance will surely deteriorate in near future.

Ibrahim Khalil, conservancy inspector at the municipality office, said the municipality authorities disposes nearly 25 tonnes of garbage every day, but the number of cleaning staff is too scanty to handle the job.

Only two trucks and five rickshaw-vans carry the garbage, he said. The municipality authorities have selected a designated waste dumping spot at Kushmail Chander Bazar and it will start functioning soon, Khalil added.

Disposal of waste materials and illegal encroachment is choking the Akhalia river in Mymensingh's Phulbaria Municipality. The photo was taken from Bhalukjaan area recently.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Krejcikova wins Wimbledon title

FROM PAGE 12

Paolini had to save two break points in the third game but she cracked under the strain again as the composed Czech stormed into a double-break ahead for 4-1.

Krejcikova moved to three set points in the eighth game and only needed one as Paolini dumped a backhand return into the net.

The nerve-wracked Italian managed to claim just four points on the Czech's serve in the 35-minute opener. Krejcikova hit 10 winners to the Italian's five.

Paolini dashed off Centre Court for a bathroom break and returned re-energised.

She had also dropped the first set in her marathon semi-final triumph over Donna Vekic and on Saturday she launched another second set fightback.

Breaks in the second and eighth games levelled the final after a set in which Krejcikova made 14 unforced errors to seven for her opponent and take her double-fault count to a tournament-high of 33.

The Czech managed just four winners in the set as she went spectacularly off the boil.

INDIA bloc wins 10 out

FROM PAGE 12

BJP's Kalyan Choubey in Maniktala.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's wife and Congress candidate Kamlesh Thakur defeated BJP's Hoshiyar Singh to win the Dehra assembly seat.

In Nalagarh, Congress' Hardeep Singh Bawa won against BJP's K L Thakur. The BJP won the Hamirpur seat with its candidate Ashish Sharma polling 27,041 votes against Congress's Pushpinder Verma 25,470 votes.

In Uttarakhand, the Congress's candidates for the Badrinath and Manglaur bypolls -- Lakhapat Singh Butola and Qazi Mohammad Nizamuddin -- won their seats.

In Madhya Pradesh, BJP's Kamslesh Pratap Shah won the Amarwara assembly seat, while in Bihar, Independent candidate Shankar Singh won the Rupauli seat.

Results were declared for the Assembly bypolls held in 13 constituencies across seven states on July 10. The bypolls were held in Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh.

Imran Khan to remain in jail

FROM PAGE 12

against the military and other state installations that erupted following his brief arrest in May 2023.

An anti-terrorism court last week cancelled his bail in one of the May 9 cases registered against him and thousands of his supporters.

The party called it a "gimmick" aimed at prolonging his imprisonment.

Bibi is on bail in a land corruption case in which she is also co-accused with Khan, who is a free person after the latest acquittal, the party added.

All four jail sentences Khan received ahead of a February national election have now been overturned or suspended.

Jailed since last August, he was acquitted last month of charges of leaking state secrets. Two other corruption sentences have been suspended.

The PTI has warned that keeping Khan in jail despite yesterday's decision will deepen a political crisis which has crippled the country of 240 million people since he was ousted in a parliament vote of confidence in 2022.

Khan blames his ouster on the country's powerful military generals. No prime minister of Pakistan has completed a full five-year constitutional term since the country gained its independence in 1947.

Leave 10km inside border line

FROM PAGE 12

The full text of the HC verdict, released on July 11, said the 8km land from the border line will remain empty so that every inch of this land is clearly visible from 8km away.

The land between 8km and 10km from the border line should be kept reserved for all establishments and activities of the BGB, the HC said.

Once the area is declared as BGB property, the authorities should assess the losses of the private property owners and provide them with Khas land of equivalent value, it said.

"Jatiya Sangsad should consider this suggestions with due importance," reads the verdict.

The HC directed the Supreme Court registrar general to send a copy of the judgement and order to all MPs, lower court judges, the director general of BGB, and the home secretary through e-mails.

Euro, Copa finals promise pure thrills

FROM PAGE 12

Turning to Europe, not just because they are closer to our time zone but also because many star footballers from top European leagues, which have massive followings worldwide, appeared in Euro 2024.

While it was difficult witnessing holders Italy and perennial underachievers Croatia making embarrassing early exits, and the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric exiting in tears, the emergence of youngsters like Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams of Spain, Arda Gueler of Turkey, Kobe Mainoo of England, Jamal Musiala and Florian Wirtz of Germany, and many more, more than made up for the disappointment from those old warhorses.

What started with a German blitz against the Scots at the Allianz Arena in Munich a month ago, with promises of the revival of the once-all-conquering Die Mannschaft, will culminate in a blockbuster final tonight when Spain square off against England. There will be many who scoff at not having their favourite teams in the final but will not begrudge the presence of two of the best teams in this tournament.

Spain, the preeminent force in global football a decade ago, seem to have reengineered their football and blasted their way through to the final with an all-win record, riding on youth and guile, while England, one of the most consistent teams in major tournaments under Gareth Southgate, have vindicated the hype with never-say-die performances in the knockout phases.

Whoever wins the final could signal a paradigm shift in football. For England, it could mark the beginning of many accolades, while Spain could usher in a new era of global dominance with this European crown.

The same, unfortunately, cannot be said about the Copa America. Fielding 16 teams with six invited from Concacaf, the event offered more diversity in terms of playing styles and personnel, but the tournament caught more attention for its physical football than the beautiful aspects usually associated with South American football.

Brazil have fallen well short of expectations in recent times, and their meek exit from the quarterfinals despite boasting mercurial talents like Vinicius Junior and Endrick, left more questions than answers regarding the future of the world's most storied footballing nation.

World champions Argentina, meanwhile, have made it to the final yet have been less than convincing at times with an aging side led by their inspirational leader Lionel Messi, who has looked like a pale shadow of his former self.

Gunning for a record 16th title, Argentina will hope that their captain rolls back the years to deny Colombia, led by a reenergized James Rodriguez, their second continental triumph.

As the curtains draw on these continental extravaganzas, football fans will reflect on the highs and lows of an exhilarating, action-packed month, leaving them eagerly awaiting the next chapter in this beautiful game.

Russian oil depot on fire after Ukraine drone attack

AFP, *Moscow*

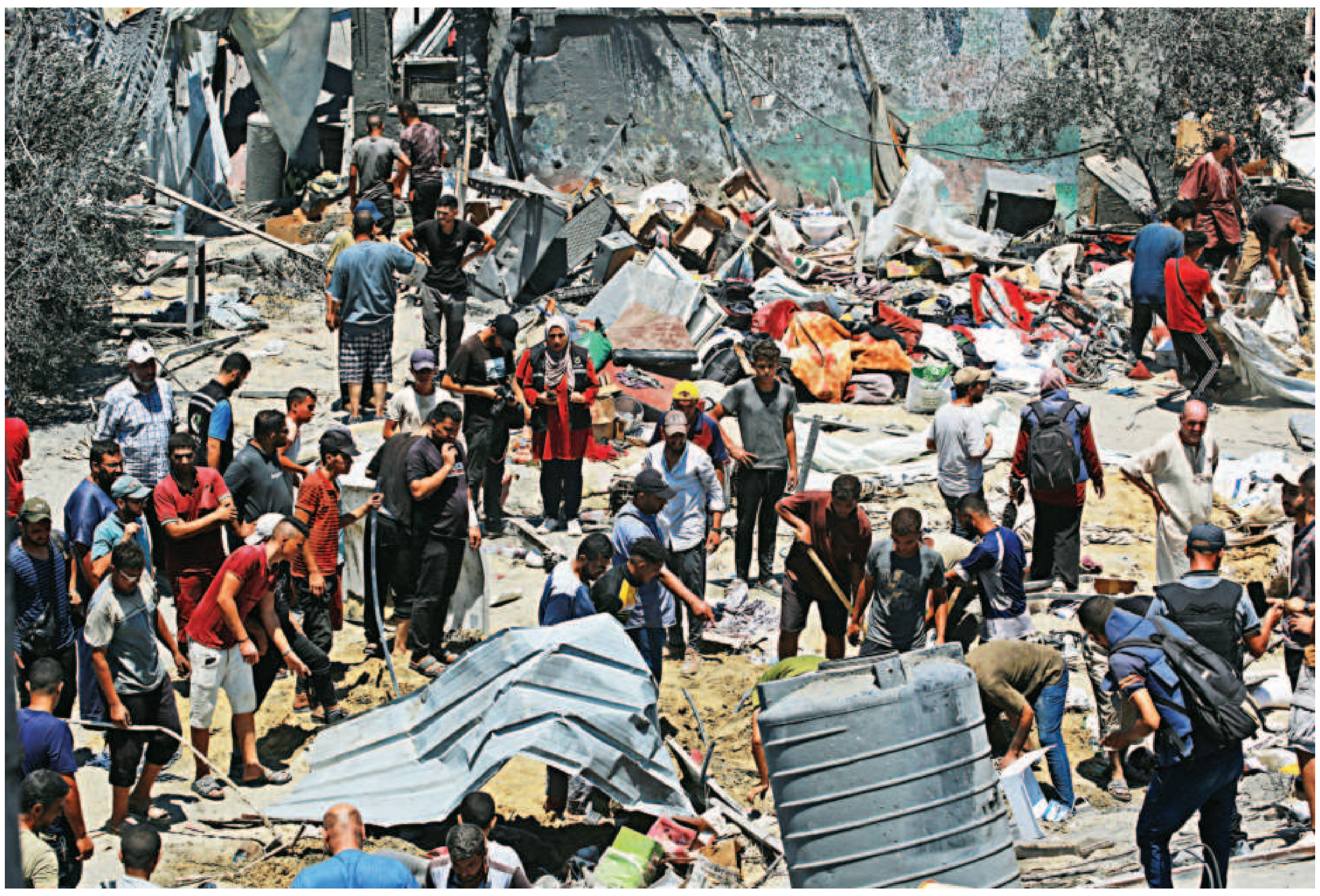
An oil depot caught fire in Russia's Rostov region yesterday after a Ukrainian drone attack, its governor Vasily Golubev said on Telegram.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have used drones, including larger self-detonating craft with ranges stretching hundreds of kilometres extensively throughout the conflict, which began in February 2022.

"After a drone attack, a fire broke out in a petrol refinery in the Tsimlyansky district," Golubev wrote, adding that there were no casualties.

He later said the fire had been was extinguished.

Russia's defence ministry meanwhile announced that its forces had downed four Ukrainian drones -- two in Rostov, one in the Belgorod region adjoining Ukraine and another in Kursk which is up further north.



Palestinians search for loved ones in the debris of tents and makeshift homes following an Israeli military strike on the al-Mawasi camp for internally displaced people, near the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

China blasts US Tibet-China dispute bill

Vows to 'firmly defend' its interests

REUTERS

China yesterday expressed strong opposition to a US law signed by President Joe Biden that presses Beijing to resolve a dispute over Tibet's demands for greater autonomy, vowing to "firmly defend" its interests.

Biden signed into law on Friday the Tibet dispute act, which seeks to push Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders, stalled since 2010, to secure a negotiated agreement on the Himalayan region and spur China to address the Tibetan people's aspirations on their historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

The law "grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the 'Tibet independence' forces," China's foreign ministry said.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the law appears to question that position, analysts say. The US has long supported the rights of the Tibetan people to practice their religion and culture, accusing China of human rights violations in the remote region bordering India.

"The US must not implement the Act," the China's ministry said. "If the US continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Italian police free 33 Indian farm labourers from 'slavery'

REUTERS, *Rome*

Italian police said yesterday they had freed 33 Indian farm labourers from slave-like working conditions in the northern Verona province and seized almost half a million euros ($545,300) from their two alleged abusers.

Labour exploitation is in the spotlight in Italy following an accident in June in which an Indian fruit picker died after his arm was severed by machinery.

In the latest case, police said the alleged gang-masters, also from India, brought fellow nationals to Italy on seasonal work permits, asking them to pay 17,000 euros each and promising them a better future.

The migrants were given farm jobs, working seven days a week and 10-12 hours a day for just 4 euros per hour, which was entirely docked from them until they settled all their debts, police said, describing the migrants' treatment as "slavery".

Some were asked to continue working for free to pay an additional 13,000 euros for a permanent work permit "which, in reality, would have never been given to them," the police statement said.

'I came back from the dead'

Says Palestinian after being freed from Israeli jail

AFP, *Bethlehem*

Muazzaz Abayat's parents barely recognised their son lying in a hospital bed after being freed from nine months in Israeli detention, with his weight halved from his usual heavyset build, hollowed cheeks and shaggy hair.

"I came back from the dead," the 37-year-old Palestinian, told AFP at a hospital in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank.

Abayat, a butcher by trade, was arrested without explanation on October 26.

About 9,700 Palestinians are currently in Israeli jails, including hundreds under administrative detention.

He was held at a prison in the Negev desert, officially under so-called administrative detention, which meant he could be held without charge or trial for an extended period.

"They arrested me at home, not surrounded by fighters but by my children and pregnant wife," said Abayat, whose sixth child was born while he was in jail.

Detentions of West Bank Palestinians have soared since the offensive began on October 7, with regular use of administrative detentions.

According to the Prisoners Club, a Palestinian watchdog, about 9,700 Palestinians are currently in Israeli jails, including hundreds under administrative detention.

The NGO estimates that arrests have doubled since October 7 compared to the same period last year.

Violence has surged in the territory since the start of the Gaza offensive, with at least 572 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops or settlers, according to the Palestinian authorities.

In a video that went viral on social media when Abayat was freed Tuesday, he is seen limping and leaning on a man to walk, while his right hand seems paralysed.

"No human being on the face of the earth can imagine how life has been" he said, calling the prison where he was held, "the 'Guantanamo of the Negev'", after the US prison in Cuba used to hold detainees after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"We were unjustly detained, killed and severely beaten with iron clubs and subjected to all kinds of torture," Abayat added.

Israel's prison administration told AFP it was "not aware" of Abayat's claims.

"All prisoners are detained according to the law. All basic rights required are fully applied by professionally trained prison guards," an Israeli Prison Service (IPS) spokesperson told AFP.

"The prisoner was examined and treated medically by the IPS' finest doctors throughout his incarceration." The spokesperson said, Abayat could file a complaint if he wished.

Showing his bruised, bony legs, Abayat recounted beatings with clubs and chains, and said his body still hurt all over.

French PM Attal eyes rebuilding political force

AFP, *Paris*

France's prime minister was elected leader of his party's National Assembly by lawmakers yesterday as politicians from all sides jockeyed for position to form the next government.

Gabriel Attal was the only candidate in the vote by the Renaissance party parliamentary group, which he plans to use as the base from which to rebuild the political force that got roundly beaten in a snap election called by President Emmanuel Macron.

Of the 98 Renaissance deputies registered to vote, 84 backed Attal, who will start in his role next week.

As Attal and other ministers eye a future outside government, deep cracks have appeared between the 35-year-old premier and his former mentor Macron.

Macron did not get any mention in Attal's message to Renaissance deputies outlining his leadership bid, with observers saying that the prime minister blames the president for calling the vote.

Last Sunday's election runoff left the National Assembly without any overall majority, but a broad alliance -- called New Popular Front won the most seats, with 193 in the 577-strong lower chamber.

Musk donates to group working to elect Trump

Reports Bloomberg

REUTERS, *Washington*

Billionaire Elon Musk, who has been ramping up criticism of US President Joe Biden, has donated to a political group working to elect rival presidential candidate Donald Trump, Bloomberg reported on Friday, citing sources.

The report did not indicate how much Musk donated but added it was "a sizable amount" given to a group called America PAC.

Bloomberg reported that the PAC - a group that can receive unlimited contributions for political activity - is next required to disclose its list of donors on July 15.

In March, Trump, a former US President who is expected to be formally nominated next week as the Republican Party's candidate for the November 5 election, met with Musk and other wealthy donors.

In response to reports of the meeting, South Africa-born Musk posted on X: "Just to be super clear, I am not donating money to either candidate for US President."

In May, he also denied media reports that there had been talks over a potential advisory role for him in any Trump presidency.

Musk, the world's richest person who runs electric car maker Tesla, rocket maker SpaceX, social media company X and other companies, did not respond to Reuters' request for comments.

Biden campaign spokesman James Singer said that Musk knows Trump is "a sucker who will sell America out, cutting his taxes while raising taxes on the middle class by $2,500."

Stop deporting undocumented Afghans

Malala tells Pakistan

AFP, *London*

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai called for Pakistan to stop deporting undocumented Afghans, saying she was especially concerned about the "dark future" awaiting women and girls sent back.

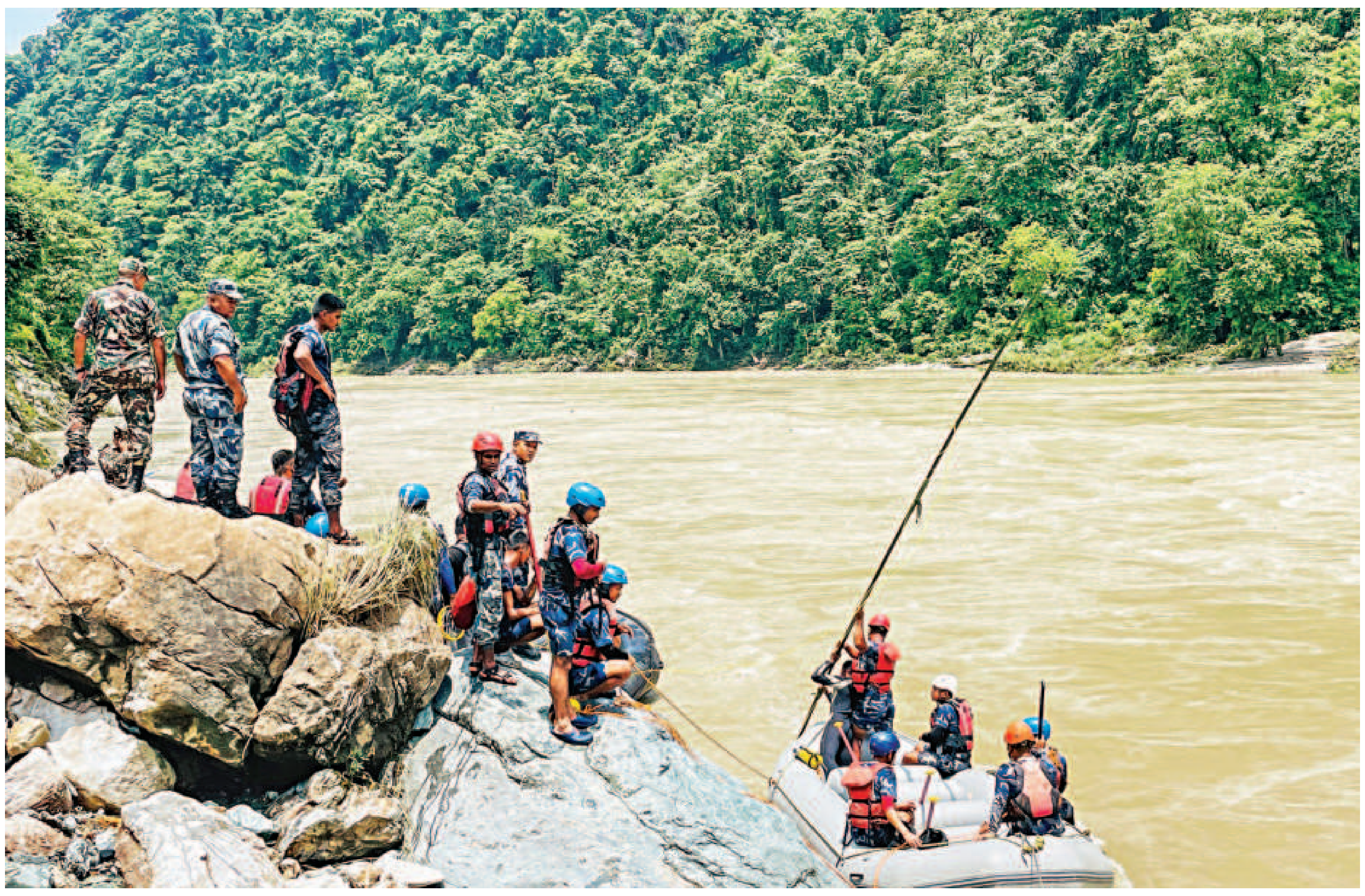
"It is deeply concerning that Pakistan is forcing Afghan refugees based in Pakistan back into Afghanistan, and I'm deeply concerned about the women and girls", the activist, who was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 2014, told AFP in an interview on Friday.

Despite extending leave for Afghan refugees with permits to stay in Pakistan for another year, Islamabad this week said it would remove illegal migrants.

More than 600,000 Afghans have fled Pakistan since Islamabad last year ordered undocumented migrants to leave or face arrest.

Human rights monitors have warned that some sent to Afghanistan faced persecution by the Taliban, who came into power in 2021 and have imposed an austere form of Islam, barring girls from higher education and excluding women and girls from areas of public life.

"A lot of these girls in Pakistan were studying, they were in school, these women were doing work", said Malala, 27, who grew up in Pakistan's Swat valley.



Members of Nepal's Armed Police Force search for survivors in the Trishuli River at the site of a landslide following heavy rainfall in Simaltar, Nepal yesterday. Rescuers recovered the first body from around 50 people missing after rains triggered the landslide that swept two buses off a highway and into the river.

PHOTO: AFP

Population to peak at 10.3bn in the 2080s: UN

AFP, *New York*

Earth's population will peak in the mid-2080s at around 10.3 billion people, then drop slightly to a level much lower than anticipated a decade ago, the UN said.

The current population of 8.2 billion people will rise to that maximum over the next 60 years, then dip to 10.2 billion by the end of the century, says a report released Thursday entitled "World Population Prospects 2024."

It said size of population in 2100 will be six percent lower than what was anticipated in June 2013.

"The demographic landscape has evolved greatly in recent years," said Li Junhua, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

He said unexpected population peak stems from several factors that include lower levels of fertility in some countries.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

No development for the drainage system?

Dhaka residents suffer as rain and waterlogging cause disruptions

Over the last four years, the two city corporations of Dhaka have spent at least Tk 730 crore to resolve its waterlogging problem. But for all that spending, there is still no sign of improvement, as Friday's rains and resultant public sufferings have once again demonstrated. The downpour, which started in the early hours and continued until noon, flooded many streets and homes, causing disruptions across the city. Many areas, especially in DSCC, would remain under water even 12 hours after the rain had stopped. This is notable because the DSCC mayor, in February last year, had promised swift drainage of water—within just 15 minutes—even after heavy monsoon rains. Are we to forget all such promises? How is it that a government frequently reminding us of its development success cannot bring any semblance of development to this particular sector?

According to our report, people who went out on the weekend endured immense sufferings, as they had to wade through knee-to-waist-deep water to reach their destinations. Public transport was scarce, but heavy congestion still ensued in some flooded streets as a number of vehicles broke down. While talking to this daily, some commuters described how they had to switch multiple vehicles to get to their destinations. Meanwhile, rainwater infiltrated underground parking spaces, reservoirs, and ground floors of residential buildings, with many seen trying to pump it out. Many shops were also affected, with stored goods being damaged.

City planners say it is the inadequate drainage system—not the rainfall—that floods our streets. In Dhaka, the Met office recorded 130mm of rainfall in just six hours on Friday. It was a heavy downpour by every measure. But, as an expert at the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) has said, the city's drainage system cannot clear out water even after a moderate 55-60mm of rainfall, as excess water cannot flow into the rivers or retention ponds because of the clogging of surface drains and connected canals. Crores of taka have been spent to remove waste from these drains and canals and to recover the latter from encroachers. Even the transfer of ownership of canals from Dhaka WASA to the city corporations did not help the situation.

We cannot emphasise enough the urgency of addressing this waterlogging nightmare in Dhaka and elsewhere. The failure of city authorities, despite substantial investments and countless promises made over the years, demands a proper response. We urge the authorities to take comprehensive measures to fix, upgrade, and properly maintain the drainage system, and go hard against those encroaching the canals. Furthermore, unregulated development that leads to the loss of canals and low-lying areas must be halted.

Unused dorms an eyesore for students

The peculiar case of Khulna Polytechnic must be resolved

It is shocking that the four dormitories of Khulna Polytechnic Institute have been lying abandoned for 15 years even as students struggle to find affordable accommodation off campus, as revealed by a report. For women students especially, not being able to stay in dormitories poses security risks as they face harassment on their way to and from campus. It is baffling that when most public educational institutions face overcrowding in their dormitories, this polytechnic institute actually has four that are not occupied and that have been allowed to become dilapidated due to lack of maintenance.

The hostels were closed for security reasons in 2009 when students were protesting the cancellation of an exam and clashed with police. But why the authorities kept them padlocked, with the electricity disconnected, after classes resumed is certainly a mystery. Why did they not reopen them after proper maintenance? If it was a budgetary issue, why did they not send applications to the higher authorities to that effect? And why did the Education Engineering Department, responsible for monitoring such buildings, not do its job?

This is a case of sheer, collective negligence for which all relevant departments must be held accountable. It is unacceptable that an institution as old as this and having such a huge campus would allow its dormitories to rot while the students face a housing crisis. The principal has said that a female dormitory with 500 seats and a 10-storey academic building will be built in place of the four dorms. How long will this take? Moreover, it still doesn't answer why the existing buildings have remained closed for so many years.

We have many government polytechnic institutions that are supposed to be geared towards equipping students with technical skills so that they can work and thrive in relevant fields. But there seems to be a general apathy towards this vital sector, and the state of Khulna dormitories is a case in point. We urge the education ministry to immediately enquire into this matter and take effective steps to ensure proper use of these buildings. The institute's administration also should make sincere efforts to provide students with seats in dormitories and ensure that those do not fall into the grips of political elements.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1958 Coup in Iraq

On this day in 1958, a coup organised by Abd al-Karim Qasim, a brigadier in the Iraqi Army, led to the end of the Hashemite monarchy. It resulted in the cessation of the Arab Federation of Jordan and Iraq, the assassinations of the King, Crown Prince, and former Prime Minister, and the establishment of Qasim as the new Prime Minister, a post he would hold until 1963.

How the cyberspace is being manipulated

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KALLOL MUSTAFA

Evgeny Morozov, in his book *The Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate The World* (Penguin, 2012), defined "cyber-utopianism" as a naive idea that the internet favours the oppressed rather than the oppressor. Contrary to the beliefs of the cyber-utopians, Evgeny showed how the internet has become a useful tool for authoritarian governments for propaganda, censorship, and surveillance—the three main pillars of Orwellian authoritarian control.

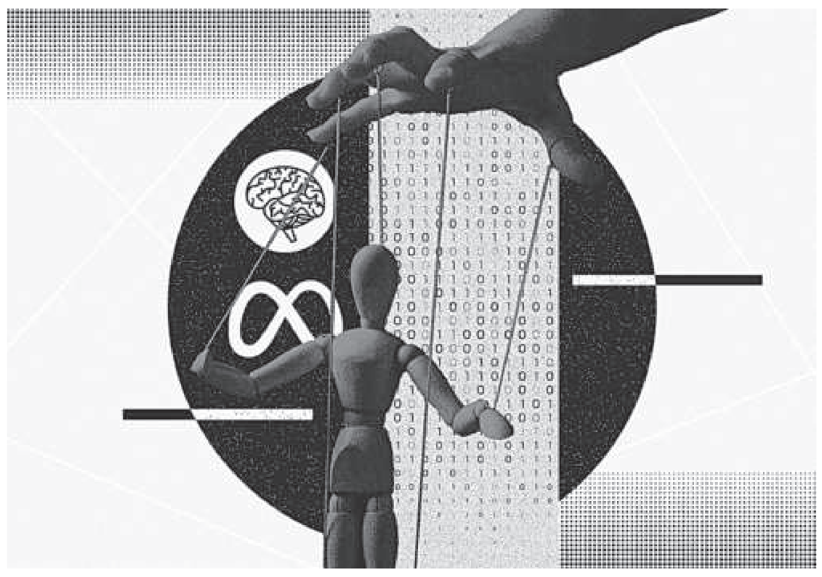
In the age of internet and digital technology, these three pillars of authoritarianism have become so interconnected that efforts to undermine one pillar might ruin the efforts to do something about the other two. For example, in order to avoid the control of the traditional censorship, if the people flock to social networking sites, they may fall prey to surveillance and propaganda. The more trust users put in social networks, the easier it is to use the networks to promote carefully disguised government messages and boost the propaganda apparatus.

Bangladeshi netizens are not outside this mechanism, which has become evident from the latest Adversarial Threat Report prepared by Meta, the parent company of Facebook. In its first quarterly report of 2024 published in May, Meta has announced the removal of 50 Facebook accounts and 98 pages with 3.4 million followers which are linked to Bangladesh's ruling Awami League, citing violations of its policy against Coordinated Inauthentic Behaviour (CIB).

According to Meta, CIB refers to coordinated efforts to manipulate public debate for a strategic goal, in which fake accounts are central to the operation. In each case, people coordinate with one another and use fake accounts to mislead others about who they are and what they are doing.

In the chapter titled "Bangladesh-based Network" and appendix, Meta's report exposed the fake accounts which posed as fictitious new entities or existing news organisations in Bangladesh. Some pages used the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in their name and posted anti-BNP content. Many of these pages had a corresponding presence across several platforms, including YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and Telegram, in addition to their own websites.

According to Meta, the network posted primarily in Bengali and also in English about news and current events in Bangladesh, including elections, criticism of the BNP, allegations of BNP's corruption and its role in pre-election violence, as well as supporting commentary about the incumbent government, the ruling party and its role in the technological development of Bangladesh.



VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

Meta found this activity as a result of its internal investigation into spammy inauthentic amplification activity in the region. Although the people behind it attempted to conceal their identity and coordination, Meta's investigation found links to individuals associated with the Awami League and the Centre for Research and Information, a non-profit organisation in Bangladesh associated with Awami League.

In the appendix of the report, Meta also gives a list of websites, X accounts, Telegram and YouTube channels, TikTok accounts, and names of fictitious news outlets which are used to spread misinformation with political purpose. According to Meta, the network worked to a regular shift pattern, posting between 07:00 and 21:00 GMT (1pm to 3am Bangladesh time), with a peak between 13:00 and 18:00 GMT (7pm to 12am Bangladesh time), and notably fewer posts on Fridays.

This is not the first time that government propaganda efforts have been exposed by Meta/Facebook. Earlier in December 2018, Facebook published a report titled "Taking Down Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior in Bangladesh" where it announced removal of nine Facebook pages and six Facebook accounts for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behaviour. Facebook mentioned that after getting a tip from Graphika, a threat intelligence company that it worked with, it discovered that these pages were designed to look like independent news outlets and posted pro-government and anti-opposition content. Facebook directly linked these propaganda activities to individuals associated with the government at that time.

The irony is that on the one hand, the government has enacted cyber security laws in the name of preventing rumours and propaganda, and is asking for support from global technology companies like Facebook, Google, and TikTok to prevent rumours, block user accounts and pages, remove content. On the other hand, the ruling party and its research wing themselves have engaged in organised disinformation campaign against the opposition parties using fake accounts.

According to the latest Google transparency report, the Bangladesh government made 591 content removal requests to Google in the last six months of 2023, of which 310 or 52 percent were related to government criticism and 175 or 30 percent were related to defamation. According to Meta's latest transparency report, from July to December 2023, the Bangladesh government sought information about 2,164 users or accounts. Meta has provided information in 67.81 percent of the cases. In the same period, the government made 3,459 content restriction requests to Meta, of which 2,049 were Facebook posts and 1,357 were Facebook comments.

However, government control over the flow of information is not limited to removing or blocking content. Of course, similar to banning books or newspapers, governments block websites and apps to varying degrees depending on the situation and regime of internet-based communication. But this is not the only way to control the internet. Apart from creating various barriers to the flow of information that is dangerous for the government, there are many other ways to control people's thoughts. Some examples of these mechanisms are keeping people busy with various unimportant issues, publicising government statements or positions as neutral opinions or news, and controlling the content of discussions on social media through hired individuals and organisations, etc.

This type of activities can also be undertaken using traditional media, but by exploiting the various features of the internet and digital technologies, these activities can be implemented on a wider basis much more easily, effectively, and at a lower cost than traditional media.

With new forms of authoritarian and surveillance capitalism developing around the internet and digital technologies, it is important to hold both the government and technology companies accountable to the citizens to ensure privacy and freedom of expression. Just as unaccountable authority is harmful in the real world, it is equally dangerous in the virtual world of the internet—especially when the real and the virtual become one.

A roadmap to effective dengue control

Mahadee Al Mobin
is research associate at Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM)

MAHADEE AL MOBIN

In the battle against dengue, Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture. As the nation grapples with the possibility of the deadliest outbreak ever witnessed, it's imperative that we mobilise every resource at our disposal to combat this relentless foe.

Dengue began to emerge as a significant public health concern at the turn of the century, but its proliferation seemed to decelerate between 2006 and 2010. This brief period of respite, however, was not to last. With the rapid pace of technological advancement, unrestrained urbanisation, and the swift onset of climate change, the dengue problem has surged with renewed vigour since 2015.

The harrowing statistics paint a grim picture: a staggering 321,179 hospitalised cases in 2023 alone, with a heart-wrenching 1,705 lives lost to this insidious disease. These numbers are not just figures on a page; they represent mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters whose lives have been cut short by a preventable tragedy. Behind each statistic lies a story of anguish and despair, of families torn apart by the merciless grip of dengue.

Children, the most vulnerable among us, bear the brunt of this crisis, with over 113 young lives lost last year alone. Their innocence should shield them from such suffering, yet they are among the hardest hit.

But the true extent of this crisis may be even greater than official figures suggest. Underreporting and inadequate healthcare infrastructure means that the actual burden of dengue is likely far higher than we dare to imagine.

What's more, dengue's relentless march knows no season, with cases now being reported year-round, defying the traditional confines of the monsoon season. From January to April this year, 2,111 people have been hospitalised, with 24 lives tragically cut short.

Amidst the shadows of despair, a glimmer of hope illuminates our path forward—a chance to reverse the tide of dengue's relentless onslaught. As we confront this crisis head-on, we must not only learn from past experiences but also adopt a holistic, year-round approach to dengue prevention and control.

This journey begins with education as we strive to raise awareness within our communities about the perils of dengue and the simple yet impactful measures we can all take. From eradicating breeding grounds to practicing personal protective measures, each individual's contribution is vital in stemming the spread of this epidemic.

We must also bolster our healthcare infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to quality care and life-saving treatments for all. From the villages of rural Bangladesh to the bustling urban hubs, comprehensive healthcare must be within reach for every citizen.

Moreover, we must address the underlying environmental factors that fuel the dengue crisis, such as stagnant water and unplanned urbanisation. By implementing targeted vector control measures and fostering collaboration between governmental bodies and local communities, we can disrupt the breeding cycle of mosquitoes and mitigate the spread of dengue at its source.

Vector control measures in Bangladesh's municipal areas predominantly depend on fogging, which offers short-term relief but lacks long-term effectiveness. A more sustainable approach involves using targeted sugar baits, which have significantly reduced malaria in Zambia.

In rural and suburban regions, introducing predatory fish like guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) into stagnant water bodies can curb dengue by consuming mosquito larvae. Additionally, fostering an environment conducive to mosquito predators such as frogs and wild lizards can serve as a natural and effective vector control measure. These biological agents can integrate seamlessly into the ecosystem, providing a sustainable solution that enhances existing efforts.

Yet, amidst these efforts, a critical gap persists—a gap between the wealth of scientific knowledge amassed by researchers and its translation into actionable policies by policymakers. This disconnect leaves us vulnerable to the escalating threat of dengue, with projections indicating a worsening infection scenario this year compared to 2023.

To bridge this gap effectively, we must consider innovative solutions, such as the establishment of dedicated agencies or institutional frameworks exclusively dedicated to vector control management programmes. These entities would serve as catalysts for collaboration, fostering dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to devise evidence-based strategies for combating the dengue epidemic comprehensively.

Examining global models reveals the pivotal role of dedicated agencies in combatting vector-borne diseases. Take, for instance, Europe's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Through collaboration with national health protection bodies, the ECDC's multifaceted approach, spanning surveillance to health communication, showcases the power of a unified front against vector-borne illnesses.

Across the Atlantic, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) exemplifies specialised divisional prowess through its Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD), leading the charge in research and prevention efforts against mosquito and tick-borne ailments.

Near home, India's National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC) spearheads the National Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme (NVBDCP), employing targeted strategies like indoor residual spraying and insecticide-treated bed nets to combat malaria and dengue.

These international examples underscore the critical need for Bangladesh to establish similar dedicated agencies.

In Bangladesh, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control, and Research (IEDCR) evaluates the overall dengue scenario, while city corporations manage the field-level implementation of vector control strategies. Establishing a dedicated organisation or agency focused on comprehensive surveillance and field-level execution for vector-borne diseases could significantly mitigate the impact during peak seasons. Such an entity would optimise resources and enhance the effectiveness of interventions by working in synergy with existing infrastructures, ensuring a more coordinated and robust response to this pressing public health challenge.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

We cannot imagine monsoon without waterlogging, especially in Dhaka, despite ongoing promises from local authorities to resolve the issue.

RAIN OF LOVE, RAIN OF SORROW

Kalidas's Meghdoot and Bangladesh's monsoon reality

Ayesha Humayra Waresa
is a freelance writer

AYESHA HUMAYRA WARESA

It is not unusual for us to experience an intense sense of nostalgia and longing for our loved ones as the monsoon clouds roll in and the first raindrops touch the ground. Much like in Kalidas's acclaimed Sanskrit poem "Meghdoot" where on the first day of the monsoon, Yaksha felt a desperate longing to reach his distant wife.

The myth follows Yaksha, who was banished by his master Kuber to the remote Ramgiri mountain for neglecting his duties, separated from his beloved wife. In yearning for her, Yaksha sees thick clouds drifting towards north on the first day of the month *Ashar* and appeals to a passing cloud to deliver a message to his wife in the faraway city of Alaka. Thus begins "Meghdoot", with an imaginary dialogue between the Yaksha and the cloud.

Kalidas used clouds to symbolise Yaksha's hope of sending a heartfelt message to his beloved. Aside from that, their majestic presence brings joy and relief to the people suffering from the scorching summer heat, emerging as their answered prayer and announcing long awaited rain.

But monsoon in Bangladesh contrasts this idyllic portrayal. While some indulge in weather demands like *khichuri* or fritters with a hot cup of tea, for others—working professionals, students, or those running errands—it's a complete curse. Waterlogged streets, muddy footpaths, traffic jams, and high transport costs turn everyday tasks into a challenge. For those living in flood-prone areas near riverbanks, monsoon brings additional hardships. It becomes a period of survival, at least the recent floods in Sylhet hint so.

Which is why, although Kalidas associated monsoon clouds with concepts of nature and love, in Bangladesh, the arrival of the monsoon is now viewed with concerns because of the hardships it could cause.

Natural occurrences or debts to pay?

Throughout history, monsoon in Bangladesh has been more than just a season of rain, it is a celebrated cultural experience influencing folk songs, festivals, and agricultural practices. Historically, successful monsoon brought abundance, while a failed or weak one could even trigger famine.

Monsoon in Bangladesh has become too complex to be simply termed a "natural disaster." In recent years, it has posed increasing challenges, with Bangladesh ranking seventh on the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index, highlighting its vulnerability to climate devastation.

This predicament extends across South Asia, where scientists attribute these changes to the climate crisis, predicting stronger monsoons with more heavy rainfall ahead. But addressing these challenges requires moving beyond viewing the damages as purely natural occurrences, because that approach helps us avoid our accountability for the damages incurred. A study titled "Fourth National Climate Assessment", published by the US Global Change Research Program provides compelling evidence that human activities, notably fossil fuel burning, are the primary factors behind warming trend across the globe that is affecting climate patterns.

Colonial mindset

When we mention human activity, it is essential to acknowledge the colonial mindset that emerged after post-British rule. During the British period, the rulers saw waterways, especially the delta's changing rivers, as obstacles to management, taxation, and governance.

For over 200 years, urban development prioritised creating dry land by regulating waterways, filling up the rivers, canals, embankments, and other structures. They created maps and laws, like the Permanent Settlement Act, to clearly distinct land from water.

They constructed other infrastructure projects, to dominate the delta and increase profitability. Local influentials and natives also participated for their benefit. These actions normalised the alteration of the natural water-soaked ecology, leading people to forget and overlook the potential consequences.

Even after the British left, city and water management remained unchanged. The government continued building embankments and dams to control rivers, aiming to modernise the country. This infrastructure-focused approach overlooked the challenges of filling waterways, causing most of the monsoon struggles people experience now.

Now, the monsoon makes us wonder how the situation escalated, whereas we acknowledge that current approaches to managing water aren't really effective.

Yet the obsession with West-defined "development" continues to promise us more unplanned infrastructure projects, often supported by international organisations. Such aims overshadow questions for what the climate needs and how cities in a monsoon-fed landscape should be designed.

Environment vs economy: Who is paying the price for these developments?

The recent floods in Sylhet serve as a relevant example of the impact of forced development. These floods are happening for many reasons. Located just below Cherrapunji, known as the wettest place on Earth, Sylhet is naturally prone to significant rain. But the last two years clearly suggest that human actions too are exacerbating the situation there.

In areas like Sylhet or Sunamganj, the lands used to be different: rivers were navigable, and there were fewer roads and structures. Now, floodwaters take more time to recede. Previously, swamps and sinkholes helped contain floodwaters, but this is no longer the case.

Because every region has a capacity limit for water absorption, when rainfall exceeds this limit, flooding occurs—which has become a regular fixture in Sylhet. The hilly terrain of Sylhet historically allowed rainwater to naturally flow down from high grounds. But unplanned development, including filling water bodies and rampant illegal hill-cutting disrupted this natural balance and exacerbated flood risks, while eroding the area's geographical identity. Roads constructed across the Haor region impede water flow, while urban development prevents water from permeating the ground.

While flooding can be natural, waterlogging primarily stems from human errors and negligence. Unplanned infrastructure that fills up the waterways, leaving no natural pathways for water, makes for inadequate drainage systems, compounded by additional plastic pollution.

We cannot, anymore, imagine monsoon without waterlogging, especially in Dhaka, despite ongoing promises from local authorities to resolve the issue. Responsibility has shifted from WASA to the city corporations, with hundreds of crores spent on drainage projects. However, the heavy rainfall continues to cause severe waterlogging due to inadequate drainage systems, blocked catch pits, plastic pollution, and outdated infrastructure.

Even in Chattogram, moderate to heavy rainfall is enough to inundate residential areas, main roads, lanes, and by-lanes across both the old and new parts of the city, notably because of defiance of a 1995 drainage master plan, hasty project implementations without feasibility studies, and the filling of 70 percent of water bodies for construction purposes and more.

Landslides in Bangladesh from 2000 to 2022 have caused 727 deaths, including 54 children, and 1,017 injuries. Historical records of landslide events indicate an average of 19 landslides annually in the country, with a four percent increase each year.

The never-ending saga of the Teesta treaty

The management of international rivers like Teesta and Ganga, particularly the opening of the Farakka and Teesta barrage gates during heavy rains and upstream water flow from India, has caused ongoing damages and hardships for the people of Bangladesh. These rivers are governed by the United Nations' International River Convention of 1997, which establishes rules for their shared use.

According to Article 7.2 of the convention, if significant harm is caused to another watercourse state, the state responsible must consult with the affected state, taking effective measures to eliminate or mitigate the harm. This includes discussing compensation where appropriate. Bangladesh retains the right to seek compensation for damages resulting from upstream projects affecting these rivers.

But each time, hopes for progress on the Teesta treaty are dashed by West Bengal's objections and India's extensive irrigation use of Teesta's water, similarly to the Ganges and the Farakka barrage.

Many believe that negotiation with India could be pivotal—a collaborative approach to managing shared rivers rather than unilateral diversions. However, decolonising the idea of development should be taken seriously as well. This involves rethinking infrastructure priorities, emphasising highly on the waterways and their natural flow, focusing on resilient and sustainable solutions, investing in robust drainage systems capable of handling monsoon deluges and providing early warning systems to mitigate disaster risks. Moreover, safeguarding vulnerable communities living in flood-prone areas and ensuring their shelter and safety must be prioritised in urban planning and development.

As we revel in the cozy comforts of a monsoon at home, we experience a modern interpretation of Kalidas's poetic vision. In "Meghdoot", clouds conveyed messages of love. But today, our clouds carry concerns about the severity of each year's monsoon. What we often term as "development" can backfire when the rains arrive, leading to flooded streets, precarious landslides, and a reminder that our monsoon has become more about survival than celebration.

Getting out of the abyss of moral depravity

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KHANDAKER R ZAMAN

We are living in a society where corruption is rampant, pervasive, and institutionalised. The organisational structure of any institution should make it impossible for corruption of massive proportions to go undetected or continue unhindered without the knowledge of the higher echelons, unless they too are complicit in the crime and benefits from the loot. Unfortunately, that appears to be the case with the unravelling of illicit wealth amassed by some of the top echelons of the state machinery.

In Bangladesh, we are witnessing white-collar thugs who abused their power and position and allegedly committed crimes of all sorts and magnitude including intimidation, extortion, embezzlement, insider-trading, illegal occupation and possession of lands to become superrich overnight. Their reported accumulation of illicit wealth and illegal exercise of power dwarfs that of even Al Capone.

The questions that arises are—what were the public institutions or departments, where these thugs worked, doing when these crimes were being committed. Similarly, where were the agencies, responsible for monitoring monetary transactions? Also, what roles did the central banking authority and Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) play while billions were being laundered, which the Global Financial Integrity (GFI) terms as Illicit Financial Flow (IFF). The interesting thing is while overseas organisations keep figures of IFF from Bangladesh, our own agencies or authorities remain oblivious to it, therefore, raising suspicion of their complicity in the crimes. GFI, the Washington-based think tank on illicit financial flows, corruption, illicit trade, and money laundering had reported that a struggling economy like Bangladesh lost an astonishing sum of $61.6 billion during the period 2005-2014 in outward illicit financial flow or money laundering. The outward IFF is alleged to have spiked since then, as a result of which the economy of the country has been further crippled and the foreign reserve has depleted from over $48 billion in August 2021 to $12.8 billion in net reserve in April 2024. The country is now in a serious crisis to meet its import payments which impacts its foreign trade and balance of payment. The resultant upward surge in inflation has brought misery to the lives of the common people.

In Bangladesh, we are witnessing white-collar thugs who abused their power and position and allegedly committed crimes of all sorts and magnitude including intimidation, extortion, embezzlement, insider-trading, illegal occupation and possession of lands to become superrich overnight. Their reported accumulation of illicit wealth and illegal exercise of power dwarfs that of even Al Capone.

Meanwhile the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which is too weak, too compromised, and too scared, is failing to effectively prosecute the Al Capones of Bangladesh. Even the criminal justice system is not faring any better. Thus, the Al Capones often manage to obtain a safe passage to countries where they can stash their illicit money and properties.

This perhaps explains why Benazir could leave the country and Matiur could flee despite the massive allegations of corruption. The case of Matiur is even more amusing. On June 24, the ACC went to court seeking an order to bar him and his family from leaving the country after, but according to news reports, Matiur and his family had already fled the country. ACC's actions remind us of the English grammar lessons in schools: "the doctor arrived after the patient had died." It also raises the obvious question why the ACC didn't institute the same proceedings against Benazir, rather made it possible for him to pass through the border check post manned by the very force that he had commanded once. On the other hand, many people are detained or refused clearance to embark on their outward journey on flimsy grounds.

Returning to Matiur's case, it is alleged that a very influential cartel facilitated the former revenue boss's safe passage out of the country. The drama doesn't seem to have ended yet with some reports saying that Matiur hasn't fled but is hiding in the country. Interestingly, his companion in corruption—his wife—is boasting with shameless pride that they have managed powerful media and power centres and nothing would happen to them. She is correct to an extent that law in the country never gets hold of the wealthy and powerful no matter what illegal, illicit or immoral actions they take. The fact is: an unholy nexus of unlawful cartels, regulators, politicians, and bureaucrats exercise such ruthless power and influence that the interests of the state and that of the people become secondary to theirs. Their triumph is visible but none dares to point it out because "justice" is long dead.

The nation is in hibernation and unlikely to wake up soon because the rot has gone on for so long and so deep that it has infested the entire social system, losing its strength to take measures to clear the mess it has gathered over time. The most concerning factor is not the money lost through corruption but the fact that it is leading us to a hopeless future. The prevailing perversions are damaging, and are creating an unhealthy social structure. Young people are helplessly witnessing crimes in high offices and how the criminals remain immune from prosecution. The statutory institutions are becoming weak putting democracy in jeopardy. Honesty and integrity are being replaced by insatiable greed and debauchery. Different branches of the state are failing to uphold and discharge their respective functions. Finally, meritorious youths are getting frustrated at the prevailing state of affairs and leaving the country in droves. Only the half-educated, mediocre and illiterates are left behind to run the country.

The devastatingly falling standard of our tertiary education is a major contributing factor to the abyss of moral depravity. The shameless sycophancy in academia and the failure to nurture and cherish meritocracy is creating an atmosphere where learning is becoming absent and earning money has become the main objective for students. I am not aware of any nation apart from ours which permits student politics of the kind and nature, that dominates our educational institutions. Students in other countries aspire to become responsible members of the society and contribute to its development and prosperity. They don't have the time or leisure to indulge in activities that are fraught with corruption and servility to power.

It is time we ask ourselves the most pertinent question of our time—whether we want to see ourselves as a failed state or should we bury all our ills and work towards building a nation dreamt by Bangabandhu and the millions who shed their blood and dignity to liberate the country and gifted us a free and sovereign nation. We certainly don't want to leave a failed nation for our children. It is about time and absolutely imperative that the nation mustered all its strength to rise and shake itself off the mud and filth it has accumulated thus far. It is not going to be easy to come out of the unfathomable quagmire of corruption and moral turpitude, but if we start the hard work now, a new generation will rise to pull the country out of its misery.

Sleep duration linked to blood vessel damage in Diabetes

STAR HEALTH REPORT

If you have recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, paying attention to your sleep habits might be more important than you think. A recent study published in The Lancet reveals that both too little and too much sleep can increase the risk of developing serious complications related to diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is already a challenging condition, but it becomes even more problematic when it leads to microvascular disease—damage to the small blood vessels. This can result in complications such as retinopathy (eye damage) and nephropathy (kidney damage). Now, research from Denmark has shown that your sleep duration plays a significant role in this risk.

In a study involving nearly 400 people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, participants' sleep was tracked using wearable devices for 10 days. The findings were clear: those who slept less than 7 hours or more than 9 hours per night were at a higher risk of microvascular damage compared to those who had an optimal sleep duration of 7 to 9 hours.

Specifically, short sleepers had a 2.6 times higher risk of microvascular disease, while long sleepers had a 2.3 times higher risk. Age further amplified these risks. For people aged 62 and older, short sleep was associated with a 5.7 times higher risk of small blood vessel damage.

The takeaway? Maintaining a healthy sleep schedule is crucial for managing type 2 diabetes and preventing further complications. While lifestyle changes for diabetes often focus on diet and exercise, ensuring you get an optimal amount of sleep should also be a priority. This simple change can make a big difference in your overall health and well-being.

WHO releases the first-ever clinical treatment guideline for TOBACCO CESSATION IN ADULTS

STAR HEALTH DESK

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends a comprehensive set of tobacco cessation, including behavioural support delivered by healthcare providers, digital cessation interventions, and pharmacological treatments, in a first guideline on tobacco cessation.

The guideline focuses on helping the more than 750 million tobacco users who want to quit all forms of tobacco. The recommendations are relevant for all adults seeking to quit various tobacco products, including cigarettes, waterpipes, smokeless tobacco products, cigars, roll-your-own tobacco, and heated tobacco products (HTPs).

"This guideline marks a crucial milestone in our global battle against these dangerous products," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "It empowers countries with the essential tools to effectively support individuals in quitting tobacco and alleviate the global burden of tobacco-related diseases."

Over 60% of the world's 1.25 billion tobacco users—more than 750 million people—wish to quit, yet 70% lack access to effective cessation services. This gap exists due to challenges faced by health systems, including resource limitations.

"The immense struggle that people face when trying to quit smoking cannot be overstated. We need to deeply appreciate the strength it takes and the suffering endured by individuals and their loved ones to overcome this addiction," said Dr Rüdiger Krech, Director of Health Promotion at WHO." These guidelines are designed to help communities and governments provide the best possible support and assistance for those on this challenging journey."

Effective therapies for quitting tobacco

Combining pharmacotherapy with behavioural interventions significantly increases quitting success rates. Countries are encouraged to provide these treatments at no or reduced cost to improve accessibility, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

WHO recommends varenicline, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), bupropion, and cytisine as effective treatments for tobacco cessation.

In 2023, WHO initiated a prequalification procedure for medicinal products against disorders caused by tobacco use to improve global access to recommended tobacco cessation medications. In April 2024, Kenvue's nicotine gum and patch became the first WHO-prequalified NRT products.

WHO recommends behavioural interventions, including brief health worker counselling (30 seconds to 3 minutes) offered routinely in healthcare settings, alongside more intensive behavioural support (individual, group, or phone counselling) for interested users. Additionally, digital interventions such as text messaging, smartphone apps, and internet programmes can be used as adjuncts or self-management tools.

WHO encourages health-care providers, policymakers, and stakeholders to adopt and implement this guideline to promote tobacco cessation and improve the health of millions of people in need worldwide.

UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERY

Dry skin vs. eczema

Ever wondered why your skin feels itchy, scaly, or irritated? It could be dry skin or eczema, two conditions that often share similar symptoms but have distinct differences. Dry skin is a common issue exacerbated by factors like weather and harsh soaps, while eczema, a type of dermatitis, involves a faulty skin barrier and immune system response.

Understanding the symptoms:
Dry skin tends to feel rough, tight, and may crack, especially in dry climates or after hot showers. On the other hand, eczema manifests as red bumpy patches with blisters that can ooze and crust over, often exacerbated by allergens and stress.

Practical tips for relief:

- Opt for shorter, lukewarm showers to prevent moisture loss.
- Immediately moisturise with gentle, fragrance-free creams or ointments.

- Use mild, unscented products to avoid further irritation.
- Consider a humidifier to add moisture to indoor air during dry seasons.

For eczema-specific care, additional treatments like over-the-counter medications and dermatologist-prescribed therapies may be necessary to manage flare-ups effectively.

By understanding the nuances between dry skin and eczema, you can take proactive steps to care for your skin and alleviate discomfort. If symptoms persist or worsen, consulting a healthcare professional is recommended for tailored treatment options.

How delaying diabetes by four years can improve your long-term health

Prediabetes is a condition where your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. It serves as a crucial warning sign that you might develop type 2 diabetes if you do not take action. Addressing prediabetes promptly through lifestyle changes like diet and exercise can make a significant difference in your health.

Recent findings have highlighted that delaying the onset of diabetes by just four years can drastically reduce the long-term risks of death and diabetes-related complications. These insights come from a study led by Guangwei Li of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, published on July 9th in the open-access journal PLOS Medicine.

Type 2 diabetes is known to pose significant risks of death and disability, and it results in substantial economic costs for both individuals and societies. However, those diagnosed with prediabetes can reduce their risk of developing diabetes by adopting healthier lifestyles, such as eating a balanced diet and increasing physical activity. But how long do you need to delay diabetes to achieve long-term health benefits?

In this study, researchers analysed the health outcomes of 540 individuals with prediabetes who participated in the Da Qing Diabetes Prevention Study. This trial, which began in 1986 in Da Qing City, China, lasted six years and included a control group and three lifestyle intervention groups focused on diet, exercise, or both. The participants were followed for over 30 years to evaluate the long-term effects of delaying diabetes.

The research team discovered that participants who remained non-diabetic for at least four years after their initial prediabetes diagnosis had a significantly lower risk of dying and experiencing major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks, strokes, or heart failure, compared to those who developed diabetes sooner. This protective effect was not observed in those who stayed non-diabetic for less than four years.

Overall, the study suggests that the longer someone with prediabetes can delay the onset of diabetes, the better their long-term health outcomes will be. Even a few years of delaying diabetes can yield lasting health benefits.

The researchers concluded that maintaining a non-diabetic status for a longer period in individuals with impaired glucose tolerance leads to improved health outcomes and lower mortality rates. They emphasised that effective interventions for people with diabetes should be included in preventive strategies to manage diabetes and its related vascular complications.

By focusing on healthy lifestyle changes, such as eating a nutritious diet and exercising regularly, individuals with prediabetes can improve their chances of living longer and healthier lives. Taking action now can help you avoid severe health issues associated with diabetes and enjoy a better quality of life.

UNLOCKING YOUR BODY'S POTENTIAL:

The power of metabolic conditioning

Heading outdoors for work or study often involves more physical activity than we realise. Whether it is brisk walking to catch a bus or climbing stairs to a meeting, our bodies constantly utilise energy. This process, called metabolism, fuels our movements by converting food into energy units known as adenosine triphosphate (ATP). How efficiently our bodies produce and use ATP during physical activity forms the basis of metabolic conditioning, also known as MetCon.

Metabolic conditioning is not just a fitness trend—it is a structured approach to improving how our bodies generate energy across different intensities of exercise. From low-intensity activities like walking to high-intensity workouts such as sprinting, each level demands energy from specific pathways in the body. These pathways, influenced by oxygen availability and nutrient sources like carbohydrates and fats, adapt to the intensity and duration of our physical efforts.

The benefits of metabolic conditioning extend beyond the gym. It enhances the body's ability to perform tasks more efficiently in less time, contributing to weight loss, increased muscle mass, and improved aerobic capacity. Crucially, this form of training continues to burn calories even after the workout ends, making it effective for those looking to shed excess weight.

Workouts designed for metabolic conditioning vary based on fitness levels and goals. Beginners might start with simple routines like Airdyne bicycle sprints, alternating bursts of maximum effort with short rests. For more advanced practitioners, exercises using equipment like TRX suspension trainers challenge muscles further by adjusting body positions or increasing resistance.

Understanding and implementing metabolic conditioning not only improves physical performance but also promotes overall health. By optimising our body's energy systems through targeted exercises, we enhance our ability to handle everyday activities with greater ease and efficiency. Whether you are aiming to boost endurance, trim down, or simply feel more energised, integrating MetCon into your fitness routine can pave the way to a healthier lifestyle.

Enjoying the outdoors safely: Summer skin protection tips

As we head outdoors for work, study, or simply to enjoy the sunny days, it is important to keep our skin protected from the summer sun's rays. While sunshine brings joy, it also brings risks to our skin's health.

Guard against UV rays:
The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause sunburns, premature ageing, and increase the risk of skin cancer. Protecting your skin from UV exposure is crucial and entirely preventable.

Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen:
Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to shield against both UVA and UVB rays. Apply about two finger lengths for your face and neck, and a shot glass amount for your body. Reapply every two hours (or every 90 minutes if sweating or in water), and don't forget your ears—even on cloudy days.

Embrace sun-protective clothing:
Not all clothing offers sun protection. Look for garments labelled with UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor), ideally UPF 50, to block harmful rays effectively. From stylish leisurewear to functional athletic gear, UPF clothing provides a fashionable shield.

Sun-smart practices:
UV rays peak from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., so seek shade and wear a wide-brimmed hat for added protection. This helps shield your ears, head, and neck better than a baseball cap.

Skincare tips for summer:
Hot weather can aggravate skin conditions like acne and eczema. Use gentle cleansers with salicylic acid to unclog pores, avoiding harsh scrubs that can irritate. After swimming, rinse off chlorine to prevent dryness and eczema flare-ups. Moisturise with non-comedogenic products to keep your skin hydrated and healthy.

By following these simple tips, you can enjoy the sun safely while protecting your skin from potential damage.

Star SPORT
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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Euro final
England vs Spain
Live from 1:00 am (Monday)
Copa America final
Argentina vs Colombia
Live from 6:00 am (Monday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
Wimbledon
Men's final
Live from 6:30 pm

ENGLAND FACE SPAIN PUZZLE
in trophy homecoming quest

- Spain have scored 13 goals so far in this edition – only France in 1984 (14) have scored more in a single edition of the European Championship.
- Aged 17 years and one day, Spain's Lamine Yamal could become the youngest ever player to feature in a World Cup or Euro final, surpassing Pele's record from the 1958 World Cup (17y 249d).
- England boss Gareth Southgate will be the third manager to take charge of more than one Euro final (excluding replays), after Helmut Schön with Germany (1972, 1976) and Berti Vogts with Germany (1992, 1996), with all three doing so in consecutive editions. No manager has ever lost two finals in the competition before.

AGENCIES

Spain go into Sunday's Euro 2024 final as slight favourites over England after not only being the most attractive team to watch at the tournament but having won every match they have played.

The Spaniards have emerged as a team that can quickly adapt their strategy to their opponents without giving up their direct attacking game in favour of a results-based performance.

They outsmarted France in the semifinals despite falling a goal behind and it took them just five minutes to score twice to take the lead with their relentless pressing game and vertical passing.

With Rodri as their midfield dynamo who possesses impressive passing efficiency with a more attack-minded approach, the battle in the centre of the pitch is expected to play a key role in the outcome.

England will have to wrestle possession from Spain, who also have the outstanding Fabian Ruiz in midfield.

Spain's pressing game has been one of the keys to their success in Germany.

No side has forced more turnovers within 40 metres of the opposition goal, two of which have led to goals.

- This is the third meeting between Spain and England at the European Championships, with England winning 2-1 in the 1980 group-stage, before progressing 4-2 on penalties in the 1996 quarterfinals.
- This is Spain's fifth European Championship final. They won the trophy thrice (1964, 2008, 2012) and lost once (1984). They could become the first team to win the competition on four separate occasions.
- Spain have won all six of their games so far at Euro 2024, already the most wins any side has picked up in a single edition of the competition. Since the introduction of the group-stage in 1980, only France in 1984 (5/5) have won the competition while maintaining a 100 percent win rate.

One of England's problems early in the tournament was failing to take risks in passing forward, even against perceived weaker opposition. In Berlin they have to be brave to get through the first wave of Spanish pressure and into the spaces where they can do damage going forward.

With lightning wingers Nico Williams and Lamine Yamal ripping up defences and able to score and provide assists, England's fullbacks will have their hands full.

A second successive Euro final for England and coach Gareth Southgate is no mean feat even though they had to endure weeks of criticism, especially in the group phase, for lacklustre performances and with little punching power up front.

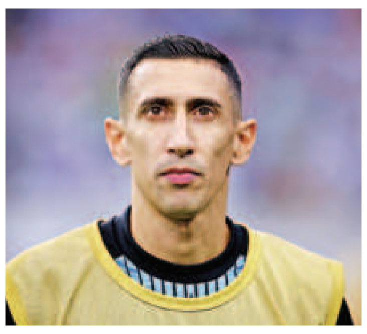
England's defence, however, has remained solid and with the pace of John Stones and Kyle Walker, when they do get exposed, they have proved adept at scrambling recoveries.

Spain's ball possession and movement will likely give England their biggest test so far and key to Southgate's side being able to stay in shape is the incredible work of defensive midfield screen Declan Rice who might also be tasked with helping left wingback Kieran Tripper to keep Yamal at bay.

After their largely misfiring group stage, with two goals in three matches, Southgate will have been reassured by what he saw against the Netherlands in the semis when his big names stepped up and started creating sustained danger from out wide and through the middle.

Blessed with arguably the deepest squad at the Euros, Southgate, who is expected to start the same eleven, must also look to use his supreme bench strength to make a difference in the final.

Argentina chase treble, Colombia ready to spoil party



- Forward Angel Di Maria aims to finish his Argentina career on a high. His nine chances created at this tournament are surpassed only by Colombia's James Rodriguez (17), Uruguay's Nicolas de la Cruz (14), and teammate Lionel Messi (13).
- This marks Colombia's third appearance in a Copa America final, having previously won in 2001 and finished as runners-up in 1975. Meanwhile, Argentina, the reigning champions, have reached their sixth final in the last eight Copa America tournaments and are eyeing a record 16th Copa title.
- Argentina are on the brink of replicating the feat of achieving three consecutive major tournament successes, having won three consecutive Copas in 1945, 1946, and 1947. Only Spain have pulled off a consecutive triple crown when they sealed Euro 2008, World Cup 2010, and Euro 2012.

AGENCIES

Argentina have the historic opportunity to match Spain and become the first South American team to achieve the 'triple crown' of three consecutive major tournament titles, which includes a World Cup triumph, if they can defeat a strong Colombia in the Copa America final in Miami on Monday morning (Bangladesh time).

Colombia, however, enter the final at Hard Rock Stadium with an impressive streak of their own. The Men in Yellow are unbeaten in 28 matches, setting a national record, and have arguably faced a tougher route to the final.

While Argentina comfortably secured a 2-0 victory against surprise package Canada in their semifinal in New Jersey, Colombia had to overcome Uruguay in Charlotte with a 1-0 win, despite playing with ten men for the entire second half.

On paper, Argentina are favorites due to their top world ranking and a squad that has been together for several years. However, expectations suggest a closely contested match rather than a one-sided affair.

"Scaloni knows them all by heart. Argentina today have a solidity that is foolproof and they have the added bonus of having the best player in the world, which is why they are the big favourites," said former Chile and Inter Milan striker Ivan Zamorano, who is covering the tournament is a television pundit.

But former Colombia star midfielder Carlos Valderrama believes a surprise could be on the cards.

"I see Colombia winning on Sunday," he told AFP, "We have a great team to dream about.

"I am optimistic about the national team, because of the process and the results they have been getting, and also because of the way they are playing.

"The team is unbeaten, is playing well in the Copa, with James (Rodriguez) as the best player in the tournament, so we can dream of being champions because we have a great team," he added.

James Rodriguez, who rose to global fame with his performances in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, has been showcasing some of his best football at 34 years old in national colours.

For Argentina, there is an emotional aspect as the final also marks a farewell to 36-year-old winger Angel Di Maria, who has consistently delivered on the big stage.

"I'm not ready for my last game with the national team, but it's time," Di Maria said last week.

"A thousand things can happen, but I think that whatever happens I can go out on a high note. I've done everything to be able to leave through that door," he added.

While defender Nicolas Otamendi may also depart, it remains to be seen if this will be the last tournament for Messi, who will turn 39 during the 2026 World Cup.

"I'm living it like everything else in recent times: enjoying it very much and being aware, like Fideo (Di Maria) and Ota (Otamendi), that these are the last battles," the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner said after guiding his team to semifinal win.

As the football world holds its breath for an exciting climax, the final promises to be a fitting culmination to a tournament filled with drama, skill, and the enduring passion of South American football.

Driven by history
Djokovic in record pursuit facing Alcaraz

AGENCIES

Without a title for over six months, Novak Djokovic is now within touching distance of a record 25th Grand Slam trophy -- with the all-conquering Serb saying Wimbledon always brings the best out of him.

For a champion who has become accustomed to trampling over the opposition while amassing almost 100 titles in his career, this lean spell is not something he is used to.

The 37-year-old lost in his Australian Open fortress at the start of the year, with his bid to win a record-extending 11th Melbourne Park title cut short in the semifinals.

A knee injury then prematurely ended his French Open title defence last month.

- Djokovic will be playing his 10th Wimbledon final -- six on the trot -- and the 37th in overall 75 Grand Slam appearances.
- Alcaraz, 16 years younger than Djokovic, is in his fourth Grand Slam final and will be aiming to add a second Wimbledon glory to his 2022 US Open breakthrough and French Open title from last month.
- Djokovic has been victorious in their last two meetings: Cincinnati Open final in 2023, followed by the semifinal of the season-ending ATP Tour Finals.

So, when he reached the All England Club final after a 6-4, 7-6(2), 6-4 win over Lorenzo Musetti on Friday, he was finally living up to his own lofty expectations.

Standing in his way to an eighth Wimbledon crown that will see him equal Roger Federer's mark is Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, who beat Djokovic in last year's title clash.

Djokovic believes the prospect of creating tennis history will provide the "fuel" he needs to defeat Alcaraz.

"I'm aware of what's on the line. Any Grand Slam that I play, there's always history now on the line," said Djokovic. "I will try to use that as a fuel to play my best tennis.

"(Alcaraz) is one of the greatest 21-year-olds we've ever seen in this sport and he will win many more Grand Slams, but hopefully not this one on Sunday," he added.

Tigresses' less than ideal buildup for Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Rainy weather and a lack of facilities hampered Bangladesh women's team's training camp at the BKSP which ended on Friday and left the team somewhat undercooked before they head off to Sri Lanka for the forthcoming ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup on July 16.

The camp started on July 3 and was held keeping the forthcoming regional tournament in mind, scheduled for July 19-28, where they had emerged as champions in 2018 in Malaysia.

The camp was also an opportunity for the girls to identify and hopefully rectify their problems after poor performances in recent home series' against Australia and India respectively.

However, most of their training sessions as well as practice matches got interrupted by the rain, forcing them to shift some of the scheduled practice sessions indoors.

Only two of the four scheduled practice matches could be played to completion while the other two were held partially owing to the downpour.

The previously scheduled match scenario practice session on Friday also couldn't take place due to torrential rain.

Even though the BKSP has multiple cricket grounds, the women's team's preparation was mostly limited to the BKSP-4 ground as the other grounds are occupied in other engagements.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has already taken over the BKSP-3 ground, which alongside BKSP-4 ground will host warm-up matches ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh, scheduled to be held on October 3-20.

The Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka and the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium will host the matches in the tournament and both are now under ICC's supervision, as is the rule for all ICC events.

The men's Under-19 team are also running a residential camp at BKSP, scheduled to run till July 20, while the High Performance unit had a training camp in Rajshahi before leaving for the Australia tour yesterday while the Bangladesh Tigers are currently training in Chattogram.

Questions now naturally arise whether the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) gave enough emphasis on providing better training facilities for the women's team ahead of a major tournament or were they too focused on the men's developmental teams.

In an attempt to make up for the lacklustre training camp, the BCB has planned two more days of practice for the team at the Academy ground in Mirpur on July 14-15.

Habibul Bashar, women's wing head, told The Daily Star yesterday that: "We had no other options. We picked BKSP in order to play five to six practice matches which we couldn't have done in other venues. Actually, there is rain all over the country. No matter where we would hold the camp, the result would be the same."

During a recent BCB interview, vice-captain Nahida Akter also expressed her dissatisfaction over not getting enough practice.

The Daily Star

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Krejcikova wins Wimbledon title

AFP, *London*

Barbora Krejcikova of the Czech Republic defeated Italy's Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title on Saturday for her second Grand Slam singles triumph.

Krejcikova, the 31st seed, won 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 to add the 2024 All England Club crown to her 2021 French Open victory.

Her win comes 26 years after her mentor Jana Novotna, who died in 2017, claimed the Wimbledon title.

The result meant seventh-seeded Paolini had lost two Grand Slam finals back-to-back after coming off second best to Iga Swiatek at the French Open last month.

Krejcikova set the tone immediately by breaking the Italian in the opening game and backing up the advantage with a hold to love.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

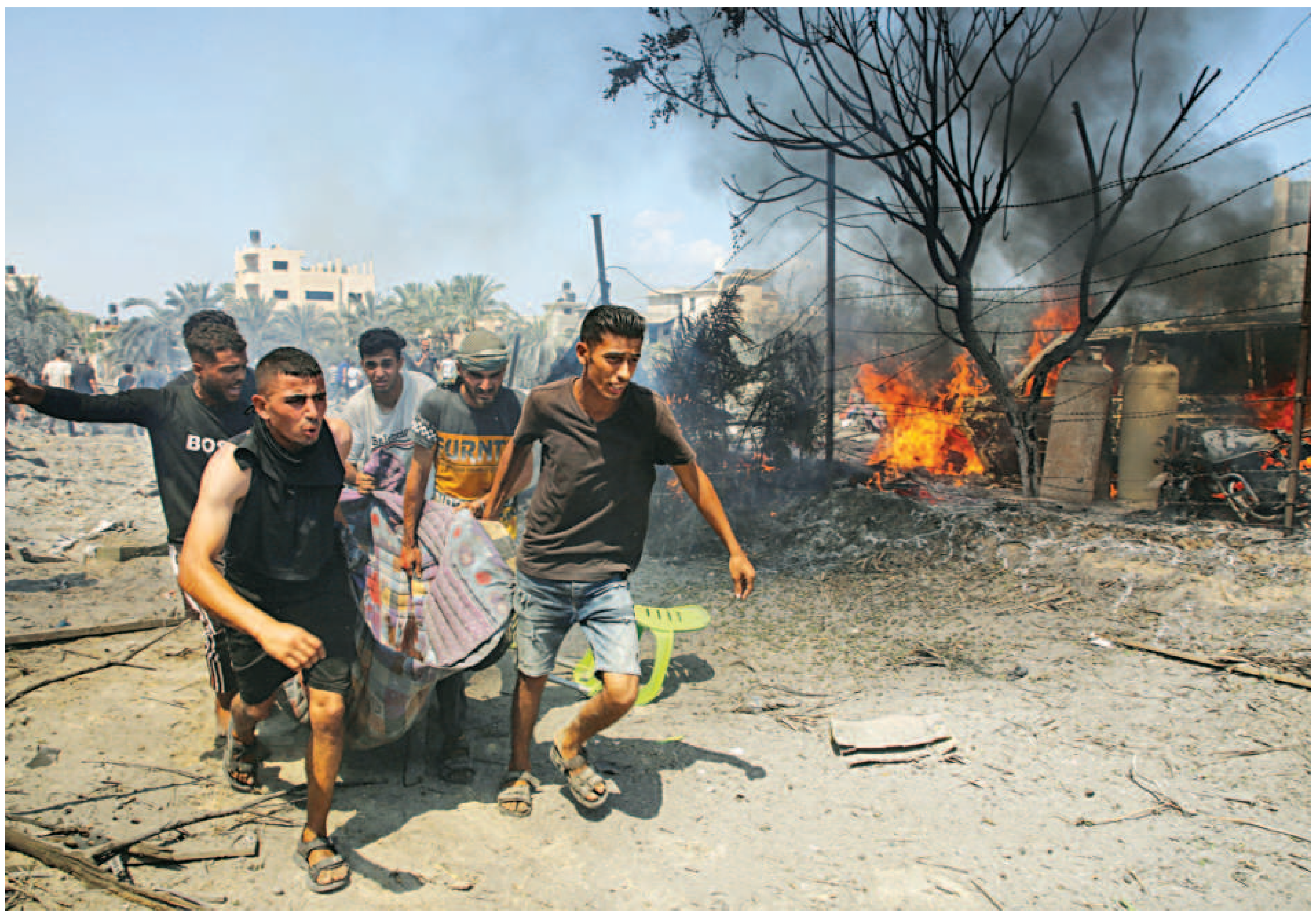


PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Palestinians carry a casualty at the site of an Israeli strike at a tent camp in Al-Mawasi area in Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Summit's floating LNG terminal back in Bay after repairs

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, *Chattogram*

Summit's floating LNG terminal returned to the Bay of Bengal near Moheshkhali after repairs from the damages done by Cyclone Remal in May.

On May 27, a floating platoon hit the FSRU, causing damage to a ballast tank. After that, the supply of LNG to the national grid through that terminal was stopped.

In the absence of the floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU), LNG supply to the national grid dropped to half, resulting in patchy gas supply in various districts including Dhaka and Chattogram.

The supply of LNG to the national grid will return to normal from July 18, said Muhammad Nasir Uddin, deputy general manager of Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company (RPGCL).

Meanwhile, one of the two LNG supply pipelines that was shut down on Tuesday has resumed operations from Friday.

The RPGCL authorities shut down the pipeline after it started leaking. The leak was caused during soil testing for the construction of a jetty in the Chinese Economic Zone at the Anwara edge of Chattogram.

After three consecutive days of repair work, the supply of LNG through the 42-inch diameter pipeline started again.

The stakeholders hope that the ongoing gas crisis in various districts including Dhaka and Chattogram will be alleviated to some extent from now on.

Finding hope in hair!

Dinajpur's hair-processing industry transforming lives of thousands

KONGKON KARMAKER

Farsia Ara was distraught when her van-puller husband, the sole earner of her family, left her and their three daughters two years ago.

Belonging to an ultra-poor family in Dinajpur's Nawabganj, she was struggling to support her children.

Unexpectedly however, she found hope in hair!

She joined the district's burgeoning loose hair processing industry as a detangler. Initially, she earned Tk 60 a day to smoothen out hair. But two years of her perseverance paid off and now she earns Tk 100 a day, making her Tk 3,000 a month.

Farsia finally found stability and married off her two elder daughters. Her youngest now works with her in the same hair processing factory, bringing their combined monthly income to around Tk 6,000 a month.

"This job has become a lifeline for my family. As I work from 7:00am to 1:00pm, I can also give time to them while maintaining my professional responsibilities ... We also get festival bonuses!"

Farsia's story is just one of many.

Often overlooked, the hair processing and wig manufacturing industry is making significant strides in improving the lives of the poor.

Across Dinajpur, especially in Nawabganj and Chirirbandar upazilas, thousands of women from ultra-poor families have found employment in hair processing. Groups of 10 to 12 women work together in homes, sorting, cleaning, and preparing the hair.

Some of the women have been supporting their families for over a decade through this work.

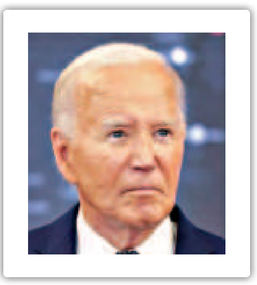
Visiting the upazilas recently, this correspondent saw hundreds

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Let others compete for nomination'

Two dozen former Democratic lawmakers ask Biden after gaffes

AFP, *Washington*



Two dozen former congressional Democrats published an open letter on Friday urging President Joe Biden to allow other candidates to compete for the party's presidential nomination ahead of November's US election.

The move is another blow for the 81-year-old Biden as he seeks to reassure voters that he is fit for office after his tumultuous debate performance in late June against Republican rival Donald Trump.

In the letter, the 24 signatories said Biden would "best serve the nation he loves" by releasing delegates who are pledged to vote for him at the Democratic National Convention -- which is otherwise set to cement his role as the party's official nominee -- and instead allow others to compete to lead the ticket.

"We are confident that one or more capable Democratic candidates would step forward. Excitement and optimism would ensue," read the letter addressed to the "American people" and reported by Politico.

In multiple public appearances this week, Biden has emphasized that he plans to stay in the race and become the Democratic nominee.

ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

INDIA bloc wins 10 out of 13 seats

THE HINDU ONLINE

The opposition INDIA bloc won 10 assembly seats, while the BJP clinched two and an Independent one, as votes were counted yesterday for the by-elections held earlier this week on 13 seats in seven states.

In Punjab, Mohinder Bhagat of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won the Jalandhar West seat. In Tamil Nadu, the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's (DMK) Anniyur Siva emerged victorious in the Vikravandi Assembly constituency.

On the four seats in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate Krishna Kalyani defeated BJP's Manas Kumar Ghosh in Raiganj, Mukut Nami Adhikari defeated BJP's Manoj Kumar Biswas in Ranaghat Dakshin, Madhuparna Thakur defeated BJP's Binay Kumar Biswas in Bagda, and Supti Pandey defeated

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

MARRIAGE CASE

Imran Khan to remain in jail despite acquittal

REUTERS, *Islamabad*

Former prime minister Imran Khan and his third wife were acquitted on charges of marrying unlawfully by a Pakistan court yesterday, but he will not be freed as authorities issued fresh orders to arrest him.

The ruling came a day after his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won more seats in parliament, ramping up pressure on the country's fragile ruling coalition which is grappling to stabilise a broken economy.

The couple were sentenced to seven years in February when a court found them guilty of breaking Islamic law by failing to observe the required interval between the divorce from a previous marriage of Bushra Khan, also known as Bushra Bibi, and her marriage to Khan.

They had filed an appeal against their convictions.

"Both the appellants are acquitted of the charges," said an order by the appeal court seen by Reuters. "They are directed to be released forthwith if not required to be detained in any other case."

It said the prosecution failed to prove its case against the couple.

Khan's PTI party said authorities have issued fresh arrest warrants for him in three cases linked to violence

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Leave 10km inside border line to BGB

HC suggests govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in its full judgement in a smuggling case has made four suggestions for parliament, including declaring 10-kilometre land from the border line as the property of Border Guard Bangladesh.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashraful Kamal gave the suggestion to ensure border security properly, bring down cross-border crimes to zero and to prevent revenue dodging.

In the verdict delivered on August 3 last year, the HC acquitted accused Zakir Hossain of smuggling charges and scrapped the three-year jail sentence handed to him by the trial court concerned.

The case was filed by BGB (formerly Bangladesh Rifles) following the recovery of Indian sharis at the Jashore border during an anti-smuggling operation in 1987.

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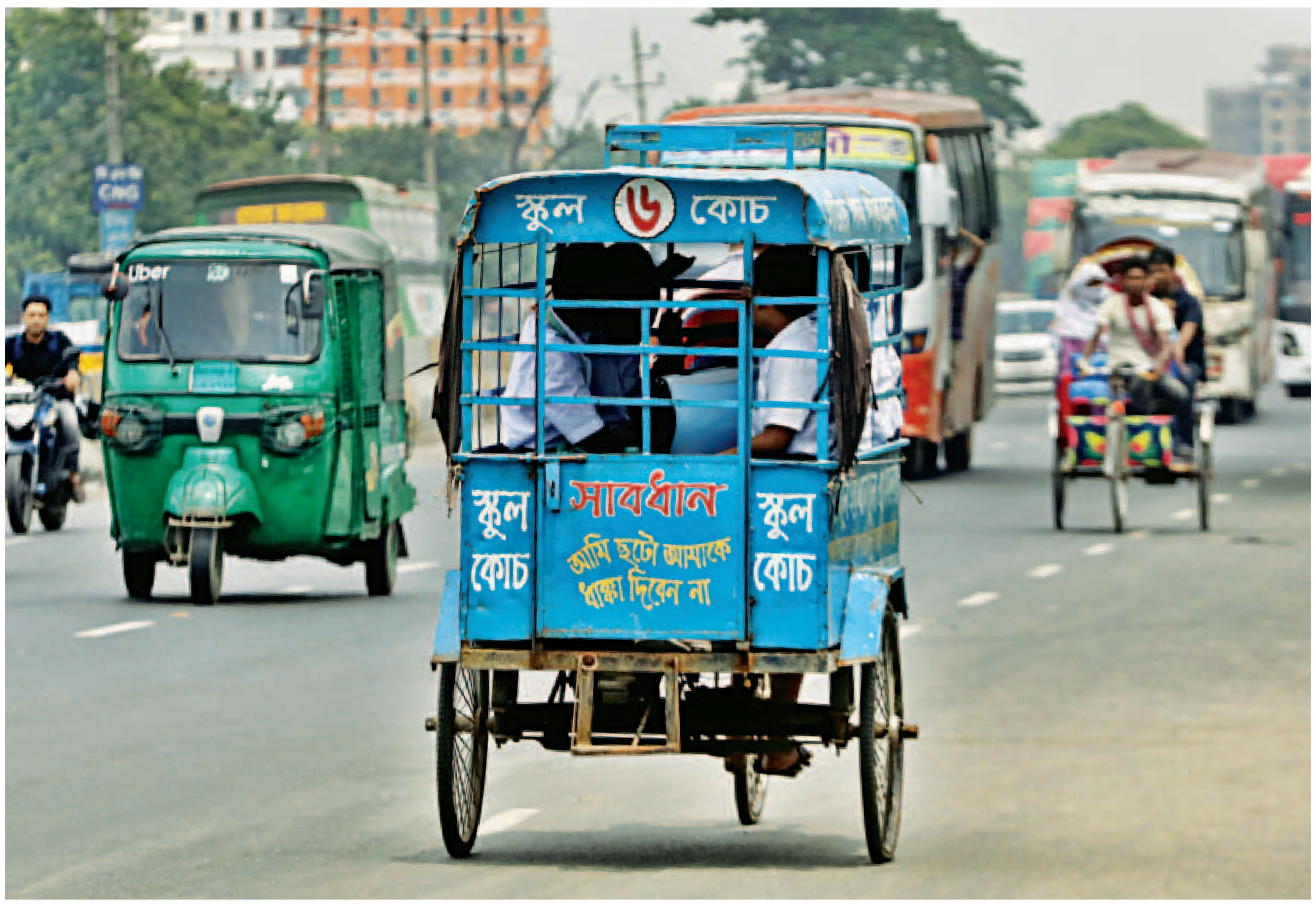

A battery-run school van goes against traffic on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in the capital's Shanir Akhra yesterday, putting the lives of the schoolchildren and other road users at risk.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Euro, Copa finals promise pure thrills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

So it all comes to a close tonight, or tomorrow morning, depending on which major tournaments one is keeping their eyes on. However, if loyalties are divided by the Atlantic, fans are poised to get a double dose of the best football continental tournaments have to offer: the Euros and the Copa America.

UEFA EURO2024 GERMANY

CONMEBOL COPA AMERICA USA 2024

Juxtaposed with the T20 World Cup, the two major footballing tournaments took a little more time than usual to get the fanbases in Bangladesh buzzing. But once the cricket enthusiasm waned with the Tigers making a meek exit from the Super Eight stage of the marquee event in the USA and West Indies, there was no better retreat for the despondent Bangladesh fans than the excitement of the two major continental tournaments rolling into the knockout phases.

And it has been quite a ride for football aficionados for the past month, perhaps not always of the highest quality, but nevertheless full of excitement, intrigue, and surprises.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

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PM'S QUOTA REMARK

Late-night protests rock DU, other universities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Tensions flared up at Dhaka University late last night as hundreds of students came out of their dormitories to protest what they said was a "disparaging comment" by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding quotas in government jobs.

Students at Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Comilla University too staged protests.

They gathered on campuses and took out processions around 11:00pm, chanting "Tui ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar!]."

Earlier, in response to a journalist's question, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "Why do they have so much resentment towards the freedom

PHOTO ON PAGE 12
SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TEESTA RIVER PROJECT

India should implement it if we're to get water

Says PM, vows to continue zero tolerance for corruption

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she wants India to implement the Teesta project and this is to ensure Bangladesh gets water from upstream.

She said, "The Teesta project is a longstanding issue. We will have to implement the Teesta project. China has made an offer and conducted a feasibility study. India also has made an offer. India will also conduct a feasibility study, and then we will accept the one that will be rational for us.

"But I will give priority to India for the project as India holds back the Teesta water. If we want to realise [share of the Teesta] water, India should implement the project. If they complete the project, they will provide everything that is required for the project. This is diplomacy. There is no hide-and-seek about this, and it's simple and clear."

Hasina said this while responding to a question from a journalist at a press conference at the Gono Bhaban on her recent visit to China.

She said Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned assistance in four ways: grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, and commercial loans. China agreed to provide Bangladesh money equal to $2 billion through the four ways, report UNB and BSS.

China also agreed to build the 9th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge for free, she said, coming down heavily on those criticising the outcome of her trip.

"Are these things nothing? They are mentally ill and these are the outcome of their illness," she said.

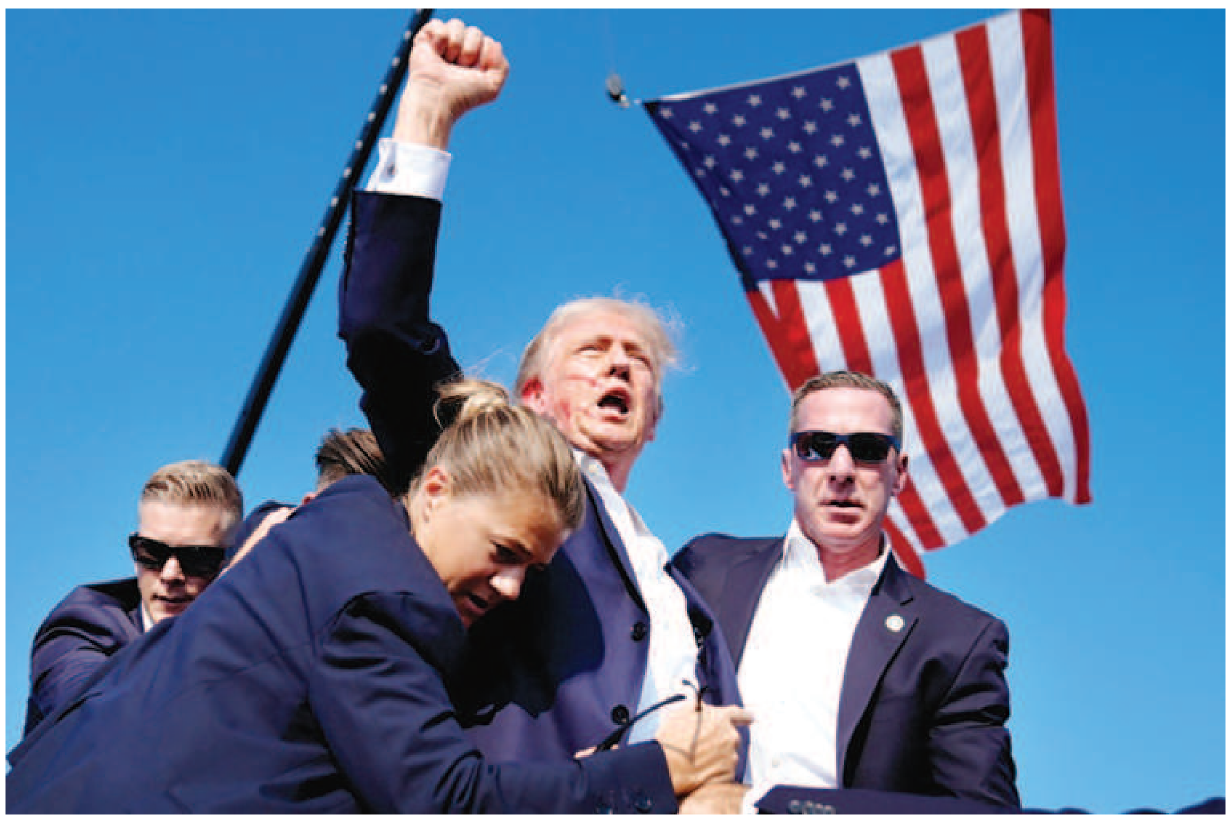
QUOTA SYSTEM REFORMS

Hasina said, "The executive authority has nothing to do [about quotas in public service] right now ..."

Hinting at the protesters, she said those who are waging the movement do not abide by the laws or follow the court, they do not

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

> **We can't do anything [about quotas] until the issue is resolved in court. It is the reality.**
>
> Prime Minister
> **SHEIKH HASINA**



A bloodied but defiant Donald Trump, the Republican US presidential candidate, is being rushed off stage by US Secret Service agents after being grazed by a bullet during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. PHOTO: UNB/AP

Take steps in 24hrs or face tougher demo

Protesters tell govt

STAR REPORT

The quota protesters yesterday urged the president to convene an emergency parliamentary session within 24 hours to reform the quota system in public service.

Otherwise, they said, they will go for an all-out movement to press home their demand.

They came up with the ultimatum in a memorandum they submitted to President Mohammad Shahabuddin around 2:40pm.

Earlier, the protesters marched towards the Bangabhaban, defying police obstruction.

In the memorandum, they said they want a law to reform the quota system,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Trump survives assassination bid

Urges Americans to 'stand united'; Biden, world leaders condemn shooting at rally

AGENCIES

Donald Trump yesterday called on Americans to stand united after he was injured in an assassination attempt – a shocking incident that opened a dark new chapter in an already polarised US presidential race.

The 78-year-old former president was hit in the ear at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, while the shooter and a bystander were killed and two spectators critically injured in the worst act of US political violence in decades.

"In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United," Trump said in a statement on his Truth Social network, adding that Americans should not allow "Evil to win".

The Republican added that it was "God alone who prevented the unthinkable from happening" and that he would "FEAR NOT".

The gunman has been identified as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, about an hour's drive from the rally site, according to an FBI statement early yesterday.

His motive remains unknown.

US media later reported that the gunman had explosives in his car.

The Wall Street Journal and CNN said that explosive materials were found in a car belonging to the shooter, which was reportedly parked near the campaign event venue in Butler, Pennsylvania.

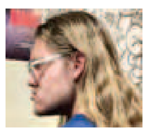
Authorities identified a rally attendee who was shot and killed as Corey Comperatore, 50, of Sarver, Pennsylvania, who Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro told reporters was killed when he dove on top of his family to protect them from the hail of bullets.

"Corey was an avid supporter of the former president, and was so excited to be there last night with him in the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

The man who shot Trump

AGENCIES



The FBI identified 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania as the suspect in Saturday's attempted assassination of former US president Donald Trump at a campaign rally.

The suspect was shot and killed by the Secret Service seconds after he allegedly fired shots toward a stage where Trump was speaking in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The FBI said it was working to determine a motive for the attack, in which one rally attendee died and two other spectators were critically injured. Trump was shot in the ear.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'Tk 400cr peon' is Jahangir

BFIU freezes his, wife's bank accounts

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

At a time when graft allegations against government officials are making the headlines, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shared a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Congratulations

Our heartiest congratulations to Mr. Mesbah Uddin Khan, Managing Director of Windy Apparels Ltd. (Sister concern of Windy Group), for receiving the National Export Trophy 2021-22 under the Gold Category from Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He is a visionary leader and the founder of Windy Group. His thoughts, creativity, foresightness, professionalism, honesty and integrity paved the roads for achieving such an outstanding reward.

We sincerely hope for the continuity of his leadership in the future and for the sustainable growth of Windy Group.

Best Regards,
All members of the Windy Family

Windy Group

NATIONAL EXPORT TROPHY 2021-2022 GOLD

We promote export
we build Smart Bangladesh

Popular Jute Exchange Limited has been awarded with 'National Export Trophy 2021-2022 Gold' for being the highest Raw Jute exporter of Bangladesh.

Heartiest congratulations to our Managing Director, Kabir Ahmed (CIP) for being honored with 'National Export Trophy 2021-2022 Gold' on behalf of all the members of the company. Special thanks to Export Promotion Bureau & Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh.

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Export Promotion Bureau
Bangladesh

WALTON

In recognition of outstanding contribution to the export of electrical & electronics products
Walton has been honored with the National Export Trophy (Gold)

Director & Former Chairman of Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC, S M Nurul Alam Rezvi received the National Export Trophy 2021-2022 (Gold) from the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu MP and the ministry's Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairman Tipu Munshi MP were also present.

APBn member shot in Ukhiya Rohingya camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

A member of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) was shot in a gunfight with criminals at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The attackers were members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa), the Myanmar-based armed group that dominates the area, said police.

Shahraj, 25, a constable at Madhurchhara Police Camp under the 14 APBn, is undergoing treatment at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

The incident took place in the F-block of the Madhurchhara 4-Extension camp, said Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Mohammad Iqbal, also the commander of APBn-8.

The attackers were members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa), the Myanmar-based armed group that dominates the area, said police.

Additional DIG Iqbal said nine APBn members were on security duty in the F-block of Madhurchhara.

"At one point, 30 to 35 miscreants entered the camp and started firing indiscriminately at the APBn members. The APBn members also fired back in self-defence. At one stage, the criminals escaped," the police official said.

APBn member Shahraj suffered bullet wounds in his right thigh and right-hand finger, Iqbal added.

After the gunfight ended, Shahraj was rescued and brought to Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex before being shifted to Cox's Bazar District Sadar Hospital for better treatment, he said.

The police operation is ongoing to arrest the criminals involved in the incident, the police official added.

Children playing in the waterlogged playground of the Buet Staff Quarters yesterday afternoon. Even two days after Friday's torrential rains, the water is yet to clear, exposing the dismal state of the city's drainage system. Such polluted water can cause several diseases, especially of the skin.
PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TRUMP ASSASSINATION BID

Violent US rhetoric comes 'home to roost'

AFP, *Milwaukee*

The attempted assassination of Donald Trump by a gunman at his Pennsylvania rally has confirmed the worst fears of public figures warning that an escalation in incendiary political rhetoric on all sides could lead to bloodshed.

US lawmakers and analysts have been voicing concern since the 2021 US Capitol riot that increasingly bellicose campaign language was becoming a worrying contusion on the US body politic ahead of November's presidential election.

The danger was vividly illustrated in 2022, when then-House speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband was attacked with a hammer by a far-right conspiracy theorist who wanted to hold the Democratic leader hostage and "break her kneecaps."

The political affiliations of Saturday's shooter, identified as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, were not immediately clear -- but analysts and politicians immediately pointed the finger at extreme political discourse.

"For weeks Democrat leaders have been fueling ludicrous hysteria that Donald Trump winning re-election would be the end of democracy in America," House Republican Majority Leader Steve Scalise, who was seriously wounded in a mass shooting at a congressional sports event in 2017, said on X.

"Clearly we've seen far-left lunatics act on violent rhetoric in the past. This incendiary rhetoric must stop."

Senior Trump campaign aide Chris LaCivita assailed the language of "leftist activists, Democrat donors and even Joe Biden."

While Ajamu Baraka, Green Party candidate Jill Stein's running mate in 2016, suggested Democratic rhetoric might have led the gunman to see it as his "patriotic duty to eliminate an existential threat to the nation."

"The chickens have really come home to roost," he posted on X.

What none of the three acknowledged was that Trump himself has been a major architect of the coarsening in US political discourse in recent years.

Many of Trump's targets in Congress and the government -- from Republican Senator Mitt Romney to retired top government scientist Anthony Fauci -- have disclosed having to take on private security after threats from Trump's supporters.

KP Sharma Oli Nepal's new PM

AFP, *Kathmandu*

Nepal's president appointed Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli as prime minister for a fourth time yesterday, after his communist party forged a coalition government with the centre-left Nepali Congress.

"President Poudel has appointed KP Sharma Oli as the new prime minister of Nepal," Kiran Pokharel, press adviser to President Ram Chandra Poudel, told AFP.

Oli, 72, who heads the Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), will be sworn into office today, Pokharel added.

His predecessor and former coalition government ally, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, lost a vote of confidence on Friday, barely 18 months after taking office. Dahal was forced to step down after Oli's party withdrew its support.

Former councillor found dead

UNB, *Naogaon*

A 47-year-old former councillor, who remained missing since Friday, was found dead in a water body at Patichara in Patnitala upazila of Naogaon district yesterday.

The deceased, Mizanur Rahman, was a former councillor of Ward 9 under Najipur municipality.

Mozaffar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Patnitala Police Station, said farmers spotted Mizanur's body floating in Saligram Buridah waterbody in the morning and informed the police.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Naogaon Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mizanur remained missing since he left home Friday afternoon, said his family members.

Man arrested for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Police arrested a 40-year-old man in Netrakona early yesterday on the charge of raping a schoolgirl.

A Netrakona court subsequently sent Ujjol Mia from Paboi village in Mohanganj to jail, police said.

The girl's mother had lodged a rape case with Mohanganj Police Station on Saturday.

Quoting the case statement, Md Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the girl, a fifth-grader, returned home from school on Wednesday afternoon.

As she was home alone, Ujjol entered the house and raped her. When the girl started screaming, Ujjol fled the scene, threatening her not to disclose the matter.

The girl was taken to Netrakona General Hospital for a medical test, said the OC.

India should implement it if we're to get water

FROM PAGE 1

know the constitution or have any idea how a government runs.

"Yes, they are meritorious, but they will have to have ideas about these matters.

"We can't do anything [about quotas] until the issue is resolved in court. It is the reality. They'll have to accept this reality," she said.

She said, "No one says anything as long as they [protesters] continue their peaceful movement. But if they go for anything else, like attacking police and their vehicles or other things, the law will take its own course."

Hasina said the government abolished the quota system after a movement. "But what is the result of this abolishment seen today?"

Mentioning that women had joined the movement in 2018, she said only two females in the last BCS exam qualified for foreign services and four for police.

Defending district-based quotas and quotas for marginalised communities, the PM said some districts have been deprived after the abolishment of the quota system. Not a single person got a job in police service from 23 districts, she added.

"Why do they have so much anger against the freedom fighters?" she said, adding, "If the grandchildren of freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

QUESTION LEAK

Hasina asked journalists to find out those who passed the government recruitment exams with the help of leaked question papers.

Mentioning that action would be taken against those who got benefits from question paper leaks, she said, "Why would we not take action? They have no right to work. But who will find them? If they [those who leaked the questions] name any person that they have sold the questions to and if it can be proved, then we will see.

"He who pays a bribe, and he who takes a bribe are both criminals. Those who leak question papers and those who buy them are both criminals. But who will figure it out? Journalists should try to find that out ... then we will take action," she added.

CORRUPTION

Responding to a question on corruption, she said, "I will not spare the corrupt people no matter whoever they are or whatever position they have as I started the drives against corruption. I don't even consider who are close or who are not."

Hasina said she has taken action against a former peon of her home who had amassed Tk 400 crore.

"He worked in my house. He was a peon and now he has Tk 400 crore. He can't go places without a helicopter. It's true. How did he make so much money?"

She said she does not think that drives against corruption would harm the image of her government and reiterated her commitment to pursue "zero tolerance" for corruption.

Without mentioning any name, she said trials of some corruption cases have also been criticised, even though the accused committed corruption and misappropriated money of workers.

ON JOURNALISTS

Replying to a question about journalists' access of information, the PM said gathering information is one thing and stealing files is another.

"A negotiation was going on for buying vaccines. One of my officers was working round the clock. The officer left the room for a while leaving the important files. A journalist of a renowned newspaper entered the room and stole the documents, and my officer caught the journalist," she said.

"Then the journalist went into the bathroom and hide the documents in her sari ... the file was taken out. And it seems there was no crime committed."

Later the journalist was awarded for stealing the file, Hasina added.

"This was not the first. The journalist was earlier captured at the ministry of shipping and later freed after signing a bond. But later the journalist became a heroine and world-famous," she said.

TRUMP ASSASSINATION BID

Hasina condemned the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump and termed the attack "unfortunate".

"It is really regrettable. He is a presidential candidate. We definitely condemn it ... ."

"It is our question as to why such an incident took place in a civilised country, like the USA which is the pioneer of democracy," Hasina said.

She noted that the Republican Party did not blame the US government for the attack and President Joe Biden also condemned the attack.

"If such an incident took place in Bangladesh, the government would have been blamed," she said.

On the Rohingya issue, Hasina said she sought China's cooperation in resolving the crisis.

She noted that the Chinese president thanked Bangladesh for its humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas and reiterated China's commitment to supporting their repatriation.

The man who shot Trump

FROM PAGE 1

State voter records show that Crooks was a registered Republican. The upcoming November 5 election would have been the first time Crooks had been old enough to vote in a presidential race.

Crooks lived about an hour away from where the shooting took place in Butler. The Federal Aviation Administration yesterday said that it closed the airspace over Bethel Park for "special security reasons."

When Crooks was 17 he made a $15 donation to ActBlue, a political action committee that raises money for left-leaning and Democratic politicians, according to a 2021 Federal Election Commission filing. The donation was earmarked for the Progressive Turnout Project, a national group that rallies Democrats to vote. The groups did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Crooks' father, Matthew Crooks, 53, told CNN that he was trying to figure out what happened and would wait until he spoke to law enforcement before speaking about his son.

A video published by US outlet TMZ on Saturday showed that a gunman, suspected to be Thomas Matthew Crooks, lying on his stomach on a rooftop with a rifle in hand.

"The guy has longer brown hair, and he seems to be wearing a grey shirt/khaki pants -- and as you can see, he's carefully trying to pinpoint a target from afar before pulling the trigger," TMZ reported.

The man is not shown firing in the published footage. But a quick succession of gunshots is heard followed by screams from people off-camera.

"He's turning this way, be careful guys," a man is heard saying.

"Somebody got shot," another voice says. "He's right there, laying down."

"Dude, that's exactly why we need... Trump here," another man is heard saying.

"Secret Service don't (mess) around," another man says.

A second video published by TMZ shows shaky footage of the same rooftop and a blurred body.

"You can see the guy there," a person off-camera says. "I think they hit him ..., he looks dead."

Another video posted by a TikTok user shows Trump touching his right ear just after multiple bangs are heard.

In the same frame, a security force sniper, positioned on a roof behind the Republican presidential candidate, is seen taking aim with a rifle mounted on a stand.

AFP did not independently verify the videos, and it is unclear whether the sniper fired the weapon.

Trump then crouches down behind the lectern as Secret Service agents move in around him. Screams are heard in the crowd.

He is later escorted off stage by agents.

Thomas Crooks graduated in 2022 from Bethel Park High School, according to the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. He received a $500 "star award" from the National Math and Science Initiative, according to the newspaper.

A 2022 graduation ceremony video cited by the New York Times shows Crooks receiving his high school diploma to some applause. Video from that ceremony posted online shows Crooks with glasses in a black graduation gown and posing with a school official. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the video.

Law enforcement officials said on Saturday that Crooks carried no identification to the site of the shooting and had to be identified using other methods.

"We're looking at photographs right now and we're trying to run his DNA and get biometric confirmation," Kevin Rojek, FBI special agent in charge, said during a press briefing.

USA Today reported that dozens of law enforcement vehicles were stationed outside a residence listed at the address on Crooks' voter registration record. Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were on the scene and a bomb squad was at the residence, USA Today reported.

Today, the perimeter of the residence was guarded by yellow police caution tape. An Allegheny County Police vehicle was parked outside.

"It's insanity that anyone would do this," Dan Maloney, a 30-year-old resident from the area was quoted as saying by USA Today.

Reuters could not immediately identify social media accounts or other online postings by Crooks. Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, did not immediately respond to questions on whether the platforms had removed any accounts related to the suspect.

Trump survives

FROM PAGE 1

community," Shapiro said, adding, "Political disagreements can never, ever be addressed through violence."

US President Joe Biden, a Democrat, said he had ordered a review of how the man carrying an AR-15-style rifle managed on Saturday to get close enough to shoot from a rooftop at Trump, who as a former president has lifetime protection by the US Secret Service.

Earlier, the 81-year-old Democrat had called the attack "sick" and spoke to Trump afterwards. He also cut short a weekend at his vacation home and flew back to Washington to deal with the crisis.

Biden was scheduled to deliver remarks on the incident at 1.30 pm (1730 GMT) yesterday, the White House said.

Trump's wife Melania said the gunman was a "monster," who had attempted to silence her husband's "laughter, ingenuity, love of music, and inspiration."

World leaders also condemned the attack, with the Kremlin yesterday morning saying there was no place for violence in politics.

In scenes that will haunt an America already traumatised by gun violence and political upheaval, Trump clutched his ear and fell to the ground after shots rang out at the rally on Saturday.

Secret Service agents immediately surrounded him and bundled the former president off stage, as he raised a fist in defiance, with blood streaked across his ear and face.

Trump said afterwards that he was "shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear" and heard a "whizzing sound."

The shooter, reportedly a registered Republican, was believed to be working alone.

Meanwhile, FBI officials yesterday said the suspected gunman was acting alone and used an AR-style rifle purchased legally to shoot at the former US president, adding that they had no indications of any mental health issues with the suspect.

The FBI officials, in a call with reporters, said the investigation was at an early stage and that they had not yet identified an ideology associated with the suspect. They said finding the motive behind the shooting was one of their priorities.

A video published by US outlet TMZ shows the alleged assailant lying on his belly on a sloping rooftop and aiming a rifle. A quick succession of gunshots is heard followed by screams from off-camera Trump supporters attending the rally.

His father Matthew Crooks told CNN that he was trying to establish "what the hell is going on", and would not comment until he spoke to law enforcement.

The shocking incident inevitably raised questions about security, and how a presidential candidate could be targeted by a gunman around 150 meters away despite a huge Secret Service detail.

US Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi rejected "absolutely false" claims that it had refused additional protection for Trump ahead of the rally, saying that the agency had in fact recently added resources for him.

The FBI said in a news conference early yesterday that it was "surprising" the gunman had been able to get off so many shots before he was spotted and "neutralised" by counter-snipers.

After multiple witnesses said they saw the gunman before the shooting and alerted authorities, Butler police said they had "responded to a number of reports of suspicious activity".

A local prosecutor yesterday said it was "surprising" that a shooter was able to position himself on the nearby rooftop to take his shot.

"I do know we had some law enforcement in that building, which is even more surprising that he was able to get up there," said Butler County district attorney Richard Goldinger.

Trump's narrow escape has also sparked conspiracy theories and fingerpointing by Republicans, as an already tense run-up to the elections becomes increasingly febrile.

Possible Trump vice presidential pick J.D. Vance said Biden's "rhetoric" had "led directly" to the Trump attack.

The attack happened days before the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee where Trump will be formally anointed as presidential candidate. Trump said he looked "forward to speaking to our Great Nation this week from Wisconsin."

"I was going to delay my trip to Wisconsin, and The Republican National Convention, by two days, but have just decided that I cannot allow a 'shooter,' or potential assassin, to force change to scheduling, or anything else. Therefore, I will be leaving for Milwaukee, as scheduled," Trump wrote on his Truth Social site yesterday.

He said he would be leaving in the afternoon.

Trump was treated in hospital and could later be seen walking unaided from his plane, though his wounded ear was not facing the camera in video footage posted by his deputy communications director. The New York Times reported that he was staying the night in New Jersey.

The United States has a history of political violence. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 while President Ronald Reagan was shot but survived an assassination attempt in 1981.

পূবালী ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং
শরী'আহ্ ভিত্তিক ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা
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PUBALI BANK PLC.
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PI Banking - a Pubali Bank apps
Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches

QUOTES ON QUOTA

The anti-quota protest is a nonpolitical agitation. But BNP and their collaborators are trying to turn the movement into an anti-government agitation and they are instigating the movement making statements and comments.

OBAIDUL QUADER
Road Transport and Bridges Minister

Anyone can file a lawsuit if aggrieved. If the investigation reveals no merit to the case, it can be automatically cancelled, regardless of whether it takes 24 hours or 24 days.

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN KAMAL
Home Minister

It's a "sub judice" issue and the ongoing protests lack justification. The government has always been sympathetic towards students, which is why the quota system was abolished. However, many problems have arisen following that.

HASAN MAHMUD
Foreign Minister

The government cannot do anything on the quota reform issue until the Supreme Court process is totally completed. There is no chance to change the High Court order by protesting on the streets.

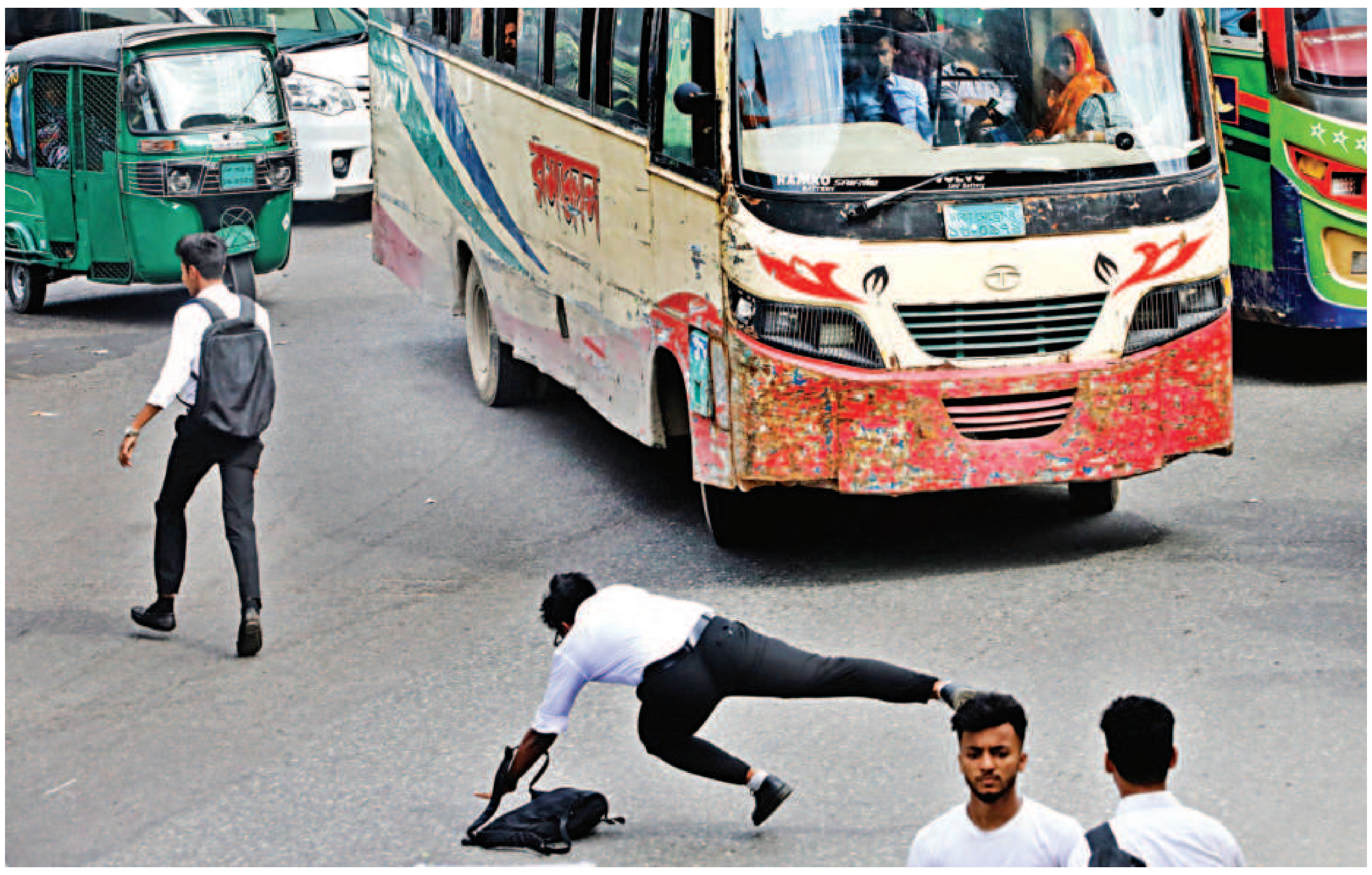
MOHAMMAD ALI ARAFAT
State Minister for Information

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 15

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A playful moment suddenly takes a dangerous turn, as while trying to throw something at his friend, a student trips over and falls onto a busy road. An accident could have occurred with a bus rapidly approaching him, but the driver managed to break just in time, narrowly averting a tragedy. A moment of carelessness on the road can turn tragic if footpaths or nearby foot-bridges are not used. The photo was taken in the capital's Science Lab area recently.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Restore 5 percent indigenous quota

Demands Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people yesterday demanded reinstating the five percent indigenous quota in first and second-class government jobs.

The protestors against quota systems are creating inequality through their movement, said Alik Mree, convener of Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad, during a press conference held on Dhaka University premises.

"Our living standard is completely different from others. We have had to grow up fighting adversity from birth. So, we think our demand for the restoration of the five percent quota is completely logical and we want to see its implementation as soon as possible," he said.

"The constitution provides special opportunities for the backward people of the country. After the cancellation of the quota in 2018, the number of indigenous people of the hills and plains entering government jobs has fallen drastically," he also said.

"Quota is a constitutional right. Various policies and laws of the state could not play an effective role in protecting the living standard and developing the rights of indigenous people. Rather, it has increased oppression and deprivation of indigenous people," he said.

After the cancellation of the quota in 2018, the number of indigenous people of the hills and plains entering government jobs has fallen drastically.

DELAYED MONSOON

Dengue may spike in Aug or Sept

Fear experts, call for central action plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dengue cases might start to increase during August or September, as this year's outbreak will get delayed due to the monsoon starting late, said experts at a programme yesterday.

However, they said, the outbreak may not be as intense this year compared to last year.

They made the remarks at a discussion, titled "Reasons for failure to control dengue and what to be done", organised by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba).

At the discussion, Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of Directorate General of Health Services, said local government and the health department must work together to control dengue.

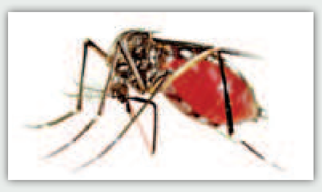
Suggesting the launch of a national strategy to control the mosquito-borne disease, he said such a strategy was prepared a few days ago. But it needs to be updated, he added.

Kabirul Bashar, professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "Dengue may be prevalent in the country in August or September. This year's dengue outbreak may not be the same as last year."

Rumana Huque, teacher of economics at Dhaka University, said financial pressure also increases for a dengue patient, as both dengue tests and treatments cost quite a lot of money.

If a dengue patient takes treatment at a government hospital, it may cost them Tk 35,000 to Tk 40,000, and it may cost Tk 60,000 to Tk 65,000 on average at a private hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Dengue death toll **48**

Total number of patients **4,566**

383 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **4,135**

155 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: **DGHS**

DB arrests mastermind of certificate forgery gang

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Detective Branch of police arrested the mastermind of a criminal gang who used to sell forged academic certificates.

The arrestee is Abu Zafar, 31. He sold the fake certificates of two private universities.

Cyber and Special Crime Department (South) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police conducted a drive on Friday and arrested Zafar, said DMP additional commissioner Harun-or-Rashid yesterday.

Harun, also the DB chief, said IT experts, a former teacher and an office assistant of a private university may have been involved in this racket.

On May 26, a case was filed with Tejgaon Police Station in this regard.

HC questions legality of 40pc quota for children of BR employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a provision to keep 40 percent quota for the children of Bangladesh Railways employees in BR.

The court issued a rule asking the government to show causes why the section 3(1) and (2) of the Bangladesh Railway Non-Cadre Recruitment Rules, 2020 that contains the provision should not be declared unconstitutional.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md Rokonuzzaman.

He submitted the petition as a public interest litigation on May 26 to the HC saying that the Bangladesh Railway has purposefully framed the rules by fixing the 40 percent quota for the children of its employees for their own benefits which is contradictory to the circular issued by the Ministry of Public Administration in 2018 regarding cancellation of quotas and articles 27, 29 and 31 of the constitution.

Due to preservation of 40 percent quota for jobs in 14th to 20 grades in the railways, there will be discrimination against others, the petitioner said.

Rokonuzzaman himself moved the petition while DAG Tushar Kanti Roy represented the state.

VACCINE FOR LIVESTOCK

JS body to look into tender graft

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday formed a three-member sub-committee to investigate alleged corruption in the tender process to purchase vaccines for the fisheries and livestock department.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Livestock Ministry formed the sub-committee at its meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

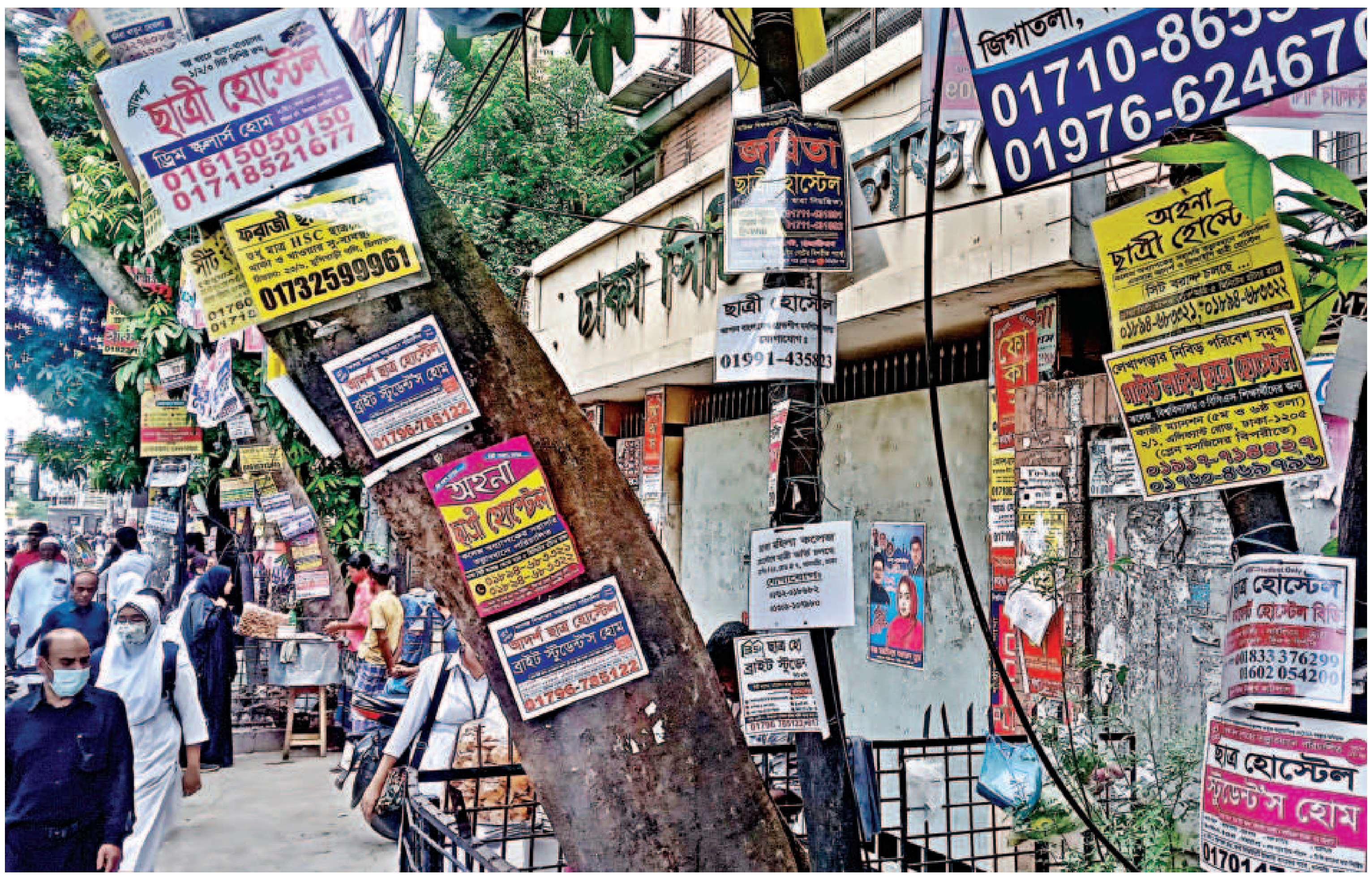
SM Rezaul Karim, an Awami League lawmaker and chief of the parliamentary watchdog, presided over the meeting. MP BM Kabirul Haque was made convener of the sub-committee. The other members are AL MP Nur Uddin Chowdhury Noyon and independent MP Moshiur Rahman Mollah Shajal.

The investigation committee was asked to submit its report before the main committee within 15 working days, BM Kabirul Haque told The Daily Star. "Today was our first meeting. We are yet to go through all the documents related to the alleged corruption in the tender process," he said.

Kabirul said, "What we have heard is that there were some irregularities in the tender process as the due procedure was not followed during the tender floating."

The committee also recommended the ministry to suspend the Department of Livestock's ongoing recruitment process, as the decision regarding the quota system in government jobs is pending before the court.

In the meeting, the committee was briefed about the activities of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and its subordinate agencies and institutions.



Posters, advertising for hostels or coaching centres, remain nailed or pasted on trees along Mirpur Road in the capital. This blatant disregard for nature not only damages the trees but also is an eyesore. Later, these plastics end up in city drains, further adding to the waterlogging woes. The photo was taken near Dhaka City College recently.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Expat stabbed to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A woman was stabbed to death allegedly by a group of robbers at her residence in Jashore's Jhikargachha upazila early yesterday.

The deceased is Ferdousi Begum, 42, wife of Altaf Hossain. She is an expatriate who returned from Spain about a year ago with her family for her son's wedding, said Nishat Al Nahian, additional superintendent (Navaran circle) of police in Jashore.

Altaf had returned to Spain after the wedding, while Ferdousi and her 12-year-old daughter stayed back.

According to police and relatives, some robbers had entered their house through the kitchen window around 3:00am.

Sensing their presence, Ferdousi confronted them. The robbers attacked Ferdousi, stabbing her multiple times. She died on the spot.

They also attacked Jannatul with sharp weapons, leaving her critically injured. She was taken to Jashore General Hospital.

"The robbers have taken some gold ornaments and other valuables. We are trying to identify and arrest them," the officer added.

'TORTURE OF WOMAN'

2 UP members sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

A Brahmanbaria court yesterday sent two union parishad members to jail in a case filed for allegedly torturing a 25-year-old woman in an arbitration over a theft charge in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila.

They are Ishaq Molla, a member of Ward 6 of Bishnupur Union, and Hossain Miah, a former member of Ward 8 of the same union.

Hasan Jamil Khan, inspector (investigation) of Bijoynagar Police Station, said the two were arrested from Bishnupur village on Saturday night after a video of beating a woman went viral on social media.

Jamil said a few days ago, a village police's wife was accused of theft and beaten up by some people, including Ishaq and Hossain.

As the video spread on social media, police detained former and present UP members, said the police official.

Two killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two persons died in accidents on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Gazipur's Kaliakoir yesterday.

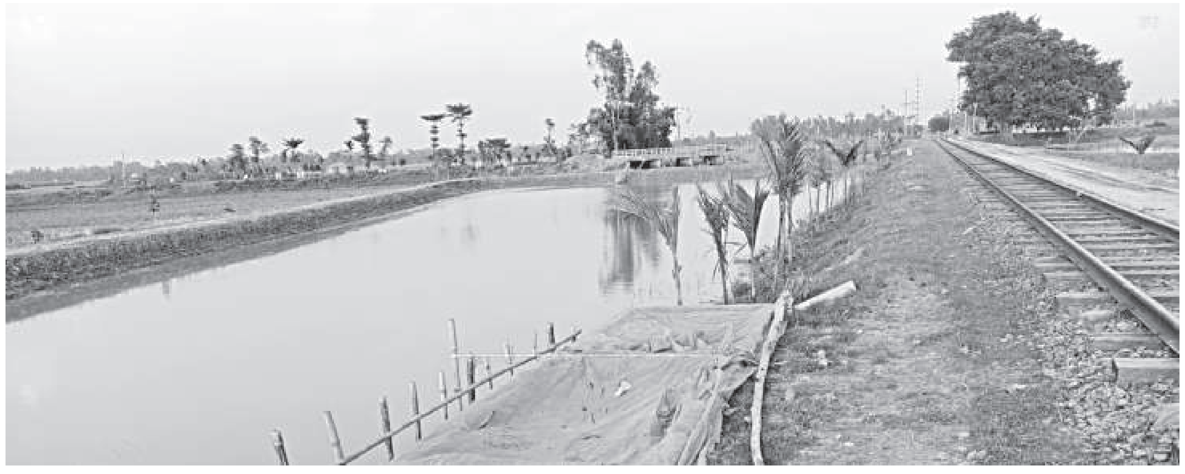
A man died after his motorcycle collided with a bus in the upazila's Sutrapur area around 9:00am.

The deceased is Jihan Farhad, 45, of Samantapur in Gazipur, said Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Nawjor Highway Police Station.

Meanwhile, the driver of a covered van died after he lost control over the steering and ploughed into a food cart in the upazila's Nawjor area around 2:00pm.

Two others, a woman aged around 38 and a child aged seven, were injured. The deceased and the injured could not be identified immediately, said OC Abu Siddique of Basan Police Station.

Govt canal grabbed for fish farming



S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

A section of local influential people allegedly grabbed a portion of Mahendranagar Canal on government's land in Nakhenda area of Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila for a fish farming project.

The canal flows through 8-9 bighas of land owned by Railway and Bangladesh Water Development Board, adjacent to the Teesta-Kurigram rail route, and falls into the Teesta river. It is a source of water for irrigation on more than 1,000 acres of agricultural lands in Nakhenda area.

The grabbers stopped the canal's flow of water, causing inundation of the agricultural lands, leaving more than 100 farmers in trouble, alleged locals.

Farmers said they have complained in writing to all the departments concerned but no steps have yet been taken in this regard.

They alleged that Altaf Hossain of Nakhenda China Bazar area, who is the younger brother of an additional superintendent of police in Dhaka, illegally occupied the canal and stopped its water flow for his fish farm on both sides of the Kurigram-Teesta rail route.

"This in turn is causing waterlogging on our arable lands. We are unable to protest as Altaf is very influential," said Sarwar Bepari, a farmer.

Abul Kashem, another farmer, said, "We have not been able to cultivate our lands. Also, we are living amid fear after submitting a written complaint against Altaf Hossain."

Contacted, Altaf Hossain refuted the allegations against him.

"I built a fish farming project on my own 22 bighas of land. I did not occupy the canal on government land. Besides, I have never used my brother's influence," he claimed.

Manjurul Haque, surveyor of Railway's Divisional Estate Office under Lalmonirhat Divisional Railway, however, said Altaf Hossain did occupy the canal for his fish farming project.

The railway owns half of the canal's land, and red flags have been placed there demarcating the boundary, he added.

Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of BWDB, said the canal will be recovered soon, adding that boundary pillars have been installed to demarcate it.

"The encroacher has been asked to vacate the canal. If he does not comply, the railway authorities will take legal action," said Purnendu Dev, divisional estate officer of Lalmonirhat Divisional Railway.

Khadiza Begum, UNO of Rajarhat upazila, said she will inspect the site and take necessary measures to keep the canal free.

Caught after fleeing 130km

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After stealing a Suzuki Gixxer motorcycle in Netrakona, Rubel and Zunayed rode around 130 kilometres yesterday morning to reach Sarail in Brahmanbaria, confident that they had evaded the law enforcers.

They parked the stolen motorcycle at a roadside shop and were enjoying snacks when police zeroed in on their location following a phone call to 999 by the motorcycle owner, Mahbub Shahin.

A patrol team from Sarail Police Station, led by Sub-inspector Pankaj Das, positioned themselves on the highway near Kuttapara and minutes later spotted two individuals on a black motorcycle passing their vehicle.

And then the chase began. Sensing danger, the thieves sped up to flee. As the police van intercepted them about 100 yards away, Zunayed got off the bike and ran, while Rubel managed to momentarily evade arrest by speeding up through a gap.

"We then started chasing again. After some time, the thief drove his bike down a narrow road where the police van couldn't follow. I took a ride on an individual's bike and continued the chase," said SI Pankaj.

SI Pankaj said, "Rubel then abandoned the bike near a shop and started running. I screamed for help so that locals could stop him. Rubel then jumped into a waterbody but got arrested 11:30am."

"The thieves couldn't imagine they would be tracked down even after fleeing from Netrakona and reaching Brahmanbaria," he told The Daily Star. According to the SI, the chase and arrest ordeal lasted for 30 minutes, covering about one and a half kilometres.

Man accused of raping 9-yr-old daughter

UNB, *B'baria*

A father has been accused of raping his 9-year-old daughter in Bijoynagar upazila, Brahmanbaria.

Shahabuddin Shah, 40, has been on the run since the incident occurred on July 13, said police.

The girl was admitted to the Brahmanbaria 250-bed General Hospital.

Her mother said Shahabuddin took the girl to a secluded spot near Jagannathpur around 5:00am and raped her.

She demanded justice.

Md Hasan Jamil Khan, inspector (investigation) of Bijoynagar Police Station, said they are trying to arrest Shahabuddin.

Need master plan for further dev projects at JU

Demand civil society members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society representatives yesterday demanded that all construction works under "further development projects" at Jahangirnagar University be stopped until the formulation of a master plan.

A letter, signed by 10 civil society representatives, was sent in this regard to the vice chancellor, dean of Arts and Humanities faculty, dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences faculty, chairman of Fine Arts department, the university's technical management committee, alongside the convener of JU's waterbody management committee.

A copy of the letter was also sent to the secretary of education ministry.

In the letter, they feared that the university administration may start further construction work without finalising the master plan, which may incite the students.

Activists Sultana Kamal and Khushi Kabir, Bela Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Bapa General Secretary Alamgir Kabir, and BIP President Adil Mohammed Khan, among others, signed the letter.

Eradicating extreme poverty govt's key goal

Says PM's principal secretary during event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is playing a leading role in the global efforts to alleviate poverty, said Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Md Tofazzal Hossain Mia yesterday.

He came up with the remarks while speaking as chief guest at a workshop at Agargaon in the capital.

The event was organised by PPEPP-EU project of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, funded by the European Union.

A primary goal of the government is to eradicate extreme poverty, he added.

Charles Whiteley, European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh, said despite Bangladesh's progress over the past five decades, the prevalence of extreme poverty remains scathingly high in certain regions, like the haor and coastal areas.

PKSF Chairman M Khairul Hossain moderated the workshop.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PPEPP-EU PROJECT

সিরাজুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী
সম্পাদিত
সাহিত্য-সংস্কৃতির ত্রৈমাসিক
নতুন দিগন্ত
২২ বর্ষের চতুর্থ সংখ্যা
প্রকাশিত হয়েছে
স্টলে খোঁজ নিন/গ্রাহক হোন
প্রতি কপি ৮০ টাকা
বার্ষিক চাঁদা (সডাক) ৪০০ টাকা
এজেন্সী ও পুরাতন সংখ্যার
জন্য যোগাযোগ করুন
সম্পাদকীয় যোগাযোগ
উচ্চতর গবেষণা কেন্দ্র
কক্ষ ২০৪ (টিএসসি সংলগ্ন)
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০
ফোন : ০১৮১৭-০৫৭৭৮০
০১৬২০-২৩৫৬৬১

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Eastern Refinery Limited
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chittagong
www.erl.com.bd

Ref: ER/LP/LT/e-GP: 20/2024 Date: 14/07/2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal for procurement of the goods as stated below:

SI #	Tender Reference	Tender ID	Description of goods & related service	Tender doc last selling date & time	Tender closing, opening date & time
1	ERL/LT/e-GP-20/2024	1001812	Supply of Spares Parts for 2 MW Diesel Generator, Model: CAT D-3608, Serial No. 6MC-548, Specification: 4 stroke, 8 cylinder, Inline diesel Engine	28-07-2024 16:00 hrs	29-07-2024 12:30 hrs

Procuring entity details: Md. Tariq Hossain, Manager (Purchase), Phone: 880-02 3333, 01261-70 (382) Email: managerlp@erl.com.bd

These are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted through National e-GP Portal https://www.eprocure.gov.bd and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd

GD-48

Dengue may spike

FROM PAGE 3

Presenting the keynote speech, Dr Lenin Chowdhury, executive president of Poba, said, "From 2000 to 2018, dengue was confined to only a few major cities, including Dhaka. Since 2019, dengue has spread across the country."

"Within this time, it was necessary to formulate a comprehensive central action plan to control dengue. But it was not done," he said.

This year the monsoon started a little late, delaying the dengue outbreak, he said, adding, "Forty-eight people have died of dengue so far this year. The number can increase in the coming days."

When protector

FROM PAGE 5

to set up a waste management plant. But they don't heed to our instructions," he claimed.

Asked why the municipality is dumping waste in open spaces and the waterbody, Biplab Muhuree, secretary of the Hathazari municipality, said they are trying to set up a waste management plant. "We are working to buy land to establish a plant. But we are facing a shortage of funds."

He also admitted they established the existing landfill without getting permission as they had no space to dump the waste.

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Zone- 02, Dhaka.

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি
আমাদের ঢাকা
আমাদের ঐতিহ্য

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.02.129.2024 Dated: 11/07/2024

Corrigendum-2

S.L No	Tender ID	Name of works	Previous Last Selling date and Time	Previous Tender Closing date & Time	Revised Last Selling date and Time	Revised Tender Closing date & Time
02	Tender ID- 993282, Ref No: 46.207.014.24.06.246.2024 Date: 05.05.2024 Package No- egpdscc/z02/w4/bmr	Development & construction work of road & drain at Basabo Madartek Main Road (Atish Dipankar Road to Nandipara Bridge) of ward 04 under zone 02 DSCC	11-Jul-2024 11:30	11-Jul-2024 12:30	18-Jul-2024 13:30	18-Jul-2024 14:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

signed/
(Md. Harunur Rashid)
Executive Engineer
Zone -2 (Khilgoan)
Dhaka South City Corporation

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/২৬/২০২৪-২০২৫

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area Dhaka-1208

Shorted Dated Local Press Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from Genuine Importers/ related Suppliers for Supply of following items for Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP) on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	EDCL(KELP)/PUR/RM/LT/2024/272 Dt. 14/07/2024	Raw Material for Male Latex Condom: 01. Black Ink Cartridge (V-401-D) 02. Make up Fluid Cartridge (V-701-D) 03. Make up Fluid Cartridge (V-705-D) (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 750.00/set Non-refundable	Closing: 25/07/2024 at 12.00 PM Opening: 25/07/2024 at 12.30 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by a amount of Earnest Money mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of " Essential Drugs Company Ltd" without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director.

(5Inchix4 Colum)

When protector turns polluter

Hathazari municipality dumping waste in canal; landfill set up next to waterbody without permission

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Chattogram*

The Sundari canal in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila is facing a severe environmental crisis due to indiscriminate dumping of garbage by the municipality.

As the state agency, who is the custodian of the canal, has been dumping household wastes for years, a portion of the canal has already turned into a narrow drain, obstructing the waterflow of this waterbody.

The landfill, adjacent to the canal, was established in 2013 without obtaining environmental clearance from the Department of Environment (DoE).

The canal, around 5km in length, started from Jangalchari and ended at Subedar Pukur area under the upazila.

This correspondent visited the spot on Saturday and observed that a huge amount of plastic packets of chips, biscuits and several types of single use plastic (SUP) were lying along the banks on both sides of the canal.

Sultan Ahmed, a resident of the Madhyakhil area near the landfill, said, "It is unbearable for me and my family to stay home when the bad smell spreads after the municipality dumps the garbage."

Mansur Alam, a resident of the Rangipara area, regularly cultivates crops using water from the hilly canal.

"Sometimes the canal water turns black during discharge of untreated wastewater from the landfill into the waterbody," he added.

A protected forest, around 50 acres, is located near the landfill. Due to dumping garbage next to the forestland, some trees have already died.

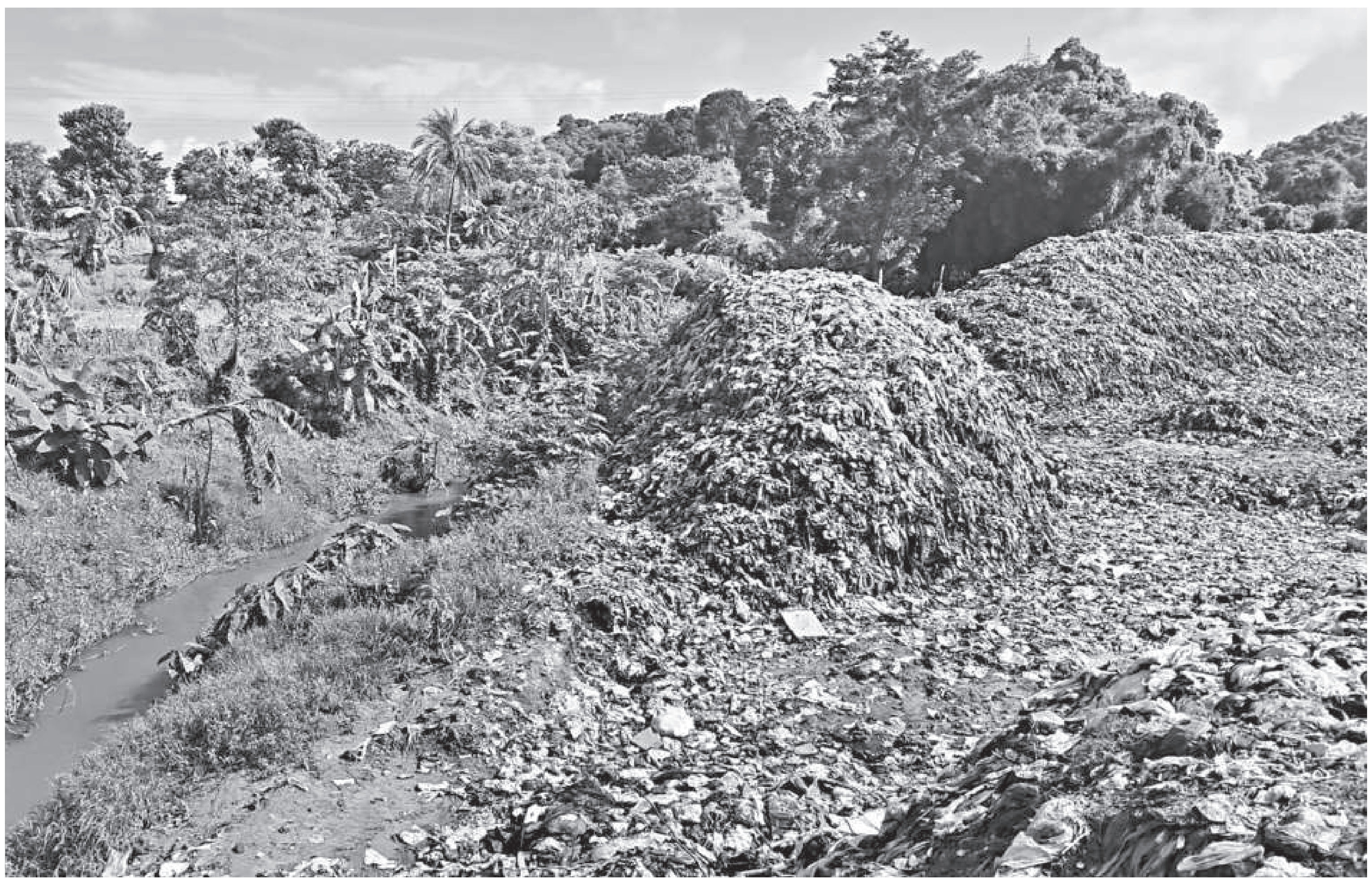
Anwarul Islam, forester of the Hathazari Forest Office, said he verbally urged officials of the municipality to take measures to shift the landfill.

According to the Environmental Conservation Act, filling a canal (waterbody) is a punishable offence.

Nur Hasan Sajib, an assistant director of DoE, Chattogram, who has been transferred to Noakhali recently, confirmed that the municipality is using the land as a landfill without obtaining permission from DoE.

"We asked the authorities several times

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



It's tough to notice Sundari canal amid the piles of waste dumped next to one of its banks. Hathazari municipality has set up a landfill next to it without permission and continues to dump household waste there. A portion of the canal has already been turned into a narrow drain, obstructing its waterflow. PHOTO: **STAR**

REMAL AFTERMATH

207 schools need urgent repair

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

At least 207 educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and madrasas in Patuakhali, are in dire need of urgent repair after sustaining significant damages in Cyclone Remal.

Although these institutions sought financial assistance worth a total of Tk 15 crore from the government through the district education office, no allocation has yet been made.

As a result, these institutions have been struggling to carry out their academic activities, with many remaining closed since the cyclone lashed the coastal belt of the country on May 26-27.

The cyclone also damaged 6,082 houses completely and 31,364 ones partially in the district, affecting around 3.38 lakh people.

Of the damaged educational institutions, 49 are in Kalapara, 42 in Galachipa, 34 in Sadar, 29 in Dasmina, 22 in Baufal, 16 in Mirzaganj, 8 in Dumki, and 7 in Rangabali upazilas.

"The cyclone blew away the tin roof of our school. Now it is not possible to conduct classes amid monsoon without having the roof repaired. As such, 200 students are unable to continue their studies. I applied to the district education office for assistance, but no money has been allocated yet," said Subal Chandra Sheel, headteacher of Chalitabuniya Junior Secondary School in Sadar upazila.

Md Ashraf Uzzaman, headteacher of Menhajpur Haqqani Secondary School in Kalapara upazila, echoed his concerns.

"In Kalapara upazila, 4 colleges, 12 schools, and 25 madrasas sustained damages worth around Tk 1.5 crore in the cyclone. I have informed the higher authorities in this regard," said Moniruzzaman Khan, secondary education officer in the upazila.

Contacted, Md Mojibur Rahman, district education officer in Patuakhali, said a letter was sent to the higher authorities on May 30 seeking an allocation of Tk 15 crore for necessary repairs to 207 institutions in the district.

So far, no allocation has been received, he added.

KURIGRAM, SIRAJGANJ

Flood situation improves slightly

STAR REPORT

The ongoing flood situation in Kurigram and Sirajganj districts has improved to some extent as floodwater has started to recede.

In Kurigram, water levels in the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers have begun to decrease, leading to a reduction in flooding in many affected areas.

As of yesterday, the water levels of Dudhkumar and Dharla had fallen below the danger level, while the Brahmaputra's water level, although reduced, remained above the danger level, said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of the Bangladesh Water Development Board in Kurigram.

"Although most areas are still inundated, the flood situation is expected to improve further as the Brahmaputra's water continues to recede," he added.

Many flood victims who had sought refuge in shelters and embankments have started returning to their homes since Saturday.

In Sirajganj, the Jamuna river was flowing 8cm below the danger level at Kazipur Point and 19cm above the danger level at Sirajganj Hard Point as of yesterday noon, according to BWDB sources.

"Water levels have been reducing at all points over the past three days. Although the Jamuna is still flowing above the danger level at Sirajganj Hard Point, we expect it to come down below the danger level in the next two to three days," said Md Nazmul Islam, sub-divisional engineer of the Water Development Board in Sirajganj.

However, most areas remain inundated, and residents have yet to return to their homes from shelters and higher grounds.

"If the Jamuna's water continues to recede, it will take around a week for floodwater to be removed from the affected areas," the BWDB official noted.

সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

BANGLADESH ELECTION COMMISSION
Election Commission Secretariat
Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)
Nirbachan Bhaban (floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

Memo No. 17.14.0000.240.07.171.2024.2239 Date: 14 July, 2024

Package Title	Purchase and Upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre
Invitation Number	17.14.0000.240.07.171.2024/1916
Issued on	13 June, 2024
Tender Package No.	GD-41.1

Addendum-01 of Invitation for Tenders (IFT)

SL No. of IFT	Existing Invitation for Tenders (IFT)	Amendments (Contents to be read as) Invitation for Tenders (IFT)
15. Tender Last Selling Date and Time	15 July, 2024 Time: 04:00 P.M.	30 July, 2024 Time: 5:00 P.M.
16. Tender Closing Date and Time	16 July, 2024 Time: 11:00 A.M.	31 July, 2024 Time: 11:00 A.M.
17. Tender Opening Date and Time	16 July, 2024 Time: 11:30 P.M.	31 July, 2024 Time: 11:30 A.M.
বিঃ দ্রঃ দরপত্র দলিলের সংশোধনী প্রকল্প কার্যালয় হতে সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।		

Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem
Brigadier General
Project Director
IDEA Project (2nd Phase)
Election Commission Secretariat

GD-47

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Public Administration
Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy
Publication Section
Shahbag, Dhaka-1000

Invitation for Rsearch Article

Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy is inviting Research Articles for the upcoming issue (July-December 2024) of **Bangladesh Journal of Administration and Management (BJAM).** Articles should be based on the following research areas/fields in Bangladesh context:

1. Public Administration and Public Policy;
2. Development Policy, Plan and Programme of the Government;
3. Development Administration and Development Economics;
4. Liberation War and Public Administration;
5. BCS Administration Academy's Training: Impact and Evaluation Study;
6. Performance Appraisal of the Civil Servants;
7. Digital Transformations of Governance: Bangladesh Perspective;
8. Smart Bangladesh: Roles of Civil Servants and Government Organizations;
9. Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in Public Service;
10. Capacity Development of the Civil Servants;
11. Innovation and Service Simplification in Government Organizations: Focusing on Artificial Intelligence (AI);
12. Human Resource Development: Focusing on Civil Servants;
13. Reforms in Civil Service, related Laws & Rules.

Articles should not exceed 6000 words including an abstract containing 250 to 300 words. Manuscripts should be submitted as MS Word file with Times New Roman font (font size 12) and Harvard Referencing system should be followed. An article must have a separate title page which will include the name(s) of the author(s), the e-mail address, brief CV of author(s), cell phone number of author(s) and a non-publication declaration of the article. The author(s) will have to submit a similarity check report generated automatically through Turnitin Software. The successful author(s) of selected article(s) will be entitled to have remuneration according to the Publication Policy of the Academy.

Interested academics, researchers, professionals and practitioners are requested to send the article through e-mail to the address publicationofficer@bcsadminacademy.gov.bd or publicationsection1987@gmail.com following a printed copy sent to the address of the Academy by 07 August 2024 within office time.

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BCS Administration Academy
Phone: 02- 55165906

GD-50

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট এর কার্যালয়
২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর
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স্মারক নং-জেলা/হাস/শের/২০২৪/২০৩৭ তারিখঃ ১৪/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর এর আর.এম.ও কোয়ার্টার, বাউন্ডারী ওয়াল, সোকওয়েল এবং পিট অপসারণ এর নিলাম
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগের নির্মাণ অধিশাখার স্মারক নং- ৪৫.০০.০০০০.১৫৬.০৬.০৪১.১৯-৪৭ তারিখঃ ২৭ জানুয়ারী, ২০২১খ্রিঃ এবং স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগের নির্মাণ অধিশাখার স্মারক নং- ৪৫.০০.০০০০.১৫৬.৯৫.০১১.২৪-২৬৭ তারিখঃ ১০ জুন, ২০২৪খ্রিঃ মোতাবেক অনুমোদন প্রদান করায় পিপিএ-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ এবং সর্বশেষ জানুয়ারী, ২০২৩ সংশোধনী এর আলোকে স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগের জরাজীর্ণ স্বাস্থ্য স্থাপনা/ভবন অপসারণের লক্ষ্যে ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর এ অত্র হাসপাতালের প্রস্তাবিত "বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা প্লান্ট" টি নির্মাণ এর লক্ষ্যে লে-আউট এরিয়ায় বিদ্যমান আর.এম.ও কোয়ার্টার, বাউন্ডারী ওয়াল, সোকওয়েল এবং পিট অপসারণের লক্ষ্যে নিলামে বিক্রয়ের জন্য আগ্রহী নিলামে অংশগ্রহণকারী ক্রেতাদের নিকট হতে নিম্নে বর্ণিত ছকের শর্তাধীনে গালাসহ সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয় ও বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়। স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ।
২	দরপত্র আহবানকারী	তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর।
৩	দরপত্র আহবানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর।
৪	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র আহবান	২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর এর আর.এম.ও কোয়ার্টার, বাউন্ডারী ওয়াল, সোকওয়েল এবং পিট নিলামে বিক্রয় ও অপসারণ
৫	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
৬	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্সধারী যে কোন ব্যক্তি/ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান (বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্র তফসিলে পাওয়া যাবে)।
৭	দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তির/বিক্রয়ের স্থান	তত্ত্বাবধায়ক এর কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর।
৮	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	১৫/০৭/২০২৪ইং হইতে ২৮/০৭/২০২৪ইং পর্যন্ত সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সকাল ৯.৩০ ঘটিকা হইতে দুপুর ২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৯	দরপত্র দলিল এর মূল্য	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকায় প্রকাশের পর ১০০০/-(এক হাজার) (অফেরতযোগ্য) টাকা ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ কোডে তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর এর অনুকূলে সোনালী ব্যাংক শেরপুর শাখায় চালানের মাধ্যমে জমা দিয়ে চালানের মূলকপি সহ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব লেটার হেড প্যাডে তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর বরাবর আবেদনের মাধ্যমে নিলাম দরপত্র দলিল ক্রয় করা যাইবে।
১০	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	পুলিশ সুপার, শেরপুর ও তত্ত্বাবধায়ক এর কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল শেরপুর এ রক্ষিত বাক্সে
১১	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	২৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ সকাল ৯.৩০ ঘটিকা হইতে দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	২৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকায় তত্ত্বাবধায়ক এর কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর।
১৩	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা।
১৪	গুরুত্বপূর্ণ শর্তাবলী	হালসনের ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ১ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙ্গিন ছবি, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/ভোটার আইডি সনদ, ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরে আয়কর পরিশোধিত সনদ ও জেরো ডিজিটের ভ্যাট সনদ। উল্লেখ্য সকল সনদপত্র সমূহের ফটোকপি ও ছবি ১ম শ্রেণী গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হইতে হইবে এবং নামযুক্ত সীল থাকিতে হইবে। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী দরপত্র দলিলে উল্লেখ রয়েছে।
১৫	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

ডাঃ মোঃ সেলিম মিঞা
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক
২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেলা সদর হাসপাতাল, শেরপুর

GD- 49

TRUMP assassination attempt How it unfolded

1:00pm ET

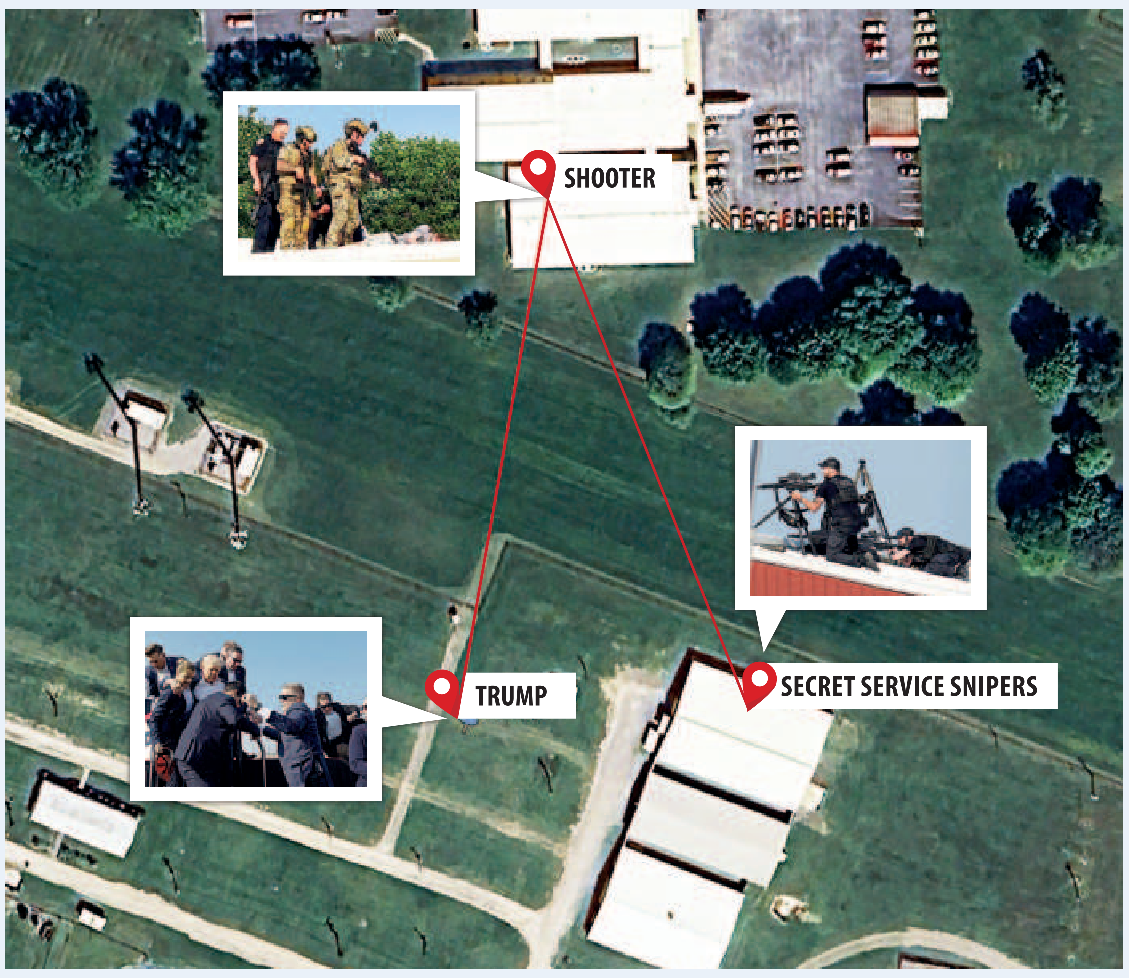
Rally grounds at Butler Farm Show grounds opens to Trump supporters, more than four hours before Trump was scheduled to speak. Fans immediately begin pouring in.

4:11pm ET

Former GOP Senate candidate Sean Parnell makes opening remarks by attacking the Biden administration, to cheers from onlookers.

6:15pm ET

Trump takes to the stage and is shot moments after he begins speaking, with gunshots ringing out as he says the words: "Take a look at what happened."



Trump rally shooting reshapes US election

AFP, *Milwaukee*

A bloodied candidate, his fist raised in defiance after surviving an assassination attempt.

It is still early to know what impact the attempt on Donald Trump's life will have on the 2024 White House race, but the image of the former president as he was rushed from the stage of a rally in Pennsylvania has already taken on iconic status.

The great disrupter whom many see as the clear and present threat to democracy and the rule of law has himself become a victim -- and survivor -- of the ultimate act of political violence.

Pennsylvania's Democratic junior senator, John Fetterman, yesterday cautioned that the attack should not become "an opportunity for politics or strategy, or how this might play out."

Yet the dynamics of the Republican Party's national nominating convention, starting today in the Midwestern city of Milwaukee, are sure to be transformed along with the campaign more broadly, as Trump seeks to make political capital from his ordeal.

An often divisive figure but a canny campaigner with unswerving political instincts, Trump took the high ground yesterday as he called for Americans to stand together in "not allowing evil to win."

He might have expected a ticker-tape parade anyway in Milwaukee, but his brush with death ensures near-mythic status among the 50,000 expected attendees there who already see the Republican tycoon as their warrior and champion.

Plastered on front pages around the world and spreading virally on social media, the image showing Trump's raised fist against the backdrop of an American flag flying above him will be worth more than even the most lavish ad campaign.

Election messaging is about contrasts and, seizing the moment, Trump demonstrated courage and fortitude that voters are certain to compare with weeks of disastrous headlines about President Joe Biden's frailty.

Crucially, the attack plays into Trump's grievance narrative about Democrats being out to get his support base and his insistence that he is taking the slings and arrows -- literally, now -- so that they don't have to.

Discussing the impact of the shooting on the convention, Democratic former White House strategist David Axelrod predicted on CNN that Trump would be "greeted as a kind of martyr."

Meanwhile, the Republican's adversaries are likely to find criticizing the former president a trickier proposition.

Biden has been taking the fight to Trump recently, in an aggressive effort to present his predecessor as a threat to democracy.

It is a message that could fall on deaf ears, though, against a target who barely escaped with his life in an act many will see as akin to domestic terrorism.

The Biden campaign said it was "pausing all outbound communications and working to pull down our television ads as quickly as possible," multiple media outlets reported, in response to the assassination attempt.

Biden also postponed a trip to Texas.

On the Democratic upside, the attack on Trump solves a more immediate problem for Biden.

The president has been lambasted for his lackluster debate showing against Trump last month in Atlanta, when he struggled even to finish sentences, let alone articulate a clear case for four more years.

Suddenly, days of painful splash headlines for the Democrat have been relegated to the inside pages or swept away entirely, as the parties argue over whose political rhetoric is most to blame for fomenting violence.

Biden's opponents within his own party may also find it hard to mount a serious challenge to his candidacy without appearing nakedly opportunist at a time of national crisis.

In terms of ramifications for the vote itself, it seems obvious that Trump would receive some kind of boost from Americans angered by the shooting, and the anti-Trump rhetoric that many Republicans say contributed to it.

But the longer-term benefit might be more to do with juicing turnout than converting agnostics, according to veteran pollster Frank Luntz.

"In the end, voters will settle down and return to their candidate of choice. The people who move towards Trump out of sympathy will probably move back," he posted on X.

"But what happened in (Pennsylvania) will definitely impact the final vote, guaranteeing that every Trump voter will actually vote."

Luntz believes the participation gap could be worth up to two points nationwide, with a more accentuated boost in Pennsylvania, a crucial swing state that Biden needs to defend if he is to have any hope of prevailing in November.

"This doesn't guarantee that Trump flips Pennsylvania. But the long and winding road for Joe Biden just became even longer and windier," Luntz added.

Russia blames Biden admin for attack

REUTERS, *Moscow*

The Kremlin yesterday said it did not believe the US administration was responsible for Saturday's assassination attempt on US presidential candidate Donald Trump, but that it had created an atmosphere that provoked the attack.

Trump was shot in the ear during a rally in Pennsylvania, in an attack now being investigated as an assassination attempt. The attacker was shot dead and law enforcement officials said they had not yet identified a motive.

"We do not believe that the attempt to eliminate and assassinate Trump was organised by the current authorities," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"But the atmosphere around candidate Trump ... provoked what America is confronting today."

His comments echoed those of some of Trump's Republican allies, who immediately pinned the blame on Biden.

"After numerous attempts to remove candidate Trump from the political arena - using first legal tools, the courts, prosecutors, attempts to politically discredit and compromise the candidate - it was obvious to all outside observers that his life was in danger," Peskov said.

He added that there were no plans for Putin to call Trump now.

PREVIOUS SHOOTINGS OF US LEADERS

AFP, *Washington*

RONALD REAGAN (1981)

President Reagan was shot and seriously wounded as he left an event at the Hilton hotel in Washington. The attacker was John Hinckley Jr, who was granted unconditional release in 2022.

Reagan spent twelve days in the hospital. The incident boosted Reagan's popularity, as he displayed humor and resilience during his recovery.

GERALD FORD (1975)

President Ford was left unscathed in two separate assassination attempts by women in September 1975, both in California and within a span of just 17 days.

JOHN F. KENNEDY (1963)

Riding in his motorcade with his wife Jackie, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas by Lee Harvey Oswald.

The Warren Commission investigating the assassination concluded in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald, a former marine who had lived in the Soviet Union, had acted alone.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (1933)

As president-elect, FDR was the target of an assassination attempt in Miami, Florida. He was unharmed, but Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak was killed in the attack.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT (1912)

Like Trump, Teddy Roosevelt was running for the White House as a former president when he was shot in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY (1901)

President McKinley was shot and killed by anarchist Leon Czolgosz in Buffalo, New York.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1865)

Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and Confederate sympathizer, while watching a play called "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington.

Take steps in 24hrs or face tougher demo

FROM PAGE 1

keeping five percent quotas for members of underprivileged communities and those with special needs.

When the procession reached Gulistan intersection on the way back from Bangabhaban around 3:15pm, Dhaka University student Nahid Islam, an organiser of the movement, announced, "If the president doesn't convene an emergency session within 24 hours, we'll announce tougher programmes."

A 12-member delegation of the protesters submitted the memorandum to Major General Mohammad Adil Choudhury, military secretary of the president, said Joynal Abedin, press secretary of the president, reports BSS.

"Don't force us to call any programmes that cause public sufferings. Take an initiative within 24 hours," Nahid said, adding, "It's still unclear to us what the government's stance is. They've the authority to reform the quota system, which has been our consistent demand."

He said the boycott of classes and exams will continue until their demand is met.

About Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's comments that the government cannot take any initiative until the court settles the issue, Nahid said the government order that abolished the quotas for first- and second-class government jobs and its reinstatement later is a sub judice matter.

"But our demand is for a rational reform of the quotas for government jobs in all grades. Only the executive branch do that."

Students of public universities and colleges, along with jobseekers, have been demonstrating against the quota system for over two weeks, occupying key city intersections, highways and rail lines.

The protests began after the High Court on June 5 ruled that the 2018 government circular abolishing the quotas was illegal, effectively reinstating the quota system.

The government appealed against the decision, and the Supreme Court on July 10 issued a status quo on the HC order.

The government's 2018 circular abolished the quota system for first and second class jobs in the wake of massive quota reform protests.

Then too, the students asked for its reform, not abolition.

Before that, 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas.

Of them, 30 percent were for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren; 10 percent for women; 10 for people from underdeveloped districts; five for members of indigenous communities; and one for persons with disabilities.

At 11:00am yesterday, as part of their pre-announced programmes, several thousand students started the march from Dhaka University.

They broke through barricades near the High Court and then at Zero Point in Gulistan. They carried the national flag, placards and posters, and chanted different slogans in favour of their demand.

Police kept water cannons and riot vehicles ready when the protesters held a sit-in at Gulistan.

Students from DU; Jagannath University; Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University; seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University; along with private universities and National University took part in the procession.

Meanwhile, students in others districts, including Chattogram, Rajshahi, Cumilla, Narayanganj and Patuakhali also handed over memorandums to respective deputy commissioners for submitting to the president.

Late-night protests rock DU, other universities

FROM PAGE 1

fighters?" If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

For over two weeks, students of different universities and colleges have been demonstrating for reforms to the quota system in government jobs.

At DU, students marched from the halls and gathered in front of the Raju Bhaskarjo.

Students from Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall, Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, Shamsun Nahar Hall, and Rukayyah Hall were among the protesters.

They chanted "Chaite gelam odhikar, hoye gelam Razakar [Asked for rights and became a Razakar]".

Nahid Islam, one of the organisers of the quota protests, said they did not call for any gathering and that the students came out of their dorms spontaneously.

Meanwhile, Chhatra League activists, armed with sticks, gathered at several points around the campus, including Madhur Canteen, and Shahbagh and Sheraton intersections.

Some protesters were also seen carrying sticks.

Meanwhile, there was strong police presence in Shahbagh, Chankharpool, and Nilkhet areas as of filing this report at 3:15am today.

A student said activists of Chhatra League tried to stop them from joining the protests at many dorms.

Asif Mahmood, another coordinator of the anti-quota protests, alleged he was attacked in front of Bijoy Ekattor Hall when he was calling students to join in.

The agitating students started returning to their dorms around 1:45am, and most of them had left by 2:30am.

Students of Chittagong University also took to the streets on their campus, during which BCL leaders and activists reportedly attacked them and injured four to five people.

Later, BCL activists were seen gathering in the Zero Point area, chanting pro-ruling party slogans.

At Rajshahi University, several hundred students took out a procession from the campus and blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway a little after midnight.

At Jagannath University, hundreds of protesters were seen chanting slogans inside the campus around 11:40pm yesterday.

'Tk 400cr peon' is Jahangir

FROM PAGE 1

personal anecdote yesterday.

While talking about the alleged corruption of a former PSC driver, Abed Ali, who amassed crores of taka by selling question papers for government jobs, the premier informed that she has taken action against a former peon (office aide) of her residence who had amassed Tk 400 crore.

Although the PM, at a press conference at the Gono Bhaban, did not mention the name of her peon, The Daily Star learnt that the person is Jahangir Alam.

According to sources, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) recently froze the bank accounts of Jahangir and his wife, Kamrun Nahar, for 30 days due to suspicious transactions under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

The BFIU also asked banks and financial institutions to provide it with updated bank statements of the couple and the companies owned by them.

Jahangir, hailing from Chatkhil of Noakhali, worked as a personal aide to the prime minister during her first two tenures from January 2009 to December 2018.

Prior to that, Jahangir was the Awami League president's personal aide when she stayed at the Sudha Sadan.

Jahangir was dismissed at the beginning of the PM's third term in January 2019.

Despite losing his job, Jahangir continued to misuse his former position, prompting the Prime Minister's Office to issue a circular to media, warning about his illegal activities.

The circular, issued on December 6, 2023, also said the PMO has no connections with Jahangir and urged people to take assistance from law enforcement agencies if needed.

Sources revealed that Jahangir, known for his influence in local politics and charity work, even traveled by helicopter to visit his in-laws' in Maijdee Court.

He was denied the AL nomination for the Noakhali-1 constituency in both the 2018 and 2024 national elections.

At yesterday's press briefing, the prime minister questioned how he accumulated such wealth, referring to his extravagant helicopter trips. "How did he make so much money?"

Jahangir used his influence to get his brother elected chairman three times in Khilpara union of Chatkhil and helped one of his followers, Mohammadullah, get elected as Chatkhil municipality mayor, according to local sources.

SALT ON YOUR WALLS?

Protect with a smart solution

> **Efflorescence affects 70-80 percent of homes in Bangladesh. Salinity issues typically arise during or after the rainy season in our country. Once the problem arises, conventional methods of addressing efflorescence involve labour-intensive and temporary fixes. Typically, homeowners resort to breaking the affected plaster and reapplying a new layer.**

Maintaining building surfaces during the rainy season is a significant challenge in Bangladesh. The monsoon's relentless rains not only test the resilience of structures but also put their aesthetic appeal at risk. Efflorescence, a common issue in this region, exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult to preserve the beauty and durability of walls.

PRIYAM PAUL

Efflorescence occurs when water-soluble salts present in building materials, such as bricks and plaster, dissolve in water and migrate to the surface. As the water evaporates, it leaves behind white, powdery deposits, giving walls a neglected and aged look. More importantly, efflorescence indicates underlying moisture issues that can compromise the structural integrity of buildings over time.

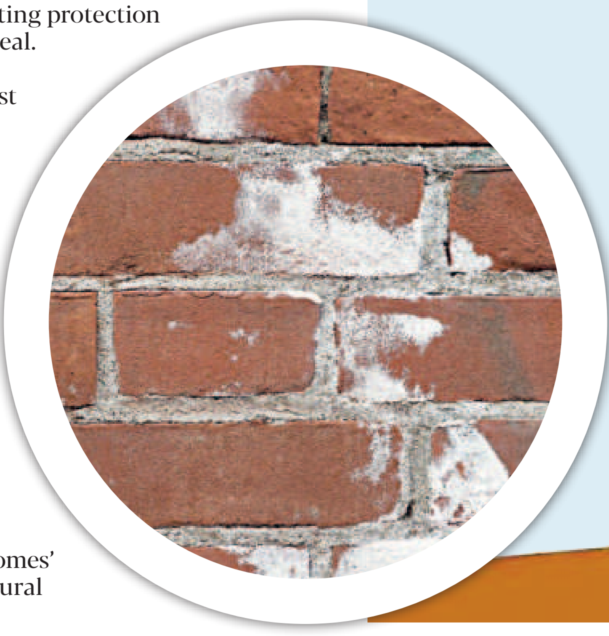
Efflorescence affects 70-80 percent of homes in Bangladesh. Salinity issues typically arise during or after the rainy season in our country.

Once the problem arises, conventional methods of addressing efflorescence involve labour-intensive and temporary fixes. Typically, homeowners resort to breaking the affected plaster and reapplying a new layer. This process is not only cumbersome but also expensive, requiring significant time and effort.

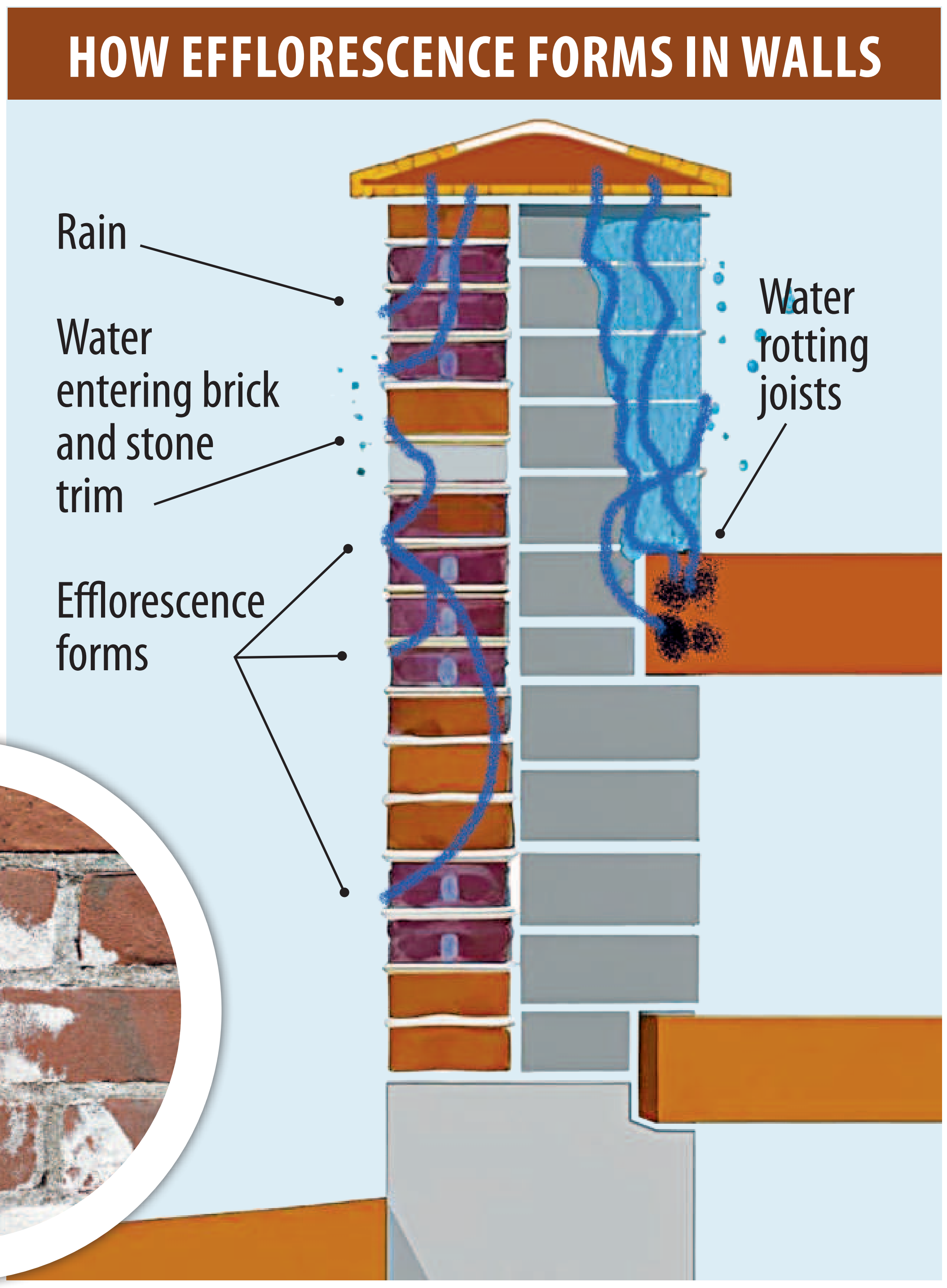
Repainting walls or covering efflorescence-affected areas with furniture or tiles are other common solutions. However, these approaches merely mask the problem without addressing the underlying moisture issues, leading to recurrent efflorescence and ongoing maintenance costs.

One unique solution provided by Asian Paints Bangladesh Limited is Hydroloc, which is designed to combat efflorescence without the need to break and replace existing plaster. This simple penetrative coating infiltrates the small pores in the plaster, neutralising the salinity inside the structure and forming a protective barrier that prevents salt build-up on the surface, ensuring long-lasting protection and aesthetic appeal.

In conclusion, homeowners invest effort and care in decorating their homes to reflect their unique style and maintain pristine living spaces. Efflorescence disrupts this by tarnishing wall paints and compromising aesthetic appeal. By choosing the right solution, homeowners can safeguard their homes' beauty and structural integrity.



HOW EFFLORESCENCE FORMS IN WALLS


Rain
Water entering brick and stone trim
Efflorescence forms
Water rotting joists

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EFFLORESCENCE
RUINING YOUR WALL?
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ANTI SALT PLASTER COATING
HASSLE FREE
SMART SOLUTION
3 YEARS
WARRANTY
EASY APPLICATION OVER PLASTER
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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE SCAN

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A waterlogged Dhaka is a policy failure

Sincere efforts by relevant authorities vital to address this issue

Monsoon brings new images and stories of sufferings every year, as did Friday's heavy rains in Dhaka. Two particular stories that seem to have stuck with many social media users involve the deaths of four individuals in electrocution and how several areas in DSCC remained submerged even 36 hours after the rain had stopped. For many, the first was a painful reminder of a similar tragedy in Mirpur last year. It too involved four people, including three of a family who died after being electrocuted on a waterlogged street. The second story comes with a side dish of irony, as it reminded many of a lofty promise by the DSCC mayor about ensuring swift drainage of rainwater—within 15 minutes no less. Promises, as one quipped, do die fast in Bangladesh.

But these are not just stories of sufferings but also of persistent policy failure. Unfortunately, those in charge of making sure these sufferings and disruptions do not occur can apparently say or do anything and get away without facing consequences. Over the past four years, more than Tk 730 crore has been spent by the two city corporations of Dhaka—Tk 370 crore by DNCC and Tk 360 crore by DSCC—to address this waterlogging problem. But despite the spectacular lack of effects of their initiatives, there has been no accountability whatsoever for the authorities and officials concerned.

The city corporations officially took over canal and drain management from Dhaka WASA on December 31, 2020. It was meant to streamline efforts to mitigate waterlogging. It did not happen, and as a result, the situation remains as dire as before. The city's drainage system continues to be weakened by poor design, weak maintenance, and ongoing road construction activities. Much of the drainage network remains clogged by waste, making it very hard for the rainwater to flow into rivers. Two city corporation officials, speaking anonymously, also acknowledged the failure of efforts to declutter the canals, canal-drains, and box culverts.

Dhaka currently has a network of 2,211 kilometres of drains, with 961km in the south and 1,250km in the north. True, ensuring the smooth function of such a big network is a big task, but there is no alternative to improving the capacities of the city corporations to properly maintain it. But even that will not be enough. Given the unregulated growth of Dhaka, experts have stressed the importance of a master plan to restore all the canals and waterbodies, and preventing their encroachment by unscrupulous entities. Addressing improper waste disposal is also critical. But most importantly, Dhaka's persistent waterlogging problem cannot be resolved without the sincerity of the relevant authorities.

Why are students still dying on roads?

RSF data paints alarming picture of road safety

Six years after the nationwide road safety movement that was sparked by the deaths of two high schoolers, nothing seems to have changed in terms of the safety of commuters, including students. According to the Road Safety Foundation (RSF), in the last five and a half years since 2019, some 34,478 people were killed in road crashes. Of them, 5,619 were students—making up 16.29 percent of all victims. While all such avoidable deaths are tragic, student fatalities are of particular concern considering their young age, their importance for the nation's future, and their starring role in the 2018 movement and subsequent acquiescence by the government. But as statistics show, they continue to be victimised as before.

Following the movement, we heard the authorities make numerous promises about improving road safety. Committees were formed, new laws and regulations were passed, and many crores of taka were spent in various projects. All of that evidently came to naught, with thousands perishing on roads every year. As per RSF data, 2,641 (47 percent) student victims were between the ages of 5-17, while 2,978 (53 percent) were between 18-25. Moreover, 1,534 (27.3 percent) of them were pedestrians. The fact that vehicle drivers were often reluctant to aid victims even after having hit them is another worrying sign.

The reasons RSF has identified as responsible for these incidents—including faulty roads and vehicles, lack of knowledge about safe road use, and reckless driving, including by student bikers—are well-known, which makes the glaring lack of results from government initiatives that much painful. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, over 600,000 vehicles are still operating without fitness certificates. One of the promises made after the 2018 movement was the removal of such vehicles from roads. How are so many of them still operating, then?

Clearly, the first thing we need at this stage is accountability for the failure of those behind such promises and initiatives. When a person dies in a road crash, it is not just the driver or vehicle owner who shares responsibility for it, but the system that protects or enables them is responsible, too. Over the years, we have seen how undue benefits and exemptions have been extended to transport associations. This needs to change. The authorities must go tough on those allowing unsafe vehicles and breaching other rules. They should also run awareness campaigns in educational institutions considering the vulnerability of students.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Twitter publicly launched

Co-founders Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone publicly launched their online microblogging service Twitter (currently known as X) on this day in 2006. Within the following decade, it gained more than 300 million users.

AUTOMATIC PRICING FORMULA FOR DIESEL

BPC can no longer cry wolf about losses

Dr Ijaz Hossain
is former dean of engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

IJAZ HOSSAIN

Until very recently, the prices of liquid fuels such as diesel, octane, petrol and kerosene were fixed administratively by the government. There were always misgivings among the general public that the government is arbitrarily fixing the prices. Even though there was a formula of sorts, it was never revealed to the public. What transpired was that the administratively set prices for a long period were in favour of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the state-run company that imports, distributes and markets oil. During this period, the international crude oil price was very low, so the BPC made a hefty profit. Consumers felt they were being deprived of the benefits of low oil prices.

For a long, long time, the pricing principle was that diesel, being a common person's fuel, must be subsidised, while petrol/octane, being a rich person's fuel, must be taxed. As a result, for a long time, diesel was much cheaper than petrol. The BPC used this cross-subsidy to manage its books. The problem started when compressed natural gas (CNG) was introduced and thousands of vehicles moved away from petrol. Moreover, the low price of diesel prompted consumers to opt for diesel vehicles. The cross-subsidy was no longer working for BPC as demand for petrol started to fall and the consumption of diesel started to increase at a rapid pace.

The situation became untenable for the BPC when oil prices skyrocketed as a result of the Ukraine-Russia war. The financial burden became so heavy that huge subsidies had to be provided by the government to balance BPC's books. The government finally decided that it would no longer subsidise diesel, so the diesel price was increased from Tk 80 to Tk 110. This had an immediate negative impact on economic activities. Consumer prices of foodstuff shot up, leading to an inflation rate of over nine percent that hasn't come down.

Soon after the massive diesel price hike, the global oil price started to fall, but the government did not bother to reduce the domestic oil price. When consumers started clamouring for a reduction in energy prices, it responded by a nominal reduction, which angered the public further.

VISUAL: **SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON**

The government understood it had to do something, and after much dilly-dallying, it introduced the so-called "automatic pricing formula" for petroleum products in March this year.

A comparison of diesel prices in six South Asian countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka—reveals that Bangladesh has the second cheapest diesel price (Bhutan has the cheapest). However, a nearly Tk 108/litre price is a break from the old philosophy that diesel, the most important liquid fuel for developing countries, needs to be subsidised to foster the country's economic growth. India introduced the market-based pricing mechanism a long time back. Diesel price in India is high because of two taxes imposed on it: first, the federal government's excise duty, and second, the state government's VAT.

Whether diesel should be taxed or subsidised is a contentious issue. Some economists believe that since it is imported, it should not be subsidised, while another group believes it should be subsidised especially for irrigation. After the initiation of automatic pricing, diesel has become a taxed product, the impact of which has already been felt with rising inflation. The argument often furthered by the energy ministry in support of keeping the diesel price high is to prevent smuggling to India. At one time, the price differential was so high that a substantial quantity of diesel got smuggled to India. With the new automatically set price, the differential is not high enough to encourage smuggling, given the associated risks and costs involved.

BPC has a tendency to show that it is incurring losses and often claims that it needs funds for development projects. The company has undertaken several such projects, of which the second refinery is the biggest. Among the significant projects undertaken by the BPC in the recent past are: i) a second refinery; ii) Bangladesh-India friendship pipeline to carry diesel; iii) Parbatipur-Siliguri transboundary pipeline; iv) a 238km pipeline from Chattogram to Godnile, Narayanganj with an extension to Fatullah (8.29km), and Cumilla to Chandpur (59.23km) for diesel; v) a 17km pipeline for jet fuel from Pitalganj to Kurmitola; vi) 110km onshore and offshore pipeline under single-point mooring (SPM) system for imported crude and refined petroleum oils from carrying vessels to ERL storage; and vii) a smart fuel distribution monitoring system (SFDMS) to modernise and streamline the fuel distribution process.

It is customary for the government to provide funding as loans, which the BPC has to pay back. Therefore, in the annual accounting, debt servicing will show up as an expense. These projects are justified with the reason that they would help the BPC manage its operations better and thus save money, or at least the costs would be fully recovered. There are, however, situations where these projects are inordinately delayed or face bottlenecks; the second refinery is a case in point. In such cases, the investment cost becomes a burden for the BPC.

Another oft-raised issue is the subsidy provided to the BPC when diesel was sold at a price lower than the international price. It is important to note that if a subsidy has been provided, there is no justification for that expense to be shown in the BPC's books as an outstanding amount.

Following the introduction of the new pricing formula for petroleum products, there is no way that the BPC can lose money, because it is a cost-plus formula. The imported costs of petroleum products as well as the cost of delivery borne by the distribution companies as well as the BPC's financing and operation costs are all fully recovered. On top of that, there is the BPC's margin, which should cover development costs.

A longer version of this article is available on our website.

How our RMG industry empowered women

RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin
is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Over the past few decades, Bangladesh has emerged as a global hub for the ready-made garment (RMG) industry. The sector has played a pivotal role in transforming the socioeconomic landscape of the country. At the heart of this transformation is the empowerment of women, who make up the vast majority of the RMG workforce. A report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reveals that, as of 2020, our RMG sector employs around 32 lakh women. This sector's growth has created numerous job opportunities for Bangladeshi women, contributing to their economic empowerment while also playing a vital role in the growth of the economy.

The RMG industry has provided lakhs of women, particularly from rural areas, with their first formal employment opportunities. This shift from informal, often agricultural work, to formal employment in garment factories has had profound implications for their economic status and independence.

Earning a regular income has allowed women RMG workers to contribute to their household finances, often making them primary breadwinners. This financial independence has given them decision-making power within their families and communities. These women now have the means to invest in their children's education, healthcare, and better living conditions, leading to a positive cycle of development and improved quality of life.

Employment in the garment sector has also facilitated skills development. Many women enter the industry with little or no formal education. Through on-the-job training and experience, they acquire valuable skills in sewing, quality control, and production management. Some factories also offer literacy programmes and vocational training, further improving their capabilities and future employment prospects.

Beyond economic benefits, the RMG industry has been instrumental in fostering social empowerment of women in Bangladesh. By stepping into the workforce, women have challenged traditional gender roles and norms that often confined them to domestic duties. The presence of women in factories has gradually shifted societal perceptions of women's roles as well. As more women work outside home, the acceptance of women as economic contributors has increased.

Working in the garment industry has also facilitated greater social mobility for women. Employment has enabled women to move from rural areas to urban centres, exposing them to diverse cultures and ideas. This exposure has broadened their horizons, increased their awareness of rights and opportunities, and inspired many to pursue further education and career advancements.

The RMG industry has provided lakhs of women, particularly from rural areas, with their first formal employment opportunities. This shift from informal, often agricultural work, to formal employment in garment factories has had profound implications for their economic status and independence.

However, this growth is not without challenges. Workers often face issues such as stagnated wages, long working hours, and challenging working conditions. These challenges have also sparked advocacy and efforts to improve labour rights and working conditions in the industry. Indeed, the rise of the garment sector has led to the growth of labour unions and advocacy groups fighting for workers' rights. These organisations have been instrumental in negotiating better wages, improving working conditions, and ensuring compliance with the labour law. Women workers have played a crucial role in these movements, often leading protests and strikes to demand fair treatment.

The Bangladesh government, along with international bodies and NGOs, has taken steps to address these challenges. The government had to take initiatives such as the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety to improve factory safety standards following the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013. Additionally, programmes aimed at promoting fair wages and gender equality in the workplace have been introduced, further supporting the rights of female garment workers.

Women's increased economic participation has contributed to community development. As women invest in their families and communities, there is a noticeable improvement in areas such as health, education, and infrastructure. Empowered women are more likely to participate in community decision-making processes, advocating for issues such as clean water, sanitation, and better schools.

I truly believe that Bangladesh's RMG industry is a testament to the transformative power of employment in empowering women and lifting them out of poverty. While challenges remain, the strides made in economic and social empowerment, skills development, and advocacy for rights are undeniable. As the industry continues to evolve, it holds the potential to further enhance the lives of crores of women, driving not only the economic growth, but also social progress and gender equality in Bangladesh.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
advertisement@thedailystar.net
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Subscription:
01711623906

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NGOs can help citizens learn to use the RTI Act

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SHAMSUL BARI *and* **RUHI NAZ**

Recently, there has been a perceptible increase in government advertisements promoting the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2009, particularly on television. This is welcome news, indicating government recognition of the citizens' role in advancing good governance. The RTI Act was adopted, as enunciated in its preamble, to empower citizens to monitor the work of public offices by seeking relevant information on how they do their jobs. However, this is a complex task, as citizens must first understand the law's myriad possibilities to use it effectively.

Regrettably, there is still a significant lack of awareness about the full potential of the RTI Act. Due to its extensive nature, promoting its use through simple awareness sessions and advertisements is proving to be a challenging, if not impossible, task. The slogans used in ads, such as "Information is power," "Know your rights, ask for information," and "Access to Information is a citizen's right," may not resonate with the people. They require assistance in understanding the reasons for seeking information in the first place. Most individuals believe that information is only necessary for specific purposes and should be sought as and when required. Few realise that the law's primary objective is not to serve citizens' personal information needs, but to promote the larger public interest. They also need help in identifying specific goals for using the law.

Despite the challenges, significant progress has been made over the last 14 years. Many citizens have learnt to use the law to check, for example, if the government's social safety net programmes for those in need are reaching them properly; if school scholarships are reaching the students in full and not being truncated by school authorities; if free medicine at public clinics for people in need is not being sold to others; if contractors are not cheating on construction materials, etc. This progress, largely due to the support of many NGOs, is a testament to the potential of citizen engagement in governance. To maintain this momentum, there is a need to expand the focus and areas of interventions. Government advertisements and efforts of the Information Commission alone cannot achieve this. Citizens need practical support to identify issues and process RTI applications, a role that only NGOs can effectively fulfil.

To help citizens identify issues of common interest likely to benefit from RTI interventions, we consulted citizen groups in different parts of the country engaged in utilising the RTI law. Based on that, we devised a list relating to key public interest sectors in governance. We cite them here as an indicative list to provide a base for further additions. Experience gained in using them will likely lead to higher engagement levels in more sensitive governance areas.

RTI interventions in the education sector

- Information on resource management of schools/colleges to ensure they are properly and justly utilised.
- Information relating to fair recruitment and promotion of teachers and staff.
- Information on the functioning of management committees and the mechanism to assure their accountability, e.g., teachers' appointments, management of school funds, etc.
- Information related to admission practices, levying examination fees, etc.

RTI interventions in the health sector

- Information relating to the management system of hospitals/clinics, e.g., availability of doctors at all levels.
- Attendance of medical staff and their maintenance of time schedules.
- Procurement of medicines and medical equipment.
- Information to check if healthcare services and resource distribution are available for all, including the disadvantaged.
- Roles and duties of hospital administration and their accountability.
- Cleanliness of hospital/clinic premises and toilets, how they are managed, and checking on the roster of duties.
- Information on the list of free services and free medicines and whether their availability is prominently displayed.

RTI interventions on local government

- Information on budgeting and expenditure on local development projects, justifications for undertaking such projects, their progress, and who is responsible for monitoring and ensuring people's participation.
- Information on how effective public service deliveries are and whether access to such public service is ensured for all citizens.
- Measures to ensure fair implementation and distribution of development projects and resources.
- Measures taken to ensure regular maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of roads, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure.
- Measures to ensure transparency and accountability in the tendering process.
- Measures to reduce corruption and mismanagement in the provision of public services, e.g., appointment of rightful candidates at public services is ensured, and unlawful transfers/promotions are avoided.

RTI intervention on public procurement

- Information on the bidding or tendering process, selection of suppliers, contract awarding processes, monitoring mechanisms for progress, and quality management.
- Information on measures undertaken to reduce corruption and prevent wastage of public funds, e.g., avoidance of repeated extension of project completion period.

RTI intervention in social welfare programmes

- Measures taken to ensure just and equitable selection processes of rightful beneficiaries of specific services, e.g., pensions for old age, widow benefits, etc.
- Information on how specific programmes, e.g., social safety net programmes, are implemented and coordinated at all levels. Measures to reduce corruption in the disbursement of funds under safety net programmes.

RTI objectives for infrastructure development

- Information on measures taken for efficient project implementations related to infrastructure development and to reduce corruption and avoid project delays.
- Information on who is specifically accountable for such infrastructure's maintenance, repair, reconstruction, and operation.

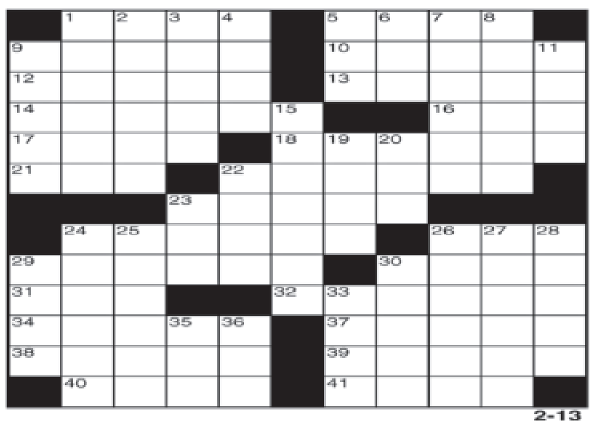
Clearly, this is a preliminary and indicative list of issues related to limited sectors. However, they provide a basis to move forward. It must be noted, however, that identifying issues and transforming them into RTI requests are two different things. Experience has shown that ordinary citizens need support in both areas, more particularly in the latter regard. A few NGOs in the country have provided them so far as a part of their mission, though finding funds for them is not easy. Hopefully, they can continue to do so until the law strikes deeper roots. In a country where the more knowledgeable and educated section of society has largely remained aloof from using the RTI law, it is not difficult to understand the fate of the RTI Act in Bangladesh without NGOs' role in keeping it moving.

VISUAL: STAR

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Members of the force
5 Archaeologist's find
9 Bean-bearing tree
10 Find darling
12 Houston player
13 Praline nut
14 Fetters
16 Child
17 Egg layers
18 Spends time at the mirror
21 Ram's mate
22 Is fearful of
23 Intended
24 Peaceful
26 Poker prize
29 Apply hastily
30 Dressed in
31 Cereal grain
32 Laundry problems
34 Impassioned
37 Detail map
38 "Tomorrow" musical
39 Suspicious
40 Halt
41 Whirl of water

DOWN
1 Kidney-shaped nut
2 Gas pump number
3 Louvre location
4 Before long
5 Keg need
6 Keats work
7 Ridiculed
8 Intelligence
9 Secret store
11 Finishes
15 Sports injuries
19 Tear
20 Have lunch
22 Retro style
23 Atlas page
24 Bison's home
25 Hidden
26 Self-assured
27 Stubborn
28 Irritable
29 Couch
30 Diminished
33 Floor piece
35 2016 Olympics host
36 Slangy agreement



SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

B	A	R	T	■	■	N	I	C	E	R
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S	I	N	E	W	■	M	E	N	D	S
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B	E	A	K	■	O	T	T	A	W	A
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G	R	A	C	E	■	S	T	O	V	E
E	A	S	E	S	■	■	A	P	E	S

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

New British Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivers his speech outside Number 10 Downing Street, following the results of the general election, in London, Britain on July 5, 2024. PHOTO: REUTERS

A litmus test for UK's Labour Party

Dr David Cheesman
is director of Equality in Diversity CIC, secretary at the United Nations Association Luton, board member of Squared Housing Association, and policy adviser on UK Financial Services Regulation.

Brig Gen (retd) Dr M Sakhawat Hussain
is former election commissioner of Bangladesh and senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), North South University (NSU). He can be reached at hhintlbd@yahoo.com.

DAVID CHEESMAN *and* **M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN**

The 2024 UK general election was a political earthquake. The Conservative Party was almost wiped out. In the previous election in 2019, the Conservatives won a comfortable majority, with 365 seats, well above the 326 needed to form a majority. Labour, with only 203 seats, was humiliated. It was predicted that the Conservatives would be in power for the next 10 years.

Instead, Conservatives threw their majority away. After losing his seat in 2024, Sir Brandon Lewis, a former Conservative justice secretary, accused his own party of giving the nation a "clown show" of self-indulgent infighting and posturing. There were three prime ministers in 2022 and one of them, Liz Truss, wrecked Britain's international reputation for financial competence. She broke another record by becoming, at seven weeks, Britain's shortest-serving prime minister. Voters, who frequently cited Liz Truss as their reason for wishing to remove the Conservatives, took their revenge in this election by voting her out.

The 2024 election was marked by a steely determination on the part of the electorate to eradicate the Conservatives. There was no sign of great enthusiasm for the alternatives. Knowing this, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer ran an exceptionally cautious campaign. The two main opposition parties, Labour and Lib Dem, took advantage of the national mood by concentrating their efforts on the seats they believed they could win. In the constituencies where either Labour or the Lib Dems polled second to the Conservatives in 2019, they did not actively campaign against each other. The results indicate ruthless tactical voting by the electorate, with the Lib Dem vote falling and the Labour vote rising in potential Labour gains and vice versa in potential Lib Dem gains. This confirms that many people voted for parties they did not support in order to kick out the Conservatives. This strategic campaigning won the Lib Dems 72 seats, their best result since 1923, and Labour 412 seats, their best since 1997.

The Conservatives were also fighting on the right. In 2019, the Reform UK Party entered into an election pact under which they would not stand against sitting Conservative MPs but Nigel Farage, the Reform leader, said at the beginning of the recent campaign that the Conservative Party was unfit to rule and his party should replace them. Reform's main manifesto commitment is for tougher immigration policies. The party only won five seats, but they received 15 percent of the national vote and many Labour and Lib Dem candidates won by sailing through the split in the Conservative/Reform vote. Some prominent Conservatives believe they should become closer to the Reform Party so that they can emulate the success of Marine Le Pen's National Rally Party in France. Others argue that British elections are always won from the centre and so appeasing Reform Party voters would take them to the fringes of the far right, making them unelectable.

Though they have a commanding majority in the House of Commons, Labour's electoral support is therefore wafer thin. Few people in the UK electorate have strong party loyalties today. The Labour leadership is acutely aware that, if the Conservatives can throw away a majority, so can they. At around 60 percent, turnout was the lowest for 20 years. This reflects disillusion rather than apathy. Though disgusted with the Conservatives, voters consistently say they have little faith in any politicians to make positive change. Such low expectations may work to Labour's advantage.

> **The single most important foreign policy issue for Britain is the war in Ukraine, though Gaza has taken a big space in public domain. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is widely regarded as an existential threat to UK sovereignty. On his first day as prime minister, Starmer spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.**

In his first speech as prime minister, Starmer set himself the task of managing expectations, stressing that change cannot come quickly. Instead, he stressed a change in tone. His government would bring back the ethos of public service and show that "politics can be a force for good." If that message comes through, the electorate may trust them enough to give them a second chance at the next election to complete their task. As a demonstration of his commitment to action, he held his first Cabinet meeting on Saturday, July 6, less than 24 hours after becoming prime minister.

The new government will focus on domestic policies, restoring the National Health Service, which the new Health Secretary has described as "broken," improving care services and education, increasing the number of affordable homes, and sorting out local government finance. Their main area of domestic vulnerability is probably immigration. The Reform Party outflanked the Conservatives on this issue. If Labour finds itself on the defensive about immigration at the next election, Reform might do the same for them.

The single most important foreign policy issue for Britain is the war in Ukraine, though Gaza has taken a big space in public domain. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is widely regarded as an existential threat to UK sovereignty. On his first day as prime minister, Starmer spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. A key factor in Labour's crushing defeat in 2019 was the contempt many traditional Labour voters had for Starmer's predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn. In doorstep interviews, they consistently said that they perceived him to be an unpatriotic pacifist who was not committed to NATO and could not be trusted to defend Britain.

Pacifism brings few votes and keeping Corbyn away from the military machine helped the Conservatives win many Labour seats in 2019. This line of attack failed in 2024. Starmer has restored Labour's credibility as a party of serious government by promising to increase defence spending, confirming unwavering support for NATO and taking a leading role in confronting Russia. Labour must maintain these commitments if it wishes to remain electable.

By contrast to Ukraine, Labour's position on Gaza is an electoral liability. Corbyn has been expelled from the Labour Party but he is back in Parliament as an independent MP, along with four other independents who stood with him on a platform of solidarity with Gaza. All constituencies with substantial Muslim populations saw a fall in support for Labour, in protest against Starmer's refusal to condemn Israel's aggression against Palestine. This cost Labour two of its most prominent shadow cabinet ministers who lost their seats to independents on the Gaza ticket. As a reminder that Palestine is a progressive issue not just a Muslim concern, Starmer's own majority was cut by 18 percent by a Jewish independent standing in support of Gaza. Andrew Feinstein is the South African son of a Holocaust survivor. He who was an MP for the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela. His wife is a Bangladeshi.

Given the fragility of Labour's vote, it cannot afford to alienate Muslims and progressives who have traditionally been among its strongest supporters. The Labour manifesto commits the party to recognising a Palestinian state "as a contribution to a renewed peace process," but without stating when this might happen. Given the domestic pressures, recognition of Palestine could be done quickly and at no cost if Labour is serious about rebuilding trust in politics.

We do not know what lasting changes the 2024 electoral earthquake will make to Britain's political landscape. That will depend on the performance of the Labour Party in office and the direction the Conservatives take when they select their new leader. The question remains: will the new prime minister contribute to the international politics of conflict or reconciliation?

UNCOMPROMISING VICKY ZAHED

Bangladeshi television projects were somewhat confined to genres, such as romance, comedy, and family drama. In this race, young director Vicky Zahed brought gothic, dark and parapsychological plots – unconventional themes that initially were a 'risk' for the tele-fiction industry.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

> **Last year, the director announced that he would be directing the web-series 'Adom', based on a real-life incident. "We have completed shooting the series and the post-production. Since the plot is sensitive, we are taking time before bringing it to the screens.**

SHARMIN JOYA

Beginning his television journey with ***The Life of Jalil*** in 2019, he went on to elevate the industry with hits like the ***Punorjonmo*** series, ***Chirokal Aaj***, ***Kaykobad***, and ***Irina,*** among many others. His directorial OTT projects -- ***Redrum***, ***The Silence,*** and ***Ami Ki Tumi*** -- are some of the remarkable ventures in his career. This Eid-ul-Azha, two of his directorial small-screen projects were released—***Tithidor*** and ***Hajot***. Tomorrow, his short film ***Ekti Khola Janala*** will be released on Binge. The director dropped by The Daily Star to share insights on his way of direction, and spilled the beans on his future projects.

"If I am asked about my direction philosophy, I'll say that I have always remained honest with myself," shared the director. "During the initial stage of my career, many suggested that I should make popular genres such as comedy, however, I have always wanted to make gothic, dark, and psychological works, for which I had to wait. My never-compromising nature brought me where I am today."

Vicky attempts to reach the audience's mind in a way that brings some discomfort, and lingers for a long time. This Eid-ul-Azha, ***Tithidor,*** featuring Mehazabien Chowdhury and written by Jahan Sultana, left many audiences in tears, and especially the female audience could find a connection with Tithi, portrayed by Mehazabien. With no commercial elements in it, no thrill, and telling a linear story, Vicky succeeded. However, for a male director, it is difficult to justify the portrayal of female psychology. How did Vicky cope with this? -- "This project is very close to my heart for two reasons. The character of Tithi reflects one of my close acquaintances, and I have seen closely how she suffers in her life and faces many criticisms, such as being single in her mid-30s. Due to her skin tone and texture, she was even bullied. Yet, she wins all the challenges and smiles amidst all her pain. Secondly, our executive producer Masudul Mahmud Ruhan ended his life last May, which was shocking for us. Through this story, I wanted to say that suicide is not the solution and there are people who, despite numerous struggles, give life a chance; because once it is gone, there is no coming back."

Vicky's experimental project ***Tikit***, was released on Chorki earlier this February. Unlike his other projects, this one didn't engage viewers that much, and the director shared the reason behind this. "I wanted to try black comedy for the first time, and it was more of satire, which didn't work for me; however, I have no regret since I got to experiment."

"We have not yet revealed the protagonist of ***Ekti Khola Janala***. He shares a resemblance to a notorious criminal, who is alleged to have eaten raw human liver after digging them up from graveyards. This is a short film, and also one of my favourite types of projects."

Vicky's landmark ***Punorjonmo*** series reached such heights that to date, wherever he goes, people ask about a spin-off possibility. For the readers, he spilled the beans: ***Hajot*** is the prequel of the ***Punorjonmo*** universe. Since Rafsan Haque's character has reached the mass audience, this time we plan to make it larger than life. Hence, for that, we need time to create something special."

Last year, the director announced that he would be directing the web-series ***Adom,*** based on a real-life incident. "We have completed shooting the series and the post-production. Since the plot is sensitive, we are taking time before bringing it to the screens."

Recently there has been a rumour that Afran Nisho and Vicky Zahed are set to collaborate for a silver screen project. To that, Vicky responded, "Nothing has been finalised, as of yet. We are in the initial planning stages. I do believe that the audience deserves our collaboration on the big screens, but only time will tell."

Dhallywood stars support Shakib Khan's new business venture

Pori Moni, Mim, Dighi, Puja Chery, and Keya Payel have solidified their positions in Dhallywood. They recently united at a press conference to support Shakib Khan's latest venture, Aponjon.

Held at a five-star hotel in Gulshan on last Saturday, the actresses stood cheerfully by Khan as he unveiled the Aponjon logo, representing his business initiative aimed at supporting small traders.

Actor Eamon, the executive director of Remark, also attended. With this venture, Shakib Khan is expanding his influence beyond the film industry, making significant strides in the corporate world to benefit small traders in the country.

'Padatik' to premiere simultaneously in Bangladesh and India

The much-anticipated Srijit Mukherji directorial film, ***Padatik***, based on the life of legendary Bengali filmmaker Mrinal Sen, is set to premier in India and Bangladesh on the same day.

Produced on the occasion of the centenary of the iconic filmmaker Mrinal Sen, the biopic features Chanchal Chowdhury in the lead role. He portrays Sen in both his youth and later years, while Korak Samanta plays the teenage Sen.

The film is set for an August 15 release in West Bengal and Bangladesh, coinciding with India's Independence Day.

Chanchal described the role as particularly challenging due to Sen's distinctive personality.

NEWS

The poor priced out of fresh veggies

FROM PAGE 12

Shewrapara, Ibrahimpur, Kochukhet, Farmgate, and Karwan Bazar kitchen markets echoed the same.

This has left the poor and the low-income group to make do with the low-quality, stale vegetables.

Low-quality vegetables often exhibit signs of spoilage such as wilting, discolouration and a lack of flavour, making them less desirable for consumption.

Thanks to the sudden spike in demand for stale vegetables, even their prices have increased by Tk 10-15 a kg in the capital's kitchen markets.

"How will we survive if stale vegetables become dear?" said Ramij Ali, a rickshaw driver who buys low-quality vegetables from the Farmgate kitchen market.

Food inflation stood at 10.42 percent in June, the third straight month to witness double-digit figures.

If the prices rise the way they have, Ramij might have to cut out vegetables from his diet. "Vegetables were the last option we had," he said.

Bablu Miah, who sells low-quality vegetables near the Ibrahimpur kitchen market, acknowledged that the prices have surged by Tk 10-15 a kg within one week.

He sells brinjal at Tk 80-100 per kg, whereas the fresh ones are selling at Tk 100-140 per kg.

The long beans at his stall cost Tk 80-100 per kg; the fresh ones are selling for Tk 100-120 in the kitchen markets.

Bablu is selling stale spiny bitter gourd for Tk 80-90 per kg, whereas the high-quality ones cost Tk 100-120 per kg.

He is charging Tk 70-80 a kg for the low-quality sponge gourd at his stall, whereas the fresh ones can be found at Tk 120-130 a kg.

The vegetable wholesalers though maintain they have no other option but to give in to the law of demand and supply.

"We used to bring vegetables from Manikganj but due to the continuous rains, all vegetable fields are submerged," said Mohammad Yeasin, a vegetable wholesaler at Karwan Bazar.

So the prices have gone up, he added.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the case of green chilli, whose price have surged by as much as Tk 100 a kg in a week. Green chillies are now selling for Tk 240-320 per kg.

"We only received 20 kg of green chillies from Rangpur three days ago -- we are now mostly dependent on imported green chillies," said Selim Hasan, a green chilli trader at Karwan Bazar.

30pc quota a right of FFs' descendants

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three months from the date of receipt of this order.

The court, however, said the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs, if necessary, and can fill the vacant posts from the general merit list if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

"We noticed that several writ petitions were filed to maintain the quota reserved for freedom fighters, by different freedom fighters and their children, and in all writ petitions, this hon'ble court clearly held that the 30 percent quota reserved for freedom fighters and their children should strictly be maintained.

" ... Since the Appellate Division has already settled the matter and affirmed the judgment and order of the High Court Division with the modification as quoted above, the same is binding upon us as well as all authorities of the state machinery as per articles 111 and 112 of our constitution and violation of the same is contemptuous," said the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat in the 27-page verdict.

On June 5 this year, the bench declared illegal the circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, which cancelled the quota system in government jobs, as it was issued without lawful authority.

The court delivered the verdict after a writ petition was filed by Ohidul Islam Tushar and six other children of freedom fighters challenging the legality of the circular.

The circular said that in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class-1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class-2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

Protesting the HC judgment on June 5, students staged demonstrations at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University. They took to the streets on July 1, demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 circular.

Students intensified their protests across the country since July 4 as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court did not stay the HC verdict following a government petition.

The protesters are carrying on demonstrations, demanding reforms of the quota system through the formulation of a law.

"Quotas reserved for the freedom fighters and affected women were introduced absolutely on clear recognition to the freedom fighters for their heroic contribution to the nation, which has also been extended to the children and grandchildren of the freedom fighters, a clear recognition that the freedom fighters have achieved.

"Thus, it cannot be said to be a mere policy of the government as the same is absolutely given as recognition to the freedom fighters for their heroic contribution for emancipation of Bangladesh, which cannot be and should not be taken so lightly equating with other citizens of the republic.

"The heroic contribution of the freedom fighters, and suffering and pain sustained by the freedom fighters and their offspring during the nine months of our Liberation War and after August 15, 1975, to till 1996 -- 21 years -- cannot be ignored, and the nation must have the highest regard to the freedom fighters, and anything is done derogatory or taken away the right and privilege should be treated as illegal and unconstitutional.

"Such constitutional and legal right of freedom fighters, their children, and grandchildren and others -- districts, women, physically challenged persons, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups -- are not being inconsistent with articles 28(4) and 29(3)(a) of the constitution, and the same cannot be taken away by the stroke of a pen as policy decision of the government," the HC said.

"The freedom fighters are pride of our nation. Thus, we are of the view that during the period of August 15, 1975, to 1996, the freedom fighters, their children and grandchildren have been suffering socially, economically and politically, which makes them one of the most backward sections of the citizen of this country," the HC judges observed.

They further said the respondents (the government) may take necessary steps by making rules or guidelines to ensure participation of backward sections of the citizen in the recruitment process of the government.

Alcaraz retains Wimbledon in style

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the men's and women's game.

But he had no answers in the Centre Court sunshine as the electric Alcaraz pounded him from the back of the court and treated the crowd to an array of his trademark drop shots.

Alcaraz seized the initiative in a first game of breathtaking quality lasting 14 minutes, taking advantage of his fifth break point.

The Spaniard settled quickly into his routine on serve and went up a double break when Djokovic double-faulted in the fifth game.

The shellshocked Serbian, playing in his 10th Wimbledon final, held serve to love to close the gap to 5-2 but dumped the ball into the net to hand the Spaniard the first set.

Alcaraz was immediately on the front foot in the second set, forcing a break in the first game and fending off pressure on his own serve to take a 2-0 lead.

A Djokovic backhand into the net in the seventh game handed Alcaraz another break point and a double fault put the defending champion 5-2 up and on the cusp of a two-set lead.

The Centre Court crowd, including Catherine, Princess of Wales, looked on in disbelief as their hopes for a titanic tussle evaporated.

Djokovic fended off another of clutch of break points early in the third set to stay alive and showed signs that he was finding his range.

But the Spaniard carved out three break points in the ninth game, arrowing a passing shot past his stranded opponent to move 5-4 ahead.

Alcaraz stepped up to serve for the championship but squandered three match points, missing a straightforward drive volley as Djokovic broke for the first time in the match.

But he recovered his composure quickly as the set went to a tie-break.

Djokovic went wide with a forehand to give Alcaraz a 5-3 lead and the Spaniard won the title with his fourth championship point.

The result means Djokovic has still not beaten a top-ten player this year and has yet to win a title.

The Serbian will now turn his attention to the Paris Olympics as he seeks to win gold for the first time.

Frauds, criminals get govt jobs due to question leaks

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Syed Abed Ali, who was arrested on July 8, mentioned the names of many others involved in the question-leak syndicate.

The HC bench said Abed Ali is not as powerful as those like (former IGP) Benazir Ahmed. "But those who are behind the leaks and sale of question papers are powerful.

"Does the investigating agency have the power to arrest them? If there is no power of arrest, then the order shall be made accordingly."

DAG Shaifuzzaman said that around five lakh candidates participate in public examinations every year.

Of them, around 20,000 pass and then around 2,000 give the viva. Therefore, what the petitioner is saying, regarding real merit not being recognised, is incorrect, he added.

The HC bench then said it is easier for candidates to pass if they have the question papers beforehand.

It adjourned the hearing for a week and asked the DAG to place a statement before it regarding the government's position on the issue at the next hearing.

BENAZIR ISSUE

During the hearing, the HC bench said Benazir Ahmed has left the country. "He must have had some channels. It was heard that he left through the airport. Was there no police officer there who knew Benazir? How did he get out of the country?"

DAG Shaifuzzaman, however, said there was confusion regarding his whereabouts.

Three ex-bank

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sentenced to five years; and Azmal, Jahidul, and Mosharof were sentenced to seven years in jail each, ACC Public Prosecutor (PP) Abul Kalam Azad told the Daily Star.

"The court also ordered the convicted to return the embezzled money."

According to the case statement, the convicted worked together to embezzle over Tk 2.59 crore from Rupali Bank's Mahasthangarh Branch using pay orders between April 6 and April 9, 2017.

After the discrepancy in the accounts was found, the bank conducted an internal investigation, which followed a case filed by Habibur Rahman, the bank's deputy general manager at the time.

Univ teachers

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themselves since July 1, and the introduction of a separate pay scale for public university teachers.

While holding a four-hour sit-in at the university premises, Sheikh Mashrik Hasan, general secretary of Jagannath University Teachers' Association, said, "We've decided to continue the movement until our demands are met. All teachers are in agreement. Although we held a meeting with a government representative on Saturday, we did not get any hopeful outcomes."

He said teachers will return to classrooms as soon as their demands are fulfilled.

Meanwhile, the Inter-University Officers' Federation, which had joined the work abstention over the pension scheme, also decided to continue their movement.

On Saturday, the teachers' representatives discussed their demands with AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader. After the meeting, the teachers said the meeting "went well".

Quader said there was confusion regarding the "Prottoy" pension scheme to be effective from July this year, but it would be in force from July next year.

Hamas 'pulling out'

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described the area as "a sandy 14-square-kilometre (5.4-square-mile) agricultural land, where people are left out in the open with little to no buildings or roads".

"The claim that people in Gaza can move to 'safe' or 'humanitarian' zones is false", said Lazzarini on social media site X.

Israel said it had targeted Deif, the head of the Al-Qassam Brigades, as well as Rafa Salama, a brigade commander, in a strike on Saturday.

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Lanka Premier League
Kandy vs Dambulla
Live from 3:30 pm
Colombo vs Galle
Live from 8:00 pm

100m is a challenge and an honour: Imranur

Imranur Rahman is set to become the first overseas-based sprinter and overall, the third overseas-based athlete to represent Bangladesh in the Olympics. The 31-year-old British-Bangladeshi, who won gold in the 60m event in the 2023 Asian Indoor Championships, spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman and shared his excitement for the July-August's Paris Games and how he is preparing for the event. Here are the excerpts:

The Daily Star (DS): Since Bangladesh's first appearance in the Olympics in 1984, track and field athletes have represented the country in every edition through wildcards. You will be continuing that tradition this year. How are you feeling after getting this opportunity?
Imranur Rahman (IR): It's an incredible honour to represent Bangladesh on the world's biggest stage. The wildcard entry is a recognition of the hard work and dedication I've put into my sport, and it's a great opportunity to showcase my abilities and make my country proud.

DS: How have you prepared to compete against the world's top sprinters?
IR: Preparation has been intense and focused. I've been working closely with my coach on refining my technique, improving my start and building my stamina. I've also been studying my competitors to understand their strengths and strategies, which will help me perform at my best.

DS: The 100m event is considered the most attractive and prestigious event in the Olympics. How do you view it?
IR: The 100m event is indeed prestigious and highly competitive. It's often the highlight of the track and field events because it showcases the fastest athletes in the world. Competing in this event is a tremendous challenge and an honour and I'm excited to see how I measure up against the best.

DS: So far, 17 track and field athletes have competed in the Olympics from Bangladesh and none of them have made it past the preliminary round. Are you hoping to become the first?
IR: It's a significant challenge, but I'm focused on giving my best performance. While breaking past records would be a tremendous achievement, my immediate goal is to perform to the best of my abilities and see where that takes me.

DS: You hold he national record in the 100m event, 10.11 seconds. Do you think it would be enough to qualify for the semifinals?
IR: My personal best of 10.11 seconds is competitive, but the Olympics feature the fastest sprinters in the world. While it's possible that my best could qualify me for the semifinals, it will depend on the competition on the day. I'll focus on executing my race plan and hope for the best.

DS: You have been steadily improving your timing in the 100m race. In 2021, you clocked 10.32 seconds, then 10.29 seconds in 2022 and 10.11 seconds in 2023. Are you hoping to surpass it in Paris?
IR: I've been working hard to continue improving my timings and I want to set a new personal best at the Olympics. However, every race is different and it's challenging to predict exactly how I will perform. I'll aim to deliver my best effort and hope it translates into a new record. But this is an if, something I cannot control.

DS: This year, you have only competed in the 60m event but you are going to compete in the 100m sprint in Paris. How difficult will it be for you to make that switch?
IR: Switching from the 60m to the 100m does present some challenges, particularly in terms of endurance and race strategy. However, I've been training specifically for the 100m, focusing on maintaining my speed over the longer distance. It will be a test, but I feel prepared.

DS: Apart from you, four other athletes from archery, shooting and swimming are going to take part from Bangladesh. What is your expectation from them in the Olympics?
IR: I have great respect for my fellow athletes and their dedication. Competing in the Olympics is a significant achievement in itself. I hope they perform to the best of their abilities and gain valuable experience. Each of us will strive to make Bangladesh proud in our respective disciplines.

Records that fell at Euro 2024

AFP, *Berlin*

As the Euro 2024 came to a close on Sunday night with the final between Spain and England, here is a look back at some of the records that fell over the last month at Euro 2024.

Lamine Yamal: Youngest player and scorer
Spain teenage sensation Lamine Yamal made history in his country's opening game against Croatia by becoming the youngest player ever to appear in a European Championship game at the age of 16 years and 338 days.

In doing so he beat the previous record held by beat Poland's Kacper Kozlowski, who was 17 years and 246 days old when he appeared at Euro 2020.

Yamal, of Barcelona, then claimed another piece of history by becoming the youngest player ever to score a goal at the Euros in Spain's 2-1 semi-final win against France, at the age of 16 years and 362 days.

Pepe the oldest player
At the other end of the scale, Portugal defender Pepe claimed the record for the oldest player ever at a European Championship when he took to the field in his team's opening game against the Czech Republic at the age of 41.

He was 41 years and 130 days old by the time he appeared in the quarter-final against France -- an age at which almost every footballer has long since retired.

The Porto centre-back passed the previous mark set by Hungary goalkeeper Gabor Kiraly, who was 40 years and 86 days old when he played against Belgium at Euro 2016.

Modric the oldest scorer
Luka Modric became the tournament's oldest goalscorer when he netted in Croatia's final game, a 1-1 draw against Italy.

Modric was 38 years and 289 days old, breaking the record set by Austrian Ivica Vastic in 2008 by 32 days.

Croatia were eliminated in the group stage, meaning that game is set to also go down as Modric's last ever at the tournament.

Ronaldo's sixth Euros
At 39, Cristiano Ronaldo had been hoping to claim the oldest goalscorer record for himself, but he failed to add to his all-time tournament best tally of 14 goals on Portugal's run to the quarter-finals, notably missing a penalty against Slovenia in the last 16.

Ronaldo did, however, claim other records. Having first appeared at the tournament in 2004, Ronaldo competed at an unprecedented sixth European Championship in Germany, and has now made a total of 30 appearances, at least seven more than any other player.

The fastest goal for Bajrami
Albania's Nedim Bajrami netted the fastest ever goal at a European Championship when he put his side ahead after just 23 seconds in their opening game against Italy.

Bajrami pulverised the previous Euros record for the quickest goal of 67 seconds by Dmitri Kirichenko of Russia against Greece in 2004.

However, his team went on to lose the game 2-1.

Merih Demiral of Turkey later scored the second-fastest goal by finding the net against Austria in the round of 16 after just 57 seconds.

Nadal to face Borg!

AFP, *Paris*

In the world of fantasy tennis, pitting Nadal against Borg may seem everyday but in the real world it has never happened before.

Sadly, although obviously given the age difference, fans at the ATP event in Bastad next week will not be watching the two kings of Roland Garros - Rafael Nadal and Bjorn Borg with 20 French Open titles between them.

Instead Nadal will be up against Leo Borg, the 21-year-old son of the long-retired former world number one, now 68.

"It was crazy because we were looking when they did the draw and my name just popped up against Rafa," said Borg, currently ranked 467 in the world. "I'm feeling very excited and it's going to be a great match."

According to his ATP biography, Borg has never watched a single point of his father's storied career which included six French Open titles and five successive Wimbledons.

Instead he credits Nadal as one of the reasons he turned to tennis as a child, making Friday's practice session together all the more special.

"It was a very good practice and of course he's been my idol since I was very young, so it's going to be a very special moment in my career," Borg said.

"But I'm looking forward to that and I'm feeling really, really excited."

Borg's only ATP Tour match win last year was in Bastad against Elias Ymer.

Bielsa far from satisfied

REUTERS

Uruguay needed a late equaliser and penalties to beat Canada in Saturday's Copa America third-place playoff match, with coach Marcelo Bielsa saying the South American side had performed well below their level.

Uruguay, ranked 14th in the world, were on the verge of a shock defeat to the 48th-ranked Copa America debutants before Luis Suarez scored a stoppage-time goal to force a penalty shootout, which Bielsa's side won 4-3.

"It wasn't a great performance. The draw, at best, was barely deserved. I think that the opponent head coach's decision to prioritize physical aptitude instead of usual starters was more successful," Bielsa told reporters.

"I went with the usual starters in spite of them being weary. There were ups and downs. The chances created by both teams were even, but in all truth, we didn't play well.

"Regarding this third place, I do think Uruguay is one of the three best teams of this tournament. Even if this tournament came after long seasons and the tiredness affects players, I thought that given our roster, we could have played a bit better than what we showed."

Bielsa's counterpart Jesse Marsch said he was proud of the progress the team had made in a short period, adding: "The players are disappointed in the way that we gave the match away.

'We have the best spin attack in the world'

Bangladesh's women's side are slated to play the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, scheduled to begin on July 19, with an eye on the upcoming T20 World Cup at home in October. The Tigresses, however, have a lot to work out in the meantime as they suffered a slump in recent times, with batting being their main concern in series losses to Australia and India at home. Head coach ***Hashan Tillakaratne*** talked about how the Tigresses can recover from this slump, and use their spin advantage and their target in the Asia Cup during an interview with ***The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi.*** The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you see the side going into the Asia Cup and how will the tournament help for the upcoming T20 World Cup at home?
Hashan Tillakaratne (HT): It's a good sign to have youth and experience on your side given that the T20 World Cup is around the corner. This [Asia Cup] is a very good tournament for assessing ourselves and if we play well, we have every chance of winning the Asia Cup.

DS: There were batting mishaps in the last few series. Did you address the issues with the batters?
HT: Quite a few players are pushing for their places in the side. Obviously, everyone wants to play in the World Cup and there is a bit of fear of failure. That's one of the reasons that often they look like they are negative and fearful of playing their shots. We have spoken about it -- about how they can free their minds. We haven't seen their true talents yet but we want them to go out there and express themselves.

DS: Do you feel the team is sufficiently equipped in the spin department, especially with three leg-spinners in the ranks?
HT: I feel we have the best spin bowling attack in the world right now. We have three to four leg-spinners and in women's cricket, batters are usually vulnerable to leg-spin. We are very fortunate to have so many. Our spin bowling coach Dinu [Dinuka Hettiarachchi] has done a lot for them. Subcontinent surfaces are slow and low and no matter how much effort you put in, they always tend to help spinners. Our spinners are genuine turners of the ball and the condition would support them.

DS: The spin dependency sort of backfired in the last two series against Australia and India. What's your take on it?
HT: I don't think the plans backfired. We had our chances in both the series. We missed chances badly because we fielded poorly against both India and Australia. The bowlers were spot on and they created opportunities.

DS: Has fielding improved?
HT: Fielding has improved and fitness levels have gone up. Right now, I will give them seven out of 10 in terms of fitness.

DS: Bangladesh failed to win a game in the last four T20 World Cups. Do you feel it's Bangladesh's best opportunity this time?
HT: Yes, right now we are in a very good shape and I have a lot of faith in them. We are in good shape to progress to the last four. In the last three to four global tournaments, the players were not ready as they were still learning the trade and developing. They have played a lot of cricket since then and we have won games outside the country (The Tigresses have won an ODI and a T20I against South Africa in December last year). Victories gave them massive experience and they have started to believe that they are capable of beating any side in the world.

DS: Does the burden of expectations sometimes weigh high on skipper Nigar Sultana Joty?
HT: Yes, lots of pressure on her since she is one of our top batters. Sometimes she has to take the side out of trouble and consolidate. So there are lots of things she has to do along with keeping wickets and managing expectations. She is very capable and understands her game well. We are fortunate to have someone like her.

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates after retaining his Wimbledon crown by defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) in the men's singles final at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London, Britain yesterday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

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Alcaraz retains Wimbledon in style

AFP, *London*

Carlos Alcaraz overpowered seven-time champion Novak Djokovic in straight sets to retain his Wimbledon title on Sunday in a brutal statement that the new era of men's tennis has arrived.

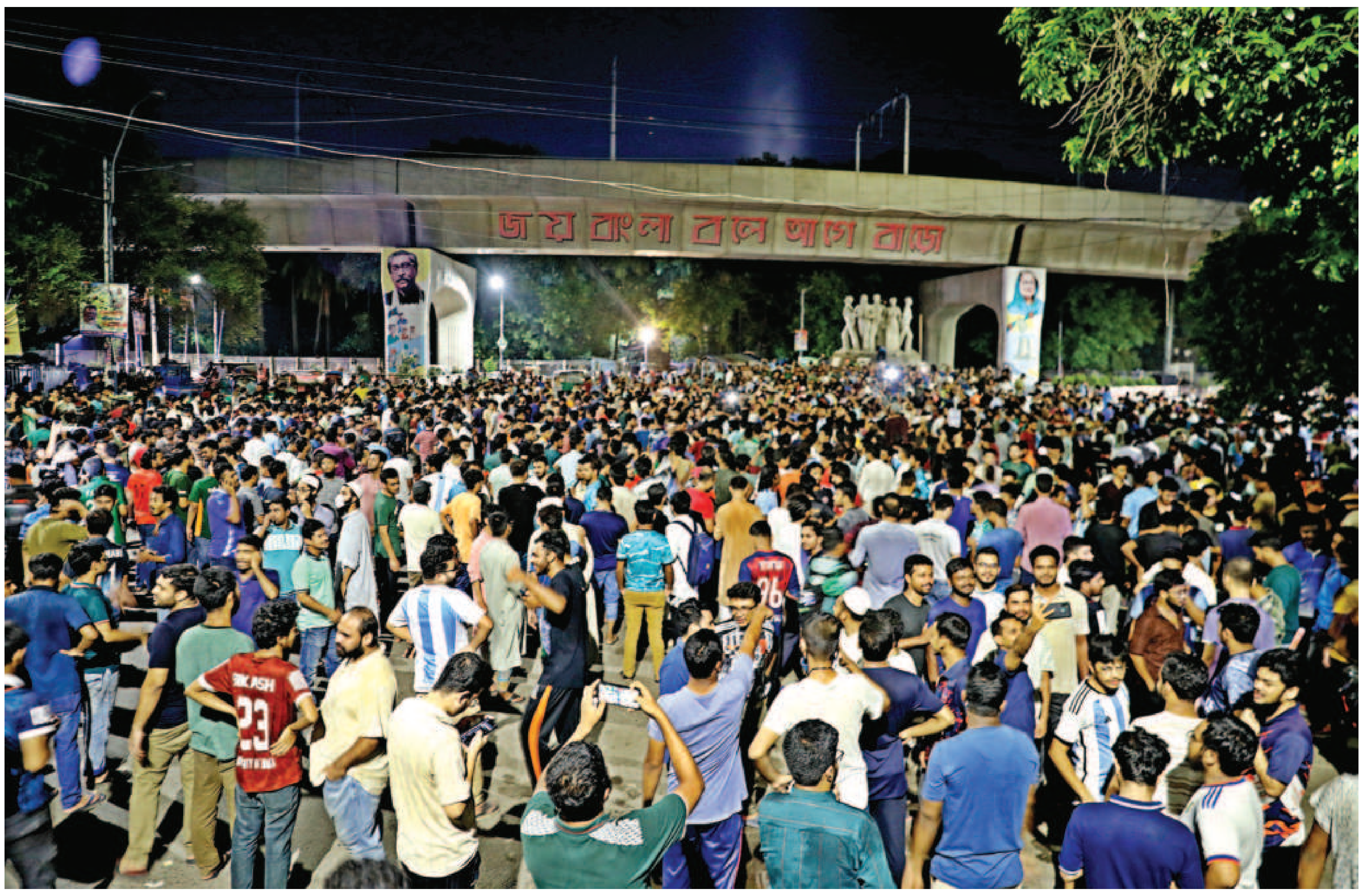
The Spanish third seed produced a performance combining awesome power with delicate touch to win 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4), collecting the fourth Grand Slam of his young career.

Alcaraz equals the Open Era record for most Grand Slams won at the age 21 or under, joining Boris Becker, Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander.

And he is just the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back to back.

Djokovic, 37, who had knee surgery just weeks ago, was aiming to win a 25th Grand Slam -- which would have been a record in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Students of Dhaka University dormitories came out in droves around 11:00pm yesterday to protest against a comment Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made on quotas at a press conference last afternoon. The photo was taken around 1:00am.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

30pc quota a right of FFs' descendants

Says HC in full text of its judgment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court, in the full text of its judgment, has justified the provision for keeping 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children in government jobs in the light of two previous verdicts -- one delivered by this court in 2012 and another by the apex court in 2015.

The court also observed that this privilege has become legal and a vested right of freedom fighters, their children, and grandchildren as sufferings over 21 years (August 15, 1975, to 1996) made them "most backward section of citizens".

The HC also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for "districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups and others, if any," and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible preferably within

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Frauds, criminals get govt jobs due to question leaks

HC expresses concerns at hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday expressed concerns over the incidents of question paper leaks, saying frauds and criminals have managed government jobs, like in the Bangladesh Civil Service, thanks to this.

"Many have taken advantage of the question paper leaks, which cannot be accepted," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Quader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said during the hearing on a writ petition.

"It is very painful for us as it deprives meritorious candidates of jobs."

Murad Bhuiyan, executive director of Sarda Society, a human rights organisation, recently filed the petition with the HC, seeking its order to conduct a judicial probe into question leaks.

In the petition, he said the maximum punishment for those involved should be life imprisonment.

"A judicial committee should be formed to find those who became cadres between the 24th and 45th BCS exams with the help of leaked questions by people like Syed Abed Ali [an arrested former driver of a Public Service Commission chairman]. The committee should be asked to publish the list."

Terming the repeated BCS questions leaks concerning, the HC asked why the PSC is unable to stop it.

Saying it is a matter of concern that BCS exam questions are repeatedly leaked, the HC bench asked why those who are in the Public Service Commission are unable to stop it. "If they can't [stop it], they are incompetent."

Deputy Attorney General SK Shaifuzzaman told the HC that a case has been filed over the BCS question leak incidents, and police are investigating it.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

PENSION SCHEME ROW

Univ teachers to press on with work abstention

Says meeting with govt representatives ended in 'stalemate'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers continued their work abstention yesterday demanding the reinstatement of their previous pension scheme.

The decision was taken at a virtual meeting of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA).

This meeting was called to discuss Saturday's conversations between teachers and government representatives, which they termed as "fruitless".

"As our demands have not been met, we've decided to continue with our movement," Professor Akhtarul Islam, the president of the association, told The Daily Star.

This means the suspension of classes, exams, and other academic activities, which have been in effect for around two weeks, will continue.

Yesterday, the teachers at most of the 35 public universities staged sit-in demonstrations on their campuses, demanding the cancellation of the new "Prottoy" pension scheme and the reinstatement of their previous scheme.

They have also been demanding a super grade for

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ATTACK ON MILITARY CHIEF

Hamas 'pulling out' of Gaza truce talks

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

A Hamas official yesterday said the group is pulling out of Gaza truce talks, following an Israeli strike that targeted the Hamas's commander Mohammed Deif.

"Commander Mohammed Deif is well and directly overseeing" the operations of the Hamas military wing, the official told AFP. Israel staged a huge bombing raid on a camp for displaced people in southern Gaza on Saturday that it said was an attempt to kill Deif.

Another senior official from the Iran-backed Islamist group, which has been fighting a nine-month-long war with Israel in the Gaza Strip, said Hamas was withdrawing from ceasefire talks because of Israeli "massacres" and the country's attitude in negotiations.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said at least 92 people had been killed, more than half of them women and children, and 300 wounded in a strike on the Al-Mawasi camp.

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's Qatar-based political chief, told international mediators of the "decision to halt negotiations due to the occupation's (Israel) lack of seriousness, continued policy of procrastination and obstruction, and the ongoing massacres against unarmed civilians", the official said.

Talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt, with US support, have for months tried but failed to bring a halt to the war in the Gaza Strip.

- Top Hamas official says military chief Deif 'fine' after Israeli strike
- At least 92 were killed in Saturday's strike in an Israeli-designated 'safe zone'
- Death toll in Gaza reaches 38,584

Al-Mawasi, where the health ministry said dozens had been killed, had in May been declared a safe humanitarian zone by the Israeli military and civilians ordered to evacuate to it. However, there have been multiple deadly incidents there blamed on Israeli strikes.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

RUPALI BANK

Three ex-bank officials jailed over Tk 2.59cr embezzlement

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bogura

Three former Rupali Bank officials, along with three of its clients, were sent to jail yesterday over the embezzlement of Tk 2.59 crore from the bank's Mahasthangarh Branch in Bogura seven years ago.

They are former branch manager Jobayenur Rahman, former senior officers Ishrat Jahan and Mahatab Uddin, and bank clients Azmal Hossain, Jahidul Islam, and Mosharof Hossain.

The accused were present in court when they were given different jail terms in the verdict pronounced by Judge Md Shahidullah of the Special Judge Court of Bogura in the afternoon.

Jobayenur was sentenced to 27 years; Ishrat and Mahatab were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain substitute Mikel Oyarzabal celebrates after sliding in for an 86th-minute winner to earn his team a 2-1 Euro 2024 final victory over England on Sunday and a record fourth European crown. England had levelled through a Cole Palmer strike after Nico Williams put Spain ahead in the second half but Luis de La Fuente's side made a stunning late comeback to win all seven games they played in the tournament.

The poor priced out of fresh veggies

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **MD ABBAS**

The prices of almost all vegetables have crossed the Tk 100-mark, piling pressure on the poor and the low-income segment already battling with a cost of living crisis for the past two years.

VEGETABLE PRICE (per kg)	Yesterday	Last week
Bitter gourd	Tk 120-140	Tk 80-100
Brinjal	Tk 100-140	Tk 80-100
Long beans	100-120	Tk 80-100
Spiny bitter gourd	Tk 100-120	Tk 80-90
Bottle gourd	Tk 100-120	Tk 60-80

From brinjal to bitter guard, long beans to spiny bitter gourd, from sponge gourd to bottle gourd, all now cost upwards of Tk 100 a kg after prices shot up by Tk 20-30 in a week because of the monsoon.

Nasir Uddin, a fresh vegetable trader at Ibrahimpur kitchen market, said his sales have decreased by one-third due to the price hike.

"I am known for selling fresh vegetables. For the last few days, due to the price hike, many of my customers have been unable to buy fresh vegetables," he said.

Many other vegetable traders in the capital's

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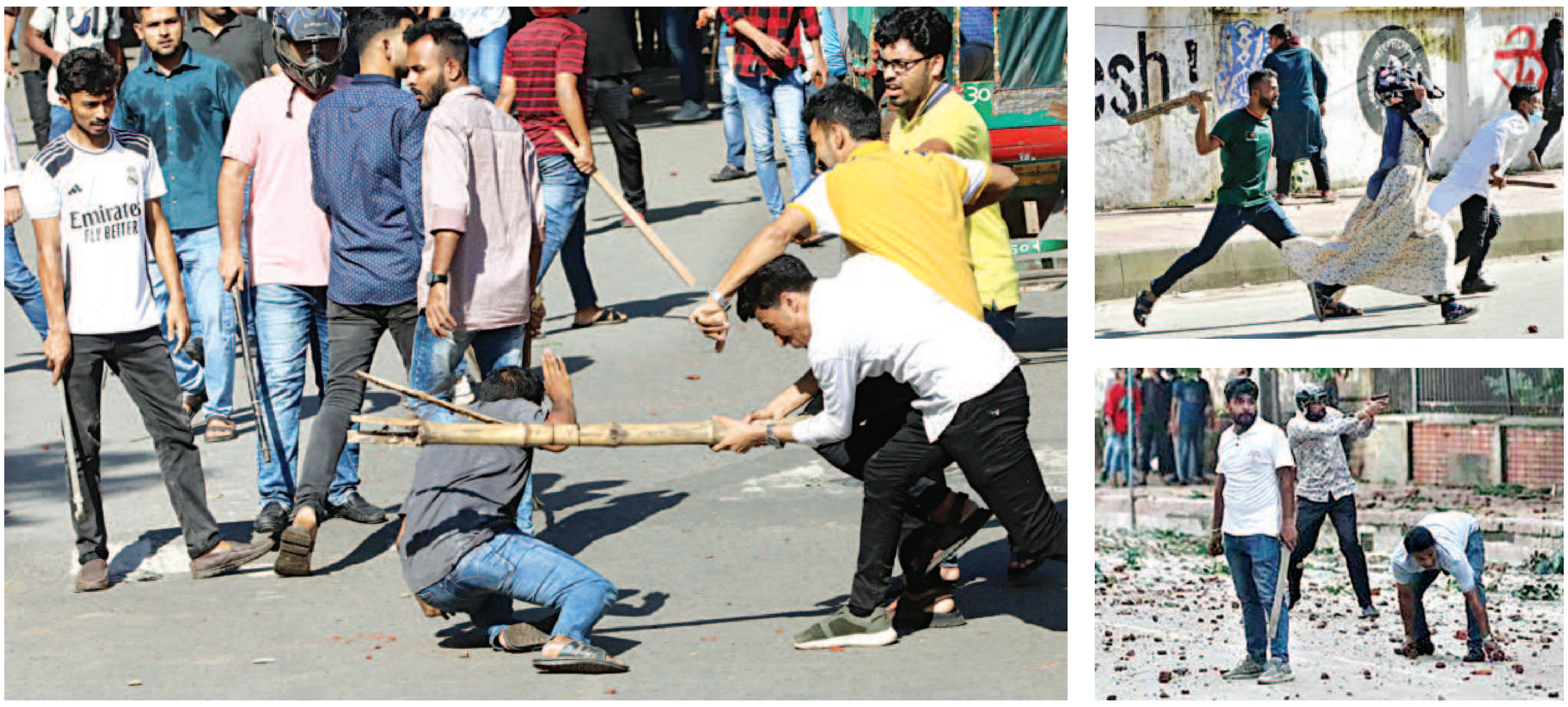


A student protester being beaten allegedly by BCL activists at Dhaka University, as attacks were launched on quota reform demonstrators yesterday afternoon, *left.* A man about to hit a female student at DU's Doyel Chattar, *top right.* A man points a gun at the protesters in Shahidullah Hall area.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS; PROTHOM ALO**

TIMELINE

DECEMBER 30, 2010
The government allocates 30% quotas in govt jobs for grandchildren of freedom fighters.

JULY 13, 2013
DU campus turns into battlefield; Cops, BCL activists attack students protesting quotas in govt jobs.

JANUARY 31, 2018
A writ petition is filed with High Court seeking re-evaluation of quota system in govt jobs.

MARCH 5, 2018
HC rejects the writ.

APRIL 8, 2018
Protesters block the Shahbagh intersection for several hours; Cops, BCL activists swoop on protesters, chase them away.

APRIL 27, 2018
AL representatives meet with the protesters, assure them of immediate decision on quota issue.

SEE PAGE 2

BCL unleashes fury on quota protesters

Over 300, mostly demonstrators, hurt at DU during 5-hr-long pitched battles; female students, BCL men among the injured; agitators to hold nationwide protest rallies today

STAR REPORT

Chhatra League activists yesterday attacked quota protesters on Dhaka University campus, triggering fierce clashes that left at least 300 people injured -- mostly protesters including female students and also some BCL men.

Clad in helmet and armed with sticks and iron rods, hundreds of Chhatra League activists, many from outside DU, beat up the demonstrators across the campus.

They were also seen whacking female protesters with sticks.

Bruised and bloodied, students ran for their lives.

At one point, the demonstrators retaliated by throwing brick chunks and beating up some Chhatra League men.

For about five hours, mayhem reigned supreme. After the pitched battles, the streets there were littered with thousands of brick chunks.

A group of Chhatra League activists even swooped on demonstrators at the emergency department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the evening, causing panic among doctors, nurses, patients, and their attendants. Many ran for cover.

The attack disrupted medical services at the country's prime medical facility.

"We deployed additional nurses and doctors to deal with the situation. Injured from both groups are getting treatment here," said DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman.

Around 297 received treatment at the DMCH and six at the Sarkari Karmachari Hospital, said inspector Md Bachchu Mia, in charge of the DMCH police outpost.

Nahid Islam, one of the organisers of the quota protests, said, "We don't know the exact figure. But our estimate is that over 200 fellow demonstrators were injured in the attacks and many are in serious condition."

Students of at least four other universities -- Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University – also came under Chhatra League attack yesterday. At least 60 students were injured there.

MAYHEM AT DU

Tension was running high on the campus since late Sunday night when hundreds of students came out of their dormitories

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

> **"They are afraid of the fact that we can also speak about our rights. They want to gag our voice at any cost."**
>
> A female student of DU

> **"They [demonstrators] brought students from different halls by threatening them. They carried out attacks on students with locally made weapons."**
>
> **SADDAM HUSSAIN** Chhatra League President

STUDENTS BLEED AS VIOLENCE SPREADS THRU CAMPUSES -- PAGE 3

Panic at DMCH emergency as 'BCL men' swoop on demonstrators

MUNTAKIM SAAD *and* **SAJJAD HOSSAIN**

Patients and attendants of Dhaka Medical College Hospital were gripped by fear as alleged Chhatra League activists launched two consecutive attacks on the student protesters there last evening.

Emergency services were disrupted due to the attacks.

Over 50 alleged BCL members, armed with sticks and wearing helmets, barged into the emergency department around 6:50pm and again at 7:30pm. They brutally beat the students, who were participating in the quota reform movement.

Witnesses said the attackers forced their way in with weapons after ignoring Ansar members' requests.

The main gate and other hospital buildings were closed during the attacks, adding to the chaos.

Patients who had come for emergency treatment were in a state of panic since 4:00pm, as injured student protesters, who were assaulted by BCL activists in Dhaka University, were being brought in.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

It's a shame that they call themselves Razakars: PM

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said it was a matter of great regret that protesters seeking quota reforms chanted slogans like "Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar."

"They don't know how the Pakistan occupation forces and Razakar Bahini tortured people in the country; they didn't see the inhuman torture and bodies lying on roads. So, they don't feel ashamed to call themselves Razakars," she said while addressing the signing ceremony of Annual Performance

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

QUOTA IN GOVT JOBS

HC verdict to be inoperative till appeal is filed with SC

The apex court says in full text of its July 10 order

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, in the full text of its July 10 order, has said the High Court judgement, which effectively reinstated quotas in government jobs, must remain inoperative until the leave-to-appeal petitions filed with this court are disposed of.

"We have heard the learned counsels from both parties in both the cases and perused the civil miscellaneous petitions [stay petitions] as well as other materials on record. Upon hearing, the parties are directed to maintain the status quo regarding the subject matter of the case till the filing of civil petitions for leave to appeal. The impugned judgement of the High Court shall remain inoperative till that period."

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan made the observation in the two-page full text of the order released recently.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

OPINION

Why must brute force always be the response to student protests?

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

At first it seemed the government was going to show the restraint expected from the state towards students protesting a quota system that needs a logical reform. Sadly, it did not take long for the government to take an unnecessarily hardline in an attempt to squash the spirit of these young people. What could have been resolved through a discussion as expected from any government, ended up being yet another violent suppression of the voices of students.

In an all too familiar sequence, when students on campuses throughout the country, spontaneously started protesting comments of the prime minister regarding their movement at a press conference on Sunday, members of the Chhatra League were ready and waiting to attack.

What followed was not something too surprising. Yet one cannot fail to be shocked at the brutality with which students, even women students, were beaten with rods and sticks. The images are hard to forget – students beaten unconscious, a student looking dazed as blood poured down his face, a capture of a man raising a stick just before it would hit two young women, a female student, unconscious, being taken to the hospital, young men with sticks and rods chasing students before hitting them mercilessly – these are not scenes from a battlefield but from campuses of universities. University campuses that resemble riot scenes. Student protesters who had gone to the emergency centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital with their wounded fellow protesters were beaten up inside the hospital. Is this why young people go to universities – to either get beaten up or to be part of groups that do the beating?

Unfortunately, that is how students are divided on our campuses.

So why the show of restraint in the beginning? It was clear that at first, the police and the Chhatra League were given

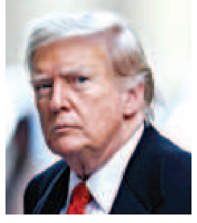
SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Trump picks JD Vance for running mate

Officially becomes the Republican presidential nominee

AGENCIES

Donald Trump yesterday selected US Senator JD Vance to serve as his vice presidential running mate, as the Republican Party officially nominated the former president as its 2024 presidential nominee at the start of the party's national convention in Milwaukee.



"As Vice President, J.D. will continue to fight for our Constitution, stand with our Troops, and will do everything he can to help me MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The four-day convention opened in downtown Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum two days after Trump survived an assassination attempt in Pennsylvania, and hours after he secured a major legal victory when a federal judge dismissed one of Trump's criminal prosecutions.

Trump is due to formally accept the party's nomination in a primetime address on Thursday and will

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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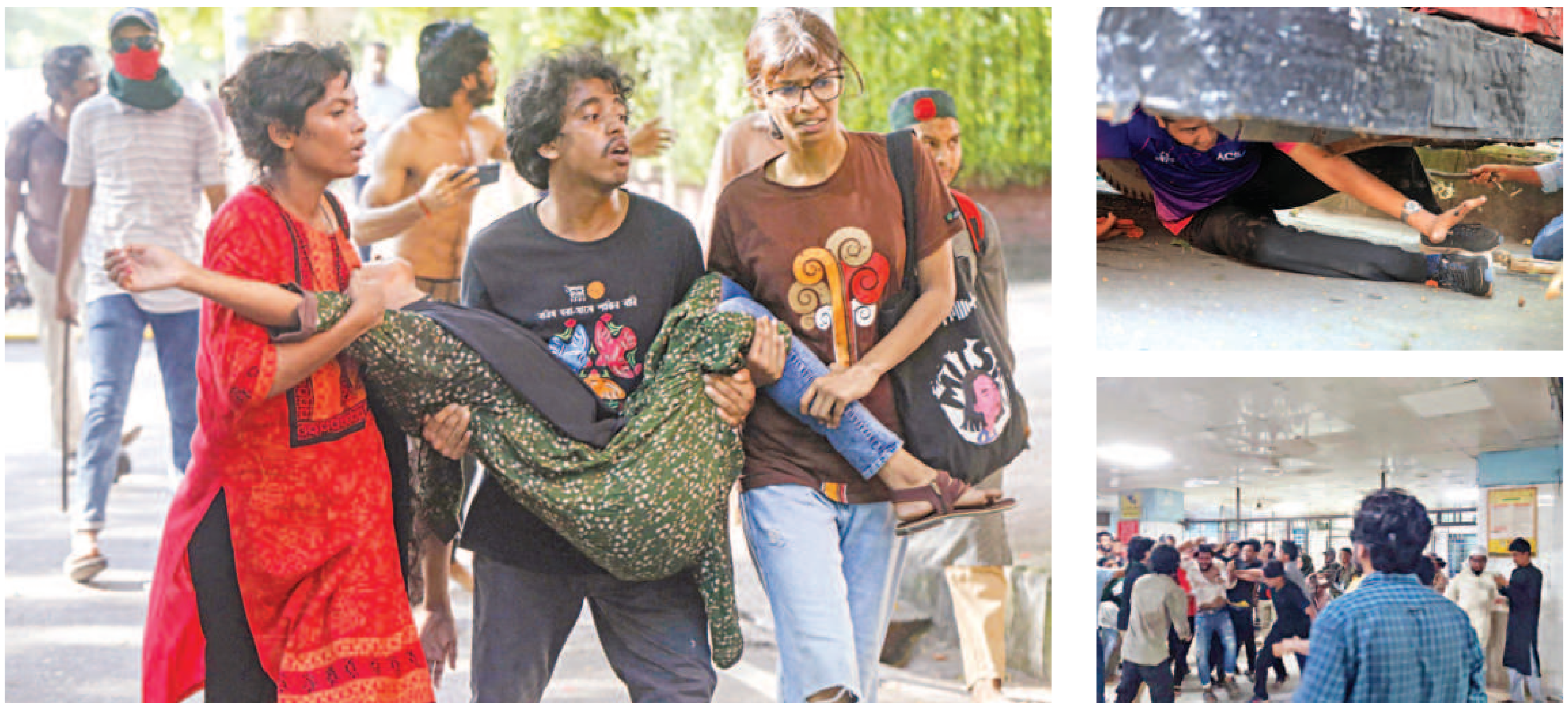

Students carrying a wounded woman to safety after BCL activists attacked quota protesters on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, *left.* A protester tries to take cover under a bus while attackers try to get to him in front of the DU VC's residence, top *right.* Protesters beating up a man they suspected to be a BCL activist inside the DMCH emergency department. Several clashes took place there last evening.

PHOTOS: AFP; AMRAN HOSSAIN; MUNTAKIM SAAD

Foreign national detained with 3.9kg of cocaine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A foreign national was detained at Chattogram's Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday morning after nearly four kg of cocaine was found in her luggage. Cocaine is an intense, euphoria-producing stimulant drug with strong addictive potential.

The detainee was identified as Statia Shantae Rolle, a citizen of the Bahamas, an island nation in the Atlantic Ocean.

A package of cocaine, weighing 3.9kg, was recovered from her luggage during a search, said Saifur Rahman, joint director of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department in Chattogram.

Inspector Dewan Mohammad Zillur Rahman from the Directorate of Narcotics Control said Statia arrived in Chattagram from Brazil via the United Arab Emirates on July 13. However, she did not take her luggage and went to a hotel.

Yesterday morning, she arrived at the airport to claim her luggage from the "Lost and Found" department.

Chittagong Customs officials said the market value of the seized cocaine may be approximately Tk 60 crore.

BCL unleashes fury on quota protesters

FROM PAGE 1

protesting what they said was a "disparaging comment" by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding quota protesters.

They chanted slogans like "Tumi ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar!]," "Cheyechhilam odikhar, hoye gelam Razakar [We wanted rights, but we have been labelled as Razakars]".

The prime minister on Sunday said, "Why do they [the protesters] have so much anger against the freedom fighters?... If the grandchildren of freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

Yesterday, the violence started about two hours after Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the Chhatra League would give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota reform movement who labelled themselves as Razakars, and were arrogant.

The demonstrators had announced a rally in front of the Raju Bhaskarjo at noon yesterday to protest the PM's remarks and attacks on them at different universities on Sunday night.

Chhatra League also announced a rally there at 3:00pm to protest "the students' derogatory comments on the country's independence".

Around noon, the quota reforms demonstrators started gathering at Raju Bhaskarjo. A group of them went to different dormitories to mobilise more students around 2:30pm.

When the group reached Bijoy Ekattor Hall around 3:00pm, some Chhatra League hall unit members threw brick chunks and flower pots at them from inside, said witnesses.

As the news of the attack spread, demonstrators from Raju Bhaskarjo rushed there and retaliated by throwing brick chunks at the Chhatra League men.

Around 3:30pm, Chhatra League men took position inside the hall while the demonstrators in front of it.

Both groups kept throwing brick chunks at each other and at one stage, BCL activists from five nearby dorms rushed out and along with their fellows inside Bijoy Ekattor Hall chased the demonstrators, sparking a running battle.

The demonstrators eventually retreated to the area in front of DU vice-chancellor's residence.

Within a few minutes, numerous Chhatra League activists, many non-DU students, attacked the demonstrators, including female students.

The Chhatra League men, many wearing helmets, were seen chasing down the students, kicking them and beating them with cricket stumps, and bamboo and hockey sticks for around 15 minutes, said witnesses.

Some female students were seen lying on the ground and in tears during that time.

"How could they dare attack the female students? It cannot be an act of an educated person," said an injured female student.

She said Chhatra League men brought in outsiders to attack them. "Where were the VC and proctors when we were being attacked? Are they not our guardians?"

Another female student said the "Chhatra League goons" attacked the front part of their procession where most of the female students were.

"They are afraid of the fact that we can also speak about our rights. They want to gag our voice at any cost," she said.

Around 5:00pm, as the demonstrators took the injured to the DMCH for treatment, a group of Chhatra League activists stormed the hospital, and another bout of chase and counter chase ensued.

A pedestrian caught in the middle was injured and was seen being led away with his shirt all bloodied.

Chhatra League activists were patrolling outside the gate of the DMCH emergency department, and they chased away students from the hospital area.

Chased by BCL men, a large group of the demonstrators went inside Shahidullah Hall while some managed to stay inside the DMCH.

As some Chhatra League men went to the DMCH with injured activists, the demonstrators beat up three of them around 6:50pm.

Half an hour later, around 70 Chhatra League activists again stormed the DMCH emergency department. Armed with sticks and clad in helmets, they beat up demonstrators inside the hospital.

Meanwhile, at Shahidullah Hall, the demonstrators and Chhatra League men hurled brick chunks at each other. The demonstrators were inside the hall and the Chhatra League activists outside.

OCTOBER 4, 2018
Government scraps quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in civil service.

JUNE 5, 2024
HC rules circular scrapping freedom fighter quotas illegal.

JUNE 9, 2024
The government challenges HC rule with Supreme Court.

JULY 1, 2024
Students and jobseekers start demo, seeking reform to the quota system.

JULY 4, 2024
Supreme Court upholds High Court verdict for the time being.

JULY 7, 2024
Protesters launch "Bangla Blockade".

JULY 9, 2024
Two DU students file petition seeking stay order on HC verdict.

JULY 10, 2024
SC orders status quo on the quota issue for four weeks.

JULY 11, 2024
HC says govt can change, reduce, or increase the ratio or percentage of quotas.

JULY 14, 2024
Late-night student protests rock DU, other campuses over PM Hasina's "disparaging remark".

JULY 14, 2024
In its full verdict, HC declares abolishment of freedom fighter quotas in govt jobs illegal.

JULY 15, 2024
Public university students come under attack while staging demos at various campuses protesting PM's remark.

The demonstrators vandalised several rooms belonging to Chhatra League activists.

Crude bomb explosions and gunshots were heard outside the dorm.

The police in the area were mere bystanders during the whole time.

Late last night, the demonstrators vandalised 10 motorbikes allegedly owned by BCL men in front Amar Ekushey Hall. Witnesses said the bikes had more than 20 men on them who ran away .

'THEY TARGETED FEMALES'

Around 3:00pm, almost 500 BCL activists carrying sticks targeted and charged towards the female student protesters near the Kalabhaban, said Sanjana Afifa, a DU resident student of Shamsunnahar Hall.

"Once they spotted us, they lunged towards us and threw brick chunks. We all ran and tried to hide but they hunted us down ... At one point, I hid inside a bus and I heard the attackers coming inside screaming 'you are Razakar, you are Razakar'. Many of those hiding in the bus with me were dragged out and beaten. I pleaded them to let me go, only to find so many others lying on the ground, bleeding."

Another female student of the same hall said, "I ran towards Fullar Road at one point and saw Chhatra League men carrying out a full-throttle attack there. At one point, a brick hit my head and I fell. Instantly, 3-4 people came and began beating me with sticks. I just lay there, getting beaten. A senior male student rescued me and took me to hospital. After treatment, I was able to return around 7:00pm."

She added that along with her, around 30 other female students of her hall were attacked and injured.

Sufiya Kamal Hall's resident student Umama Fatema said the attackers identified her from television.

"They screamed, 'we saw you on TV, we will kill you', and around 25 people charged towards me ... They targeted me, I had to cry and beg them to let me go. I ran and they still chased after me. When I reached Fullar Road, two women passing by hid me behind them and asked me to stop crying so that the attackers cannot hear me."

Another student of Begum Rokeya Hall Arpita Das said, "I somehow got out alive. Most of those who beat us up did not look like students. I tried to protect myself and run wherever the others ran. I saw a girl behind me fall to the ground and then people beating her up mercilessly. They beat whoever they saw in their path. At one point, I ran into the SM Hall ... There were so many people with blood all over them. We tried not to scream or cry ... At one point, the provost told us to hide in the TV room."

"WE WON'T LEAVE"

Through a video message on his Facebook page, demo organiser Nahid said that yesterday was a very sad day for Dhaka University.

"The situation at Dhaka Medical College Hospital is horrible. The injured are lying on the floor. There are no treatment facilities there. The Chhatra League goons even attacked female students at the emergency gate," he said.

"We will resist unitedly. We are promising we will be on the ground. We will not leave the ground," he said.

Nahid told reporters at Doyel Chattar around 9:30pm that they have announced fresh demonstrations and protest rallies at 3:00pm today at campuses across the country.

He urged the students to join the programmes and threatened harsher demonstrations like blockade if their demand was not met.

BCL TAKES NO BLAME

Chhatra League President Saddam Hussain said the demonstrators forced students to join their protests to create an unstable environment at DU.

"They [demonstrators] brought students from different halls by threatening them. They carried out attacks on students with locally made weapons. But they fled away when the students untidily resisted them [demonstrators]," he told reporters at DU in the afternoon.

Chhatra League General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan alleged that Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir goons attacked different halls in DU.

KEEP DORMS FREE OF OUTSIDERS

Dhaka University authorities, after an emergency meeting of the provost standing committee last night, directed its respective hall authorities to keep the dormitories free of outsiders and to strengthen security on campus.

DU VC Prof ASM Maksud Kamal chaired the meeting, which was attended by the provosts of all dormitories.

Meanwhile, students of several private universities, including United International University, North South University, Independent University, Bangladesh, American International University Bangladesh, and Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology took to the streets yesterday and blocked several city streets.

Why must brute

FROM PAGE 1

instructions by their bosses to remain calm and not take any action against the students. But as soon as the high-ups in the government made dismissive comments criticising the movement, things started to take an ugly turn. The AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader at a press conference on Sunday remarked that the Chhatra League was ready to give an apt answer to the "audacious behaviour" shown on the campuses (by leaders of the anti-quota movement). Such a direct call for action gave them the green signal. True to their reputation, the members of the student body swooped on the students and "taught them a lesson" for daring to be vocal and defiant.

It is tragic that a student body that was once at the forefront of the most significant movements of our history has been turned into the bully boys (and girls) of the ruling party. These young men wielding rods and sticks are also university students. Why should students beat up other students for a cause that would ordinarily unite them? Why do the large numbers of the police force become silent bystanders when helmet-clad goons pounce upon unarmed university students?

These are naïve queries in a reality where even peaceful protests are seen as threats to power and are clamped down upon with full force. For some reason it was thought that this time the government would show tolerance and listen to the young, passionate young men and women who believed that their voices would be heard, their needs would be addressed. All they have been asking for is a fair chance in life, an equitable system of opportunities to compete for government jobs and the realisation of a dream that can be attained through merit and hard work. Are these aspirations unwarranted for young people of an independent nation?

HC verdict

FROM PAGE 1

"All the protesting students are asked to go back to their respective educational institutions and concentrate on their studies.

"This court hopes that the vice-chancellors and proctors of all universities and heads of other educational institutions will take their students back to their respective educational institutions and create a supportive environment for learning".

"Protesting students can, if they wish, present their arguments before the court through lawyers. The court will take into account their statement while disposing of the original petition. In the meantime, the petitioners are directed to file regular civil petitions for leave to appeal," the Appellate Division also said.

On July 10, the SC delivered the status quo order following two separate petitions filed by the government and two Dhaka University students seeking a stay on the HC judgement.

It fixed August 7 for hearing the leave to appeal petitions.

"The apex court order means that the government cannot take any initiative about the quota system in civil service until the leave to appeal petitions are disposed of," Deputy Attorney General Sk Shaifuzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said the government may file a fresh petition with the Appellate Division seeking an extension of the July 10 status quo order within a few days.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 this year declared illegal the circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, which cancelled the quota system in government jobs.

The circular said that in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class-1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class-2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

It's a shame

FROM PAGE 1

Agreements for the FY 2024-25 at the Prime Minister's Office.

"Our only target is to establish the spirit of the Liberation War. Lakhs of martyrs shed blood and lakhs of our mothers and sisters were tortured. We won't forget their contribution. We must keep that in mind."

The PM said her government took legal action against the war criminals involved in mass killing, looting, and torturing of women.

"Many of them were executed following trials and thus the repressed got justice," she said.

Hasina said, "I felt sorry when I heard yesterday [Sunday] the students of Ruqayyah Hall calling themselves Razakars. Do they know what happened there on March 25, 1971? Some 300 girls were killed, and 40 others were taken to the Pakistan camps and raped."

Referring to some gruesome incidents carried out by the Pakistan forces in 1971, the premier said the female students did not see the oppression on streets in 1971. "So, they are not ashamed of calling themselves Razakars."

"What country are we in? What spirit do they believe in? What lesson did they learn? What did they learn? It is my question," she added.

Hasina said the Liberation War is a matter of our pride.

People left their homes and fought for independence risking their lives following the call of the father of the nation and achieved victory, she said.

Those who were in Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al-Shams Bahini unleashed inhuman torture on the people, she said, adding, "Don't forget it."

"We have to march forward with the spirit of the Liberation War after taking lessons from it," the PM said.

Those who were in power for 21 years after the assassination of the father of the nation on August 15, 1975, failed to give the country anything, she said.

Hasina said the pro-liberation force Awami League has changed the country with massive development work over the last 15 years after assuming power.

"Bangladesh is now a changed country ... Bangladesh has earned a dignified position on the global stage," she added.

"Let's take the country ahead. This Bangladesh will move ahead. We will move around the world keeping our heads high ..."

Panic at DMCH emergency

FROM PAGE 1

Other demonstrators accompanied the injured.

Meanwhile, alleged BCL members were stationed on the adjacent road when student protesters gathered near the hospital.

Witnesses further alleged that before the BCL attacks, quota protesters assaulted at least three people at the hospital, suspecting them of being Chhatra League activists.

A female DU student in the hospital, requesting anonymity, said, "We thought the hospital was safe, but unfortunately, BCL activists entered."

Hasan Abdullah, a patient, said, "Around 5:30pm, I saw people running away from the hospital, which scared me."

Another patient, Rina Begum, said, "A young man was being beaten in front of the hospital's emergency department. An Ansar member intervened to calm the situation. Attacks inside the hospital are never acceptable."

Speaking to this newspaper, patient Jafar Hossain said, "I was scared as soon as I saw boys carrying sticks. They even attacked an ambulance."

An Ansar member, speaking anonymously, said the patients were frightened and many had left the hospital prior to the attacks without receiving treatment.

A student, also wishing anonymity, said, "No one is leaving the hospital out of fear."

Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman, director at DMCH, said their services were disrupted due to the attacks.

"To control the situation, we allocated more nurses and doctors to the emergency department," he said, adding that the injured from both groups are receiving treatment.

Journalists were barred by the attackers from taking photographs or recording videos. Some also had their phones checked.

Hospital sources said police and Ansar members were able to bring the situation under control around 9:00pm.

Trump picks JD Vance

FROM PAGE 1

challenge Democratic President Joe Biden in the Nov 5 election.

Trump, 78, and Biden, 81, are locked in what opinion polls show to be a tight election rematch. Trump continues to falsely claim that his 2020 loss to Biden was the result of widespread fraud and has not committed to accepting the results of the election were he to lose.

In the wake of the assassination attempt, Trump said he is revising his acceptance speech to emphasise national unity, rather than highlight his differences with Biden.

"This is a chance to bring the whole country, even the whole world, together. The speech will be a lot different, a lot different than it would've been two days ago," Trump told the Washington Examiner. The would-be assassin's bullet clipped Trump's right ear but did no major harm.

Trump said that following the judge's decision dismissing the documents case, his other outstanding prosecutions should also be thrown out. He is still awaiting trial on two cases - a federal prosecution in Washington and a Georgia state prosecution - for his attempts to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

Biden has tried to bring the temperature down after months of heated political rhetoric.

"There is no place in America for this kind of violence, for any violence ever. Period. No exceptions. We can't allow this violence to be normalised," Biden said of the assassination attempt in a televised address from the White House on Sunday.

The shooting on Saturday whipsawed discussion around the presidential campaign, which had been focused on whether Biden should drop out due to concerns about his age and acuity following a halting June 27 debate performance.

Nearly two dozen of Biden's fellow Democrats in Congress have called on him to end his reelection bid and allow the party to pick another standard bearer.

The focus this week will be squarely on Trump.

Having consolidated party control, Trump could seize on the prime-time opportunity to deliver a unifying message or paint a dark portrait of a nation under siege by a corrupt leftist elite, as he has done at times on the campaign trail.

Trump has frequently turned to violent rhetoric in campaign speeches, labelling his perceived enemies as "vermin" and "fascists," and accusing Biden without evidence of a conspiracy to undermine the United States by encouraging illegal immigration.

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Don't be nervous seeing anything in newspapers

PM tells govt officials; asks them to go tough on corruption

BSS, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave a set of directives to government officials that include going tough against corruption, ensuring transparency and accountability, bringing dynamism to administrative activities, and implementing the APAs to build a just, developed, and prosperous Bangladesh.

The premier said this while addressing the signing ceremony of Annual Performance Agreements (APAs) for the 2024-25 fiscal year at the PMO.

"Take proper action wherever any irregularity is found... We announced zero-tolerance (policy) against corruption," she said.

She said only a few individuals commit corruption, but many people are blamed for it.

"This is why stern actions will be

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Students bleed as violence spreads thru campuses

STAR REPORT

Not just the students of Dhaka University, students of at least four more universities across the country bled yesterday as they came under attack by Chhatra League men during their anti-quota protests.

Students of Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Eden Mohila College, among others, were protesting against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent comments on freedom fighter quota, alongside demanding reform in quota system, when BCL activists and leaders carried out the attacks on them.

At JU, students, under the banner of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, started a march in front of the university central library around 6:30pm.

However, at least 50 students were injured after being attacked by BCL members around 7:00pm.

The attack lasted for over two hours.

According to victims and eyewitnesses, BCL leaders and activists carried out the attack, which started from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

"Around 50 students took treatment at the university medical centre. Of them, 20 were referred to a private hospital in Savar as their condition deteriorated," said Rezwanur Rahman, a doctor at the centre.

In the evening, protesters held a sit-in in front of the VC's residence.

Around midnight, BCL men started to hurl brickbats at them, said Mahfujul Islam a protesting student.

Afterwards, the demonstrators took shelter inside the VC's compound. Witnesses said some protesters had to climb up the wall and open the compound gate for others to protect themselves.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

A blood-stained shirt of an anti-quota protester lies on the ground, surrounded by BCL men, who carried out attacks on students in several universities across the country yesterday. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

Fakhrul condemns BCL attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday strongly condemned and protested the brutal attack on the agitating students by Chhatra League activists on the Dhaka University campus.

In a statement, Fakhrul said the Awami League government has taken the approach of suppressing the ongoing movement of general students in the same way they run "steamroller" on the movement of pro-democracy political parties.

"Today, police and Chhatra League jointly attacked and injured so many students in different educational institutions of the country, including Dhaka University," he said.

"We condemn the cowardly and heinous attack... The attackers must be punished," he said.

Health(care) comes at a high price

61pc face financial difficulties for medical costs, says BIDS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 61 percent of people in the country face financial difficulties while seeking medical services in hospitals, according to a new study by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

On average, a family has to spend around Tk 55,134 when a family member is admitted to the hospital and about 54 percent of this cost is spent on medicines, the BIDS study found.

The study findings were shared at a seminar at the BIDS auditorium in the capital yesterday.

The study, titled "Catastrophic Health Shock and Impoverishment in Bangladesh: Insights from HIES 2022," showed that due to out-of-pocket payments, around 3.7 percent of the population, which is equivalent to 6.13 million people, were pushed below the national poverty line in 2022.

The data for the study were obtained from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2022. Household characteristics, out-of-pocket payments for healthcare, and detailed household consumption expenditures of 14,000 households were analysed for the survey.

Medicine costs are the major costs both for hospitalised patients and outpatients, it said.

Of the people who suffered financial difficulties while seeking treatment, 26.83 percent borrowed money, 18.77 percent took help from friends and relatives, and 15.53 percent sold their assets.

Besides, 32.58 percent of people broke their savings to get hospital services and 6.29 percent paid hospital expenses from their regular earnings, the research findings showed.

Most healthcare costs in Bangladesh come directly from people's pockets, as out-of-pocket payments accounted for 55 percent of the country's healthcare

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

- 26.83pc borrowed money
- 18.77pc took help from friends, relatives
- 15.53pc sold their assets
- 32.58pc broke their savings
- 6.29pc paid from regular earnings

PATIENT CARD

24 eminent citizens condemn 'Razakar' slogans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four eminent citizens have condemned and expressed their anger over the slogans of the students who are protesting for quota reform.

"We are very surprised and angry to hear the slogans 'Who are you, who am I, Razakars' and 'We are all Razakars' from the procession of the students demanding the cancellation of the quota system in several universities on Sunday night," they said in a statement yesterday.

They were hurt and angry as slogans demanding representation of the razakars, who opposed independence, planned the killing of intellectuals, were uttered at the Dhaka University premises, the statement said.

No one has the right to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'RAZAKAR' BACK AND FORTH

Who said what?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students' sentiments were inflamed by what they termed was a "disparaging comment" by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her press conference on her recent China visit on Sunday afternoon. Her usage of the term razakar (collaborators of Pakistani occupying forces in 1971) has become a point of contention, with students taking issue with it and many ministers having their say.

HASINA'S COMMENT

"Are the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters not talented? Are only the children and grandchildren of the razakars [collaborators] talented?"

"Why do they have so much resentment towards freedom fighters?" If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

STUDENTS' PROTEST SLOGANS

Following the PM's comments, university students countrywide came out of their dorms on Sunday night with slogans like:
"Tui ke? Ami ke? Razakar, razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, razakar!]" and "Chaite gelam odhikar, hoye gelam Razakar [Asked for rights and became a razakar]".

OBAIDUL QUADER

ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER

Chhatra League will give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota reform movement who on Sunday night labelled themselves razakars and showed arrogance.

DIPU MONI

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

"Those who introduce themselves as Razakars have no right to hold the blood-stained red and green flag of our Liberation War martyrs or to march with that flag tied to their foreheads."

ZUNAID AHMED PALAK

STATE MINISTER FOR ICT

"Isn't it shameful to chant slogans in support of razakars at Dhaka University, where razakars committed mass murder of students and teachers on March 25 [1971]?"

MOHAMMAD ALI ARAFAT

STATE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

"We are against discrimination, we stand for merit. There is no need to be a Razakar for this... No demands will be accepted for those who want to become razakars."

MOHIBUL HASSAN CHOWDHOURY

EDUCATION MINISTER

"...These people do not respect the court or the government. Therefore, it is not possible for this state to respect these traitors! They have raised the right slogan! Let the true faces of the razakars of this era be revealed!"

SADDAM HOSSAIN

BCL PRESIDENT

"Those who support razakars...They will not be eligible for government or private jobs."

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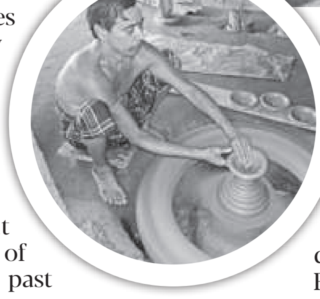
Demand for clay utensils on the rise

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, *Bagerhat*



After years of oblivion amid a growing market for cheap plastic alternatives, clayware is again experiencing a rise in demand and popularity as it is utilitarian, eco-friendly, and culturally significant.

In many hotels, motels, resorts and other tourism and festival-centric scopes across the country, a trend of using clay utensils has surged in recent times, especially in Bagerhat and Pirojpur.

"Ahead of Durga Puja, Pahela Baishakh, Ratha Yatra, and other religious and cultural festivities, the demand for clay utensils has been rising in recent years," said Govinda Paul, a clayware maker from Kathipara village under Morrelganj of Bagerhat.

"Also, many local eateries have opted for using clay plates for serving their customers, buying a lot of 100 plates for Tk 2,000. Some households are now using clay rice pots with lid, a traditional utensil for cooking rice that went out of demand following surge of aluminium ones over the past few decades," he added.

Govinda Paul said clay utensils such as plates, glasses, bowls, rice and juice pots, as well as other items such as tree planters and paddy silos, made by artisans in Bagerhat and Pirojpur are now being transported to Dhaka and other districts.

Fellow artisans Anand Paul and Gouranga Paul echoed him, emphasising that the growing demand has been making a positive impact on their livelihoods.

Md Mamunur Rashid, deputy manager of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation in Bagerhat, said the government and different organisations are interested in fostering the cultural resurgence in use of clayware, alongside recognising its economic and environmental benefits.

"We have plans to provide support to local artisans to promote this industry," he said.

RMG SECTOR

Focus on compliance, sustainability

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A good working environment increases productivity for ready-made garments (RMG) workers, said speakers at a programme yesterday.

The event, titled "Fabric of Change: Role of Swisscontact in Upskilling RMG Workers in Bangladesh," was organised by Swisscontact Bangladesh at a city hotel.

Mujibul Cezanne Hasan, country director of Swisscontact Bangladesh, said, ''As Bangladesh moves towards LDC graduation, we should consider business-viable and self-sustaining models that existing market players in the RMG sector can easily replicate.''

Mohammad Sohel Sadat, director of BGMEA, said, ''We need to focus on sustainability and compliance, as many challenges are emerging, particularly at the mid and upper management levels.''

Md Akhter Hossain, vice-president of BKMEA, emphasised the importance of upholding factory standards and green transition.

He said ensuring a good working environment will help increase productivity for RMG workers.

The event stressed the RMG sector's enthusiasm for deeper collaborations between private and development sectors to build sustainable RMG skill development ecosystem.

MALAYSIA DEBACLE

Recruiting agencies asked to refund money by July 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment yesterday submitted a probe report to the High Court, saying that the ministry has ordered the recruiting agencies concerned to settle all debts and credits of intending Bangladeshi workers, who could not be sent to Malaysia even after they paid the required money.

Around 17,700 job seekers were not able to reach Malaysia. A hundred recruiting agencies have also been issued show cause notices, asking them to give explanations about their failures by July 18.

The ministry placed the report through Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy before the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon.

On June 30, the HC wanted to learn what steps have been taken against the mismanagement that led to Bangladeshi jobseekers failing to reach Malaysia before the deadline of May 31 this year.

Take steps to stop cutting of hills in Sylhet: High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to take necessary steps to stop cutting of hills and hillocks in Sylhet and thus protect natural echo-system and lives, properties and livelihoods of people living in the district.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the government to take legal action against those liable for cutting hills or hillocks.

At the same time, the HC ordered the local officials concerned including the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Sylhet to arrange continuous monitoring in hill and hillock areas in Sylhet so that no one can cut, destroy or damage those and to submit compliance reports to the court in every six months.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon issued the order.

Don't be

FROM PAGE 3

taken against those who get involved in corruption. I don't care what blame will be given to the government," she said.

"No more corruption will be tolerated," she said.

Hasina said the government wants to build a corruption-free society apart from paying attention to enhancing the quality and skills of government officials.

She asked every ministry to enhance monitoring of its subordinate offices, including the field-level ones, to ensure good governance. "The top-level [of the administration] is very good. Some problems occur at the bottom," she added.

Hasina asked the government officials not to be nervous or worried after seeing anything in the newspapers.

"There is nothing for you to be nervous or embarrassed about seeing what is written in the newspapers. Rather, you should check if there is any authenticity to it [the news]. If it has no authenticity, dump it straight into the dustbin, and you don't even need to read it," she said.

Students bleed as BCL violence

FROM PAGE 3

Asked, Dhaka Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime and Operation) Abdullah Hil Kafi said, "We are at the spot. We are trying to normalise the situation."

In Chattogram, BCL members attacked quota reform movement activists in the Sholashahar Railway Station area, resulting in at least three students being injured.

Earlier, BCL activists seized the key to the CU shuttle train and halted it at 2:30pm. BCL members then detained Talat Mahmud, assistant convener of the quota reform movement in Chattogram, beat him, and forcibly took him to the proctor's office.

Eyewitnesses said when the protesters started for the proctor's office in a procession, they were attacked by BCL activists in front of the Shaheed Minar.

Enamul Haque, assistant proctor of CU, said, "BCL activists took Talat to the proctor's office. Upon receiving information, Talat's fellow activists also came to the office. We drove out both groups after counselling. Talat is now safely in our custody."

Later, when the quota reform movement activists started a rally at Sholashahar Railway Station, a clash ensued between BCL activists and them around 3:30pm, said eyewitnesses.

At least 20 JnU students were injured after they participated in the demo held in Dhaka University area. The injured students are currently receiving treatment at DMCH.

Junayed Islam, a JnU student, said, "We were peacefully conducting our protest when Chhatra League activists attacked us with weapons and sticks. At least 20 of my friends were injured."

Meanwhile, at least four students of Eden College were allegedly beaten up by BCL activists during the protest programme at 11:30pm.

On RU campus, at least four RU students were injured, after they came under BCL attack.

According to the victims, RU BCL leaders and activists launched a sudden attack on them at 6:20pm and ordered them to go back to their halls.

Nasim, an injured student, said, "BCL men started beating us and ordered us to return to the halls. Eventually, I ran away from the scene."

Earlier, RU BCL President Mostafizur Rahman Babu warned that no concession would be given if anyone called themselves a Razakar. "If any Jamaat-Shibir member raises any slogans by the name of Razakar, then RU BCL will not make any concessions," he said.

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24 eminent

FROM PAGE 3

carry the national flag of Bangladesh abandoning the spirit of Liberation War, freedom fighters and the ideals of independence, they said.

The statement also said, "We hope that they will realise their mistake and will act to realise their demands in a democratic manner."

Prof Anupom Sen, Syed Hasan Imam, Ferdousi Mazumder, Shujeo Shyam, Sarwar Ali, Abed Khan, Col (retd) Sajjad Ali, Mamunur Rashid, Mofidul Haque, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Nasir Uddin Yousuff, Prof Kamrul Hasan Khan, Prof Shafi Ahmed, Prof Mamtazuddin Patwari, M Hamid, Raisul Islam Asad, Golam Kuddus, Shaymol Dutt, Lucky Enam, Sara Zaker, Shimul Yousuf, were among the signatories.

New housing project

FROM PAGE 5

Mazumdar, an urban planner and executive member of the Forum for Planned Chattogram.

Lack of study before taking on housing projects has been the reason behind CDA's failures, he alleged.

Asked why CDA is taking up a new project despite having failed to complete previous ones yet, Kazi Hasan Bin Shams, CDA's spokesperson and chief engineer, dodged the question, saying no concrete development has been made regarding the new project yet.

He declined to elaborate further, saying he was busy.

Health(care)

FROM PAGE 3

costs in 1997, which increased to 68 percent in 2020, according to National Health Accounts.

Out-of-pocket health expenditures rose to 73 percent in 2021, according to the Global Health Expenditure Database.

Presenting the research findings, Abdur Razzak Sarkar, research fellow at BIDS, said, "Due to the increase in medical costs, many families who live below the poverty line often become destitute. Many are deprived of health care due to lack of money."

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen said, "We are working on government-based health insurance. We will launch it soon, though it will take time." When the health insurance is introduced, out-of-pocket expenses will also be reduced, he added.

TENDER NOTICE

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh, hereby announces the launch of the following tenders:

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
ITB/HCR/CXB/2024/010	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF COMPRESSED RICE HUSK (CRH) FOR UNHCR OPERATIONS IN BANGLADESH
Pre-bid conference (Virtual)	Date and time: 17 July 2024 at 11:00 hrs BST

Interested and potential vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation to Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/239886

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the ITB document via the URL below:

http://etenderbox.unhcr.org

Bid submission deadline: Wednesday, 31 July 2023 – 14:00 hrs. (BST) Bangladesh time.
Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer will be acceptable who submits only in the above link.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় ও বাংলাদেশ কারিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ড অনুমোদিত
আলহাজ্ব আয়েশা খাতুন পলিটেকনিক ইনস্টিটিউট-৬৫২৩২
(৪ বছর মেয়াদী ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং কোর্স)
কনকাপৈত, চৌদ্দগ্রাম, কুমিল্লা। মোবাইল:০১৭৩৯৮২০৪৯২

ক্র.নং	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
১	জুনিয়র ইনস্ট্রাক্টর সিভিল টেকনোলজি	১	কারিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ড অনুমোদিত যে কোন ইনস্টিটিউট হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রীধারী।
২	জুনিয়র ইনস্ট্রাক্টর কম্পিউটার সাইন্স এন্ড টেকনোলজি (মহিলা)	১	কারিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ড অনুমোদিত যে কোন ইনস্টিটিউট হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রীধারী।

সকল পদে আগামী ৩০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ইনস্টিটিউট এর অফিস কক্ষে সরাসরি অথবা ই-মেইল alhajayeshakhatunpolytechnic22@gmail.com এর মাধ্যমে নির্ধারিত নিয়োগের আবেদন ফরম পূরণ করে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জীবনবৃত্তান্ত, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, শিক্ষাগত সনদের ফটোকপি, অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের ফটোকপি সহ ২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি জমা দিতে হবে। এসএমএস ও ই-মেইলের মাধ্যমে পরবর্তীতে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়সূচী জানিয়ে দেওয়া হবে।

প্রতিষ্ঠাতা/সভাপতি
আলহাজ্ব আয়েশা খাতুন পলিটেকনিক ইনস্টিটিউট

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০১৮১৯২৬২৬৪৪, ০১৯১৯২২৫৫৫৫

জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড
৬৯-৭০, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০
www.nctb.gov.bd

সংশোধিত অফার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক্রম.			পূর্বের তারিখ ও সময়	সংশোধিত তারিখ ও সময়
১.	বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর ও তারিখ	:		সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বরঃ ৯৮, তারিখঃ ১৫/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
২.	নির্দেশিকা বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	১৫/০৭/২০২৪ অফিস চলাকালীন।	১৮/০৭/২০২৪ অফিস চলাকালীন।
৩.	অফার প্রস্তাব জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	:	১৬/০৭/২০২৪ সময় বেলা ০২:০০টা এর মধ্যে জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড, কক্ষ নং ৫০৮, ৬৯-৭০, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকাতে জমা দিতে হবে।	২১/০৭/২০২৪ সময় বেলা ০২:০০টা এর মধ্যে জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড, কক্ষ নং ৫০৮, ৬৯-৭০, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকাতে জমা দিতে হবে।
৪.	উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময়		১৬/০৭/২০২৪ সময় বেলা ২.৩০টা	২১/০৭/২০২৪ সময় বেলা ২.৩০টা

বি. দ্রঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং; ৮৫; তারিখঃ ০৭/০৭/২০২৪ এর অন্যান্য সকল শর্ত অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

১৫।৭।২৪
মোসাঃ নাজমা আখতার
সচিব
ফোনঃ ২২৩৩-৮৫৬৪৪

GD-55

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bhola
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.09.00.000.14.037.24.2210 Date: 15/07/2024

Re-Tender CORRIGENDUM NOTICE No. 01

The tender notice issued by the office of the undersigned vide Memo No: 46.02.09.00.000.037.24.1846 Date: 05/06/2024 has been changed as follows:

Last date of selling : 13/08/2024 till 16.00pm instead of 21/07/2024 16.00pm
Last date of submission : 14/08/2024 till 13.00pm instead of 22/07/2024 13.00pm
Date of opening : 14/08/2024 till 16.00pm instead of 22/07/2024 16.00pm
Time for completion : 18 months instead of 21 months

15.7.2024
Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil
Executive Engineer
LGED, Bhola
E-mail: xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd

GD-56

IUB
Independent University, Bangladesh

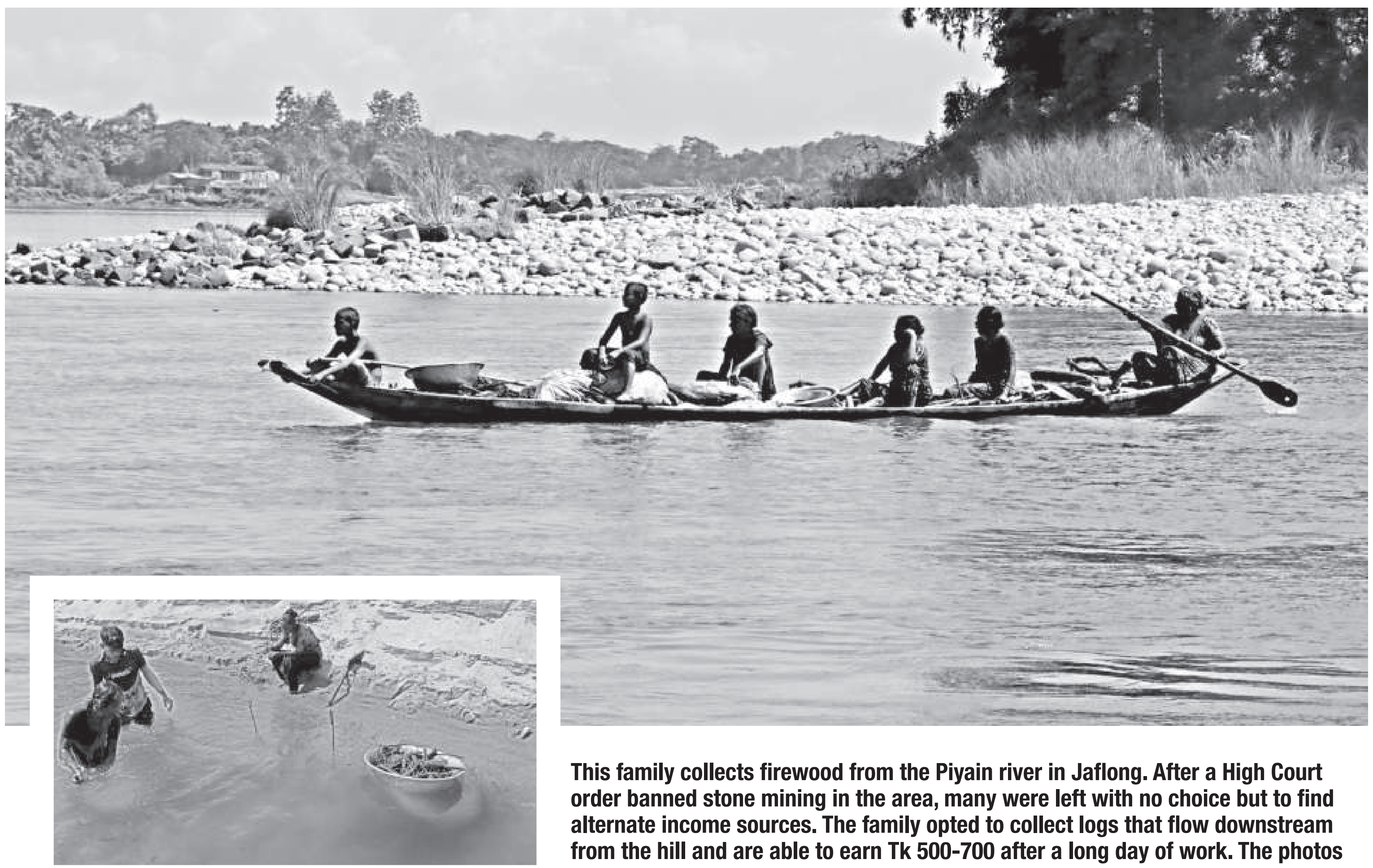
INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Facilities and Protocol, Administration Department

- Administrative Officer
- Junior Assistant

Application Deadline: **Sunday, July 28, 2024**

For detailed information and to apply, please visit:
http://iub.ac.bd/news-and-events/jobs-at-iub
or scan the QR code



This family collects firewood from the Piyain river in Jaflong. After a High Court order banned stone mining in the area, many were left with no choice but to find alternate income sources. The family opted to collect logs that flow downstream from the hill and are able to earn Tk 500-700 after a long day of work. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

New housing project, same old fate?

CDA takes on another scheme despite not finishing previous three

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Chattogram Development Authority has taken up yet another housing project, despite struggling to complete its previous three such projects.

The state agency sent a Development Project Proposal for "Patenga Bay Pearl Housing" to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works last month for approval.

According to project documents, CDA wants to implement the housing project on 60 acres of land in three phases. The first phase will be implemented on around 20 acres of land in North and South Patenga, with 114 residential and commercial plots.

However, CDA's history in residential project implementation has been a sorry one so far.

CDA is having a difficult time completing its three ongoing projects -- Ananya Abasik 1, Silimpur, and Karnaphuli -- due to a myriad of issues, including water crisis and layers of soft soil on project lands.

In fact, not a single house has been built under the Karnaphuli housing project taken in the 1992-93 fiscal year at a cost of Tk 12 crore, while most plots in the two other projects are also vacant.

Besides, CDA took on two more housing projects in the last 10 years but eventually cancelled both. Of those, Ananya Abasik 2 was cancelled after CDA spent Tk 316 crore for it, while it withdrew from the Bayezid Housing Project due to its high cost.

City planners raised questions over CDA's new initiative, citing its failure in previous projects.

"Taking up new housing projects is not realistic while previous projects lie incomplete," said Md Delwar Hossain

Taking up new housing projects is not realistic while previous projects lie incomplete.

MD DELWAR HOSSAIN MAZUMDAR
Urban planner

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

SYLHET FLOOD

Academic activities suspended at 665 schools

MINTU DESHWARA,
Moulvibazar

Academic activities of at least 665 educational institutions have been suspended for the last 12 days across Sylhet division due to flooding.

Of those, 346 are government primary schools, according to the Sylhet Divisional Primary Education office.

The rest of the educational institutions are secondary and higher secondary schools, and colleges.

Those in the haor (wetland) areas are most affected.

Many of the educational institutions are currently being used as shelters for flood victims of the respective areas in Sylhet, Sunamgaj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts.

In Sylhet, academic activities are suspended at 211 government primary schools, of which 84 are being used as shelters.

Also, activities are suspended in 283 secondary and higher secondary schools and colleges in the district, of which 237 are serving as shelters for flood victims, said Abu Sayeed Md Abdul Wadud, secondary education officer in Sylhet.

In Moulvibazar, 108 primary and 36 secondary schools remain closed, of which 69 are being used as shelters, said Mohammad Fazlur Rahman, secondary education officer in the district.

Moulvibazar Secondary Education Officer Mohammad Fazlur Rahman said floodwaters have persisted without receding, resulting in the closure of activities in 36 secondary educational institutions.

Visiting different schools in the flood-affected areas, this correspondent saw the school compounds submerged under knee-deep water entering the classrooms, emanating a putrid odour and damaging the furniture inside including tables, chairs and benches.

Jalal Uddin, deputy director of the Directorate of Primary Education in Sylhet, assured that once flood recedes, the schools that sustained damage will be repaired and renovated before academic activities are resumed.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 16

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

People suffer for battered roads

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Residents of Tangail municipality are suffering immensely as most of the roads in the town have long been in a battered condition due to lack of repair works for years.

Some roads are so worn out that those have become unfit for vehicular movement. Town dwellers are being compelled to use the roads daily for commute amid risk of accidents.

Despite being aware of the situation, the municipality authority has neither taken any step to this end yet, nor took any accountability over the public sufferings, alleged several residents.

The Battala-Baby Stand road is one of those in utter disarray.

"It is an important thoroughfare in the town. Numerous potholes have emerged all over the road, some of those being so large that heavy vehicles get stuck while smaller ones overturn often while plying the road, leading to injuries to commuters," told Saiful Islam, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver.

"The recent heavy rains left the road in an even worse shape. It needs urgent repairs," he added.

Sujon Miah, a resident of Bajitpur area, said, "The condition of Bajitpur-Baka Miar Bridge road may give the impression that there is no authority to oversee the town's welfare and management."

Mahmudul Hasan, a local trader, echoed him.

Delwar Hossain, traffic inspector (administration) in Tangail, said, "While the Battala-Baby Stand road is already in a sorry state, the pressure of vehicles on it, including goods-laden heavier ones, rose after the Roads and Highways Department started renovating the Baby Stand-Nirala Intersection road."

Shahin Miah, a trader on the town's Victoria Road, said there is no footpath on the road even though it is one the most important roads in the town. "As such, pedestrians are being compelled to move through the road amid risk and often face accidents," he said.

SM Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir, mayor of Tangail municipality, said they were aware about the public sufferings due to bad shape of several roads in the town.

"We have already reconstructed the road from Nirala Intersection to Baby Stand. There is also plan to develop all other roads in the town as soon as possible," he added.

Two boys find countless hours of joy, skating through the empty streets of the village. The photo was taken in Noya Kandi of Wazirpur upazila in Barishal recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানি)
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

গ্যাস জাতিয় সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতিয় দায়িত্ব পালন করুন।

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Tender No.: SGFL/MSTE/24-25/FP-01
Date: 14-07-2024

1.	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Energy & Mineral Resources Division
2.	Agency	:	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (A company of Petrobangla)
3.	Purchaser Name	:	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL)
4.	Purchaser District	:	Sylhet
5.	Invitation for	:	Tender for Procurement of Spare parts for Generator
6.	Invitation Ref No	:	SGFL/MSTE/24-25/FP-01
7.	Date	:	14-07-2024
KEY INFORMATION			
8.	Procurement method	:	Open Tendering Method (International Competitive Bidding), Single stage two envelope system. Tenderer are to submit simultaneously two (2) sealed envelopes, one containing the Technical Tender and the other one containing the Price Tender. The Technical Tender will be opened on the date and time mentioned at Sl. no.14 of this tender notice and the Price Tender of the technically responsive Tenderer(s) will be opened later on.
FUNDING INFORMATION			
9.	Budget and Source of Funds	:	SGFL's Own Fund.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
10.	Project Name	:	N/A
11.	Tender Publication Date	:	N/A
12.	Tender Last Selling Date	:	02-09-2024
13.	Tender Closing Date & Time	:	03-09-2024 and 12:00 hrs (BST)
14.	Tender Opening Date & Time	:	03-09-2024 and 12:15 hrs (BST)
15.	Name and Address of Office for selling Tender	:	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited Dhaka Liaison Office Petrocentre, 13th Floor, 3 Kawran Bazar C/A Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.
16.	Name and Address of Office for Receiving & Opening of Tender	:	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited Head Office, P.O. Chiknagool, Sylhet-3152 Bangladesh.
17.	Date & Time of Selling of Tender Document.		The tender document will be available for sale from 18-07-2024 to 02-09-2024 during office hours on all working days.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
18.	Eligibility of Tenderer	:	Bonafide manufacturers/suppliers or their authorized agents of all countries except the country/countries having no diplomatic relation with the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh.
19.	Brief Description of Goods	:	Tender for Procurement of Spare parts for Generator.
20.	Brief Description of Related Services	:	N/A.
21.	Price of Tender document	:	Taka 5,000.00 (non-refundable)
22.	Name of the Official Inviting Tender	:	Managing Director
23.	Address of the official inviting tender	:	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited P.O. Chiknagool, Sylhet-3152 Bangladesh. Attn: Deputy General Manager (Procurement)
24.	Contract Details of Official Inviting Tender	:	Phone: +88880-2996641630 E-mail: dgmpr@sgfl.org.bd
25.	**Special Instruction**	:	a) Tender must remain valid for 150 days from the date of opening of the tender. b) Tenderer shall furnish with the Tender (Technical Tender) an acceptable Tender Security in the form of Demand Draft or Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh or in the form of an Bank Guarantee (as per format provided in the Tender Document) issued by a scheduled bank of Bangladesh or by any reputed foreign bank duly endorsed with full obligation and liability by a scheduled bank of Bangladesh in the amount as under: Description: Spare parts for Generator — Tender Security Amount: Taka 5,00,000.00 or USD 4,350.00 c) The Tender security must remain valid for one hundred and seventy eight (178) days from the date of opening of the tender. d) The scope of supply, terms of supply and information require to be furnished by the Tenderer, etc. are given in the tender document. e) Tender(s) submitted after the deadline for receiving of tenders will be rejected and returned unopened to the Tenderer. f) The Tender must not be submitted by Fax or email. g) If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance (Strike, Public holiday, etc) the same will be received/ opened on the next working day at the same time and Venue. h) This tender notice will also be available at SGFL Website: www.sgfl.org.bd, Petrobangla Website: www.petrobangla.org.bd and CPTU Website: www.cptu.gov.bd
26.	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings at any stage prior to award of contract without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected Tenderer(s).		

14.7.24
Deputy General Manager (Procurement)

GD-53

'MAHARAJA' is a new experience in non-linear storytelling

Nithilan Swaminathan's debut film 'Kurangu Bommai' (2017) introduced a unique storytelling style around an abandoned bag of money. Seven years later, he returns with his second film, 'Maharaja', which was released in theatres on June 14 and premiered globally on Netflix on July 12.

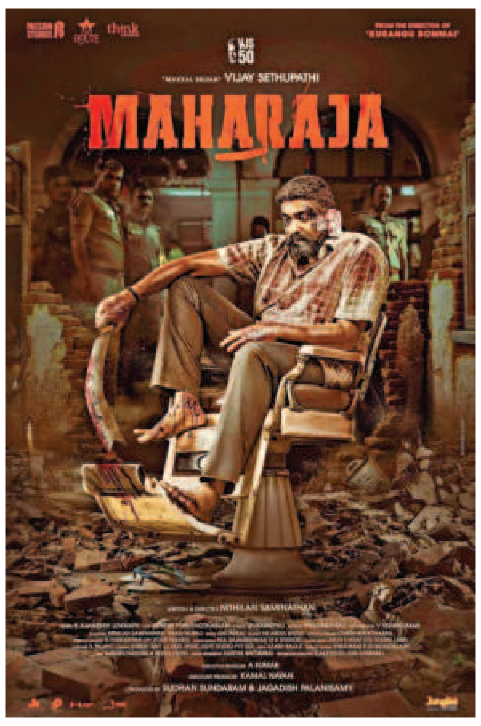
SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

This film marks Vijay Sethupathi's 50th venture and features Anurag Kashyap, a significant figure in independent filmmaking. The most crucial spoiler is that you must set aside all distractions, including your phone, to fully concentrate on this movie.

Maharaja's story begins with a shocking accident, which might seem like a typical opening. The narrative then takes a few more minutes to introduce the protagonist, Maharaja, a barber who is also a devoted father. His daughter, Manju, narrates their everyday life, portraying a vulnerable father, a common hook in modern Indian cinema. The Maharaja-Manju family includes a third member, Lakshmi, a dustbin that suddenly gets stolen. To recover the stolen dustbin, Maharaja files an FIR at the police station. This unusual complaint leads to a mystery that transforms the film into a crime thriller.

Nithilan expertly lays the foundation of familial bonds and emotions through the characters in the first half, showcasing his remarkable ability to evoke human emotions. The character of Maharaja is vividly brought to life by Makkal Selvan's (Vijay Sethupathi) impressive mannerisms and attitude.

The first half is well-paced, featuring unexpected twists that build up to the interval, leaving the audience eagerly anticipating the second half. Nithilan truly shines in the latter half, packed with even more twists and surprises, proving that the first half was merely a prelude. His brilliance extends to creating a heroic persona for a non-human object, a talent evident in his debut film. Transforming a simple, dirty dustbin (Lakshmi) into the core object of the show is remarkable.



PHOTOS: **COLLECTED**

The director's storytelling technique is exceptional, crafting a narrative that keeps everyone in suspense. The plot twists and turns are impeccably timed, causing the audience to question everything they believe. The story's depth, along with its exhilarating pace, ensures that there is never a dull moment.

We witness the political reality of the subcontinent through dialogues like "People who don't have education become the mafias" and "If someone is paying Rs 7 lacs for a dustbin, it means he has millions to hide." These lines resonate, especially with us, Bangladeshis, who can relate to recent scandals ('Goat Scandal' etc). The story brims with humour, struggle, and many familiar elements.

You'll find yourself questioning why someone would be so desperate for an old dustbin, even though Maharaja provides ample justification. In the end, you realise that the dustbin (Lakshmi) wasn't that important, but by then, you're already engrossed in the film, trying to piece together the puzzles involving Selvam's role, his demeanour, and his origins, as well as the different appearances of the dustbin in various locations. Editor Philomin have done a tremendous job as the edit is the heart of this cinema. That non-linear rough cut has made this cinema a brainstorming experience.

Maharaja is not a flawless film. The slapping sounds, awkward lip-sync in dubbing, and low-quality Hindi dubbing are quite noticeable. The numerous plot twists and non-linear storytelling might need to be clarified for some. The appearance of snakes and Maharaja's unrealistic physical power lack logic.

The film doesn't feature any lip-sync songs or background songs, but it excels with its background music. The suspense score, dominated by jazz music, leaves a lasting impact.

The cinematography in the film is mostly wide-frame inclusive; even a single person's frames are wide too. Most of the scenes involve multiple characters, so they had to use wide frames. Interestingly, Nithilan employed five cinematographers for the cinematography.

Vijay Sethupathi's portrayal of Maharaja was a tour de force. He brought complexity and intensity to his character, making it both compelling and relatable. Anurag Kashyap as Selvam took the audience on a rollercoaster ride. As the antagonist, Kashyap stole the show. Though his emotional appearance while getting arrested was not up to the mark, he somehow made up for it in the ending. With limited screen time, Sachana delivered an impressive performance as Jyothi, Maharaja's daughter.

This movie is not just a film; it's an experience. It's a testament to what cinema can achieve when storytelling, acting, and technical prowess come together.

The author is a contributor for Arts & Entertainment, The Daily Star.

Release date for 'Dorod' finalised

Anonno Mamun directorial pan-Indian film ***Dorod*** has officially set its release date for September 6, hitting cinema screens across Bangladesh and India. In this psychological thriller, Bollywood actress Sonal Chauhan co-stars alongside Shakib Khan. The film's initial teaser and first look have already been unveiled, garnering significant interest from film enthusiasts. "Our goal is to make a mark not only in Bangladesh but also in the global market with the film. There is a sizable Bangladeshi community in the Middle East, and they are our target audience," disclosed Mamun.

Canadian PM Trudeau joins Diljit Dosanjh on stage

Indian musician Diljit Dosanjh made history by selling out Toronto's Rogers Centre, with nearly 50,000 attendees. Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau attended the event on Saturday.

Sharing the moment on Instagram, Diljit wrote, "Prime Minister @justinpjtrudeau came to witness history in the making: we sold out the Rogers Centre!"

Trudeau, dressed in a white t-shirt and brown trousers, met Diljit before the show. The singer was thrilled to meet the Canadian PM, and they shared a hug. Trudeau also met with Diljit's team and crew, joining them on stage.

COUNTRYWIDE

People suffer as bridge collapses in Ishwarganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Thousands of people of several villages have been facing serious trouble since the bridge on Kanchamatia river in Ishwarganj upazila collapsed on Friday.

Villagers said hundreds of people of different villages under four unions as well as motorised vehicles used to ply on the risky bridge every day.

However, no casualties were reported when the vulnerable bridge at Sahebnagar village in Sohagi union collapsed on July 12 afternoon, they said.

According to sources, Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) constructed the concrete bridge in 1999.

Ahmed Ali, a resident of Sohagi village, said several thousand residents including students of different villages under four unions of the upazila are in great misery since the bridge collapsed on Friday afternoon.

Moreover, farmers of the area, which is famous for vegetable cultivation in large scale, are counting losses as they are unable to transport their produces to the nearby markets since collapse of the important bridge, Ali said.

Rokeya Begum, former member of Sohagi union parishad (UP), said some 40 students of her area including her two daughters could not attend their institutions in the last two days due to the broken bridge.

Although the bridge was in a vulnerable state for the last several years, local UP did not take any step to repair it in all these years, Rokeya alleged.

Now villagers are crossing the river on rafts made from banana trees, spending Tk 10 for each trip, she further added.

Sohagi UP Chairman Kadir Ahmed Bhuiyan said although the bridge was constructed nearly 25 years ago, it had been in a dilapidated condition for the last four years due to plying of heavy vehicles.

Plying of overloaded trucks could not be stopped due to lack of proper monitoring, resulting the collapse of the bridge, said the chairman.

Abot 1,000 students of eight educational institutions of the locality are the worst sufferers as they are facing untold suffering while crossing the river, he added.

Ishwarganj LGED Upazila Engineer Aysha Akter said a proposal to construct a new bridge under the '100-metre Bridge Project' has been submitted recently.

They have visited the spot and steps will be taken soon to mitigate the sufferings of locals, she added.

People cross this broken bridge on Kanchamatia river in Mymensingh's Ishwarganj upazila amid risk, since it collapsed on Friday.

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Argentina's glorious era carved into granite

FROM PAGE 12

2018 World Cup had left the team and one of their brightest ever stars, Messi, devastated.

These heartbreaks, however, had set the stage for an incredible reversal of narratives.

The turning point came with Argentina's victory in the 2021 Copa America, materialising against hosts Brazil amid an audience-less arena during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. It was their first major tournament win since 1993, following 10 Copa America editions in which they reached the finals four times.

This pivotal breakthrough instilled belief in the squad, and under the continuous guidance of coach Lionel Scaloni, Argentina went on to end a 36-year wait for World Cup glory.

Since then, Scaloni had been preparing his side for a Messi-less reality, evident in their performances during the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, which was reiterated in the just-concluded Copa edition.

In the USA, the team showcased their depth of character with Messi being light years away from his signature best, playing to their strengths and subduing their opponents who came out all guns blazing in the initial phases of the match, as Colombia and Ecuador found out.

At the packed Hard Rock Stadium, Argentina faced a physically superior, well-drilled Colombia -- coming on the back of a 28-match undefeated run -- but emerged superior through the courage and tenacity that a battlefield demands.

In the 66th minute, Messi was left crying profusely after an ankle injury forced him off the field. However, with the game finely poised at 0-0, Messi's teammates rose to the occasion, seemingly playing as if they had put their lives on the line to see their 37-year-old maverick playmaker smile at the end of the night, in what could well be his last outing in a major event.

"Leo is the greatest player in history. He wants to continue playing because he doesn't want to leave his teammates," Scaloni remarked. This sentiment was echoed by midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, who noted, "He always wants to be there, but the fact that he's part of this team is the best thing for us."

Eventually, it took Lautaro Martinez, who started on the bench despite being the tournament's top scorer, to strike in extra time to secure a 1-0 victory. Martinez had also carved a redemption arc for himself, having been criticised right and left for massively misfiring in Qatar, leading to an overburdened Messi.

The triumph was not just about Messi, though. It marked the fitting end to two 36-year-old stalwarts: winger Angel Di Maria and defender Nicolas Otamendi. Di Maria, who announced his national retirement prior to the match, received special praise from his coach: "His story is like a movie because of how it ended."

Scaloni, reflecting on their 'triple crown' journey, said: "I don't know if it marks an era, but it's true this team never ceases to surprise. They overcame the difficulties of a very difficult match, with a very complicated opponent and without a good first half."

From the depths of despair to the heights of glory, Argentina's redemption story is a testament to perseverance and the indomitable spirit of camaraderie. Rest assured, with the rock-solid foundation in place, even the skeptical fans of the Sky Blues and Whites would bank on the team to bring forth further fond memories.

'We're being deprived of justice'

FROM PAGE 12

Prof Yunus made the remarks while talking to journalists on a Dhaka court premises after attending a hearing in a case filed over misappropriation of about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' profit participation fund.

Yesterday was scheduled for recording statements of witnesses, but Judge Md Robiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 set August 5 for the next hearing, following a defence petition, said Belal Hossain, bench assistant of the court.

"These things [the allegations against him] have no basis. This is a case without basis," said the Nobel laureate.

"I am a victim of something, that is clear. It is revenge, violence, hatred all together," he said.

"It was a good thing we were not put inside that cage [in the dock] today [Monday]. I will keep talking about the cage because it is a huge insult to the nation. We should not tolerate this humiliation. I appeal to the judiciary to remove these cages as soon as possible. We want to get rid of its use," he continued.

"It is an insult to humanity. Why will people be kept in cages like animals? It is not a matter of judgement ... just an insult. It is an insult to the entire nation," added Prof Yunus.

Yesterday, he, along with his lawyers, appeared before the court around 11:00am.

On February 1, investigation officer Gulshan Anwar Prodhan, a deputy director of the ACC, placed the charge sheet before the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka.

The 13 other accused are Grameen Telecom Managing Director Nazmul Islam; directors Ashraful Hassan; Naznin Sultana; Parvin Mahmud; M Shahjahan; Nurjahan Begum; and SM Huzzatul Islam Latifee; Sramik-Karmachari Union President Kamruzzaman; General Secretary Firoz Mahmud Hasan and its representative Mainul Islam; Jatiya Workers Federation Office Secretary Kamrul Hasan; and lawyers Zafrul Hasan Sharif and Yusuf Ali.

All 14 accused, including Prof Yunus, are on bail.

On May 30 last year, Gulshan filed the case with the ACC's integrated district office in Dhaka.

Go for a time-bound roadmap

FROM PAGE 12

through abuse of power in the name of being associated with her or by individuals in other high positions in the government".

He called her statement "timely and promising", especially that action was taken against the individual; that such bad elements must be removed whether far or near; that taking action against corruption does not tarnish the government's image; and that zero tolerance against corruption will continue.

Iftekharuzzaman said the PM's declaration to hold the corrupt accountable is significant for the government and the relevant institutions.

Saying the PM's statement debunked the often-heard motivated impression that taking action against high-level corruption damages government's reputation, he added, "In this context, we urge the government to adopt a specific time-bound road map for the meaningful and effective implementation of the PM's zero tolerance pledge and AL's election manifesto.

"By so doing the government can open the road to address growing public concerns about the enormous depths and breadths of corruption and impunity."

Vessel reports being attacked off Yemen

Say UKMTO, Ambrey

REUTERS

A merchant vessel reported it had been attacked early yesterday by three small craft in the Red Sea about 70 nautical miles southwest of Yemen's port city of Hodeidah, Britain's maritime agency and security firm Ambrey said.

An unmanned small craft collided with the vessel twice and two manned small craft fired at it, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

The vessel and crew were reported safe, and it was proceeding to the next port of call, it said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. But since November, the Iran-aligned Houthi group in Yemen has launched drone and missile strikes in shipping lanes in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Palestinians scavenge for usable items at a dump site in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

UK WAR MEMORIAL

Pro-Gaza activists held after protest

AFP, *London*

UK police yesterday arrested two pro-Palestinian demonstrators after a protest at Britain's Cenotaph war memorial in central London.

A Palestinian flag was laid in front of the Cenotaph and "180,000 killed" spray-painted on the ground in front of the monument, photos and video footage showed.

The Cenotaph is the focus every year of national events to commemorate Britain's war dead.

"Two women were quickly arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and are in custody," the Metropolitan Police said on X, adding that damage was caused to the road and not to the monument itself.

In a statement, the Youth Demand group said its supporters had taken action to "commemorate the thousands killed in Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza".

It said Youth Demand was calling for a two-way arms embargo on Israel and for the new UK government to halt all new oil and gas licences granted since 2021.

Russia downs 22 Ukrainian drones

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia downed 22 Ukrainian drones overnight in the west of the country and over Crimea, Moscow's defence ministry said yesterday.

"Over the past night... air defense systems on duty destroyed and intercepted 22 UAVs", the ministry said in a Telegram post.

Fifteen drones were shot down over the Russian border region of Bryansk, six over Crimea, and one over Lipetsk.

Separately, the governor of Kursk said three more Ukrainian drones had been downed there.

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russian territory this year, targeting both energy sites that it says fuel Russia's military. Both sides have used drones, including larger self-detonating craft with ranges stretching hundreds of kilometres, extensively throughout the conflict, which began in February 2022.

Judge tosses Trump documents case

REUTERS, *Washington*

A US judge yesterday dismissed the criminal case accusing Donald Trump of illegally holding onto classified documents, dealing the former president another major legal victory as the Republican seeks a return to the White House.

Florida-based US District Aileen Cannon, who was nominated by Trump, ruled that Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is leading the prosecution, was unlawfully appointed to his role and did not have the authority to bring the case.

It marked another blockbuster legal victory for Trump, following the July 1 US Supreme Court ruling that as a former president he enjoyed immunity from prosecution for many of his actions in office.

Trump yesterday called for all court cases against him to be dropped. "This dismissal of the Lawless Indictment in Florida should be just the first step, followed quickly by the dismissal of ALL the Witch Hunts," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

Prosecutors are likely to appeal the ruling. Courts in other cases have repeatedly upheld the ability of the US Justice Department to appoint special counsels to handle certain politically sensitive investigations.

But Cannon's ruling throws the future of the case, which once posed serious legal peril for Trump, into doubt. Smith is also prosecuting Trump in federal court in Washington over his attempts to overturn the 2020 election.

In the documents case, Trump was indicted on charges that he willfully retained sensitive national security documents at his Mar-a-Lago social club after leaving office and obstructed government efforts to retrieve the material.

LAW OVERHAUL

Lawyers go on strike in Delhi

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Thousands of lawyers in India's capital yesterday protested against an overhaul in criminal legislation by staying away from work and boycotting court hearings, as opposition mounted to the changes.

Many have been angered by new laws that came in on July 1 expanding police powers to keep people in pre-trial detention and requiring judges to issue written rulings within 45 days of the end of a trial.

Indian government has defended the changes, saying they are "victim-centric", modernise the system and "end the endless wait for justice".

Oli takes oath as Nepal's fifth PM in five years

REUTERS, *Kathmandu*

Veteran communist politician K P Sharma Oli was sworn in as Nepal's prime minister yesterday, the fifth in five years, hoping to ensure political stability in the impoverished Himalayan nation that badly needs to woo investors and create jobs.

Nepal has been politically unstable since it abolished a 239-year-old monarchy in 2008. Oli's new government will be the 14th since, with 72-year-old Oli himself returning for his fourth term.

Oli, who heads the moderate Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), was administered the oath of office by President Ramchandra Paudel, three days after his predecessor Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Oli announced a 22-member cabinet, with Bishnu Paudel picked as finance minister, and Arzu Rana Deuba of alliance partner Nepali Congress (NC) named foreign minister. Deuba is the wife of NC president and former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

A handout picture released by the Suwayda 24 news site shows people protesting outside the police headquarters in Sweida, a mainly Druze city located in southwestern Syria yesterday, as Syrians go to the polls to elect new members of the Parliament. PHOTO: **AFP**

POST-POLLS FRANCE

Left-wing parties struggle to unite

Says Socialists' leader

REUTERS, *Paris*

France's left-wing parties still plan to form a joint government after they emerged as the strongest bloc in parliament in a snap election, but any pact is unlikely to come this week, the head of the Socialist Party (PS) said yesterday.

"Nothing will happen before July 18." Olivier Faure told France 2 television, referring to the date the newly elected National Assembly is due to convene for the first time.

The New Popular Front (NPF), a hastily assembled alliance ranging from socialists and Greens to the communist party and the hard-left, eurosceptic Unbowed France (LFI), won the parliamentary election earlier this month but fell well short of a majority.

"We will take our time, don't worry," Faure said. His comments, coming after a week of fruitless talks within the bloc, marked a shift in tone.

Following their surprise election win on July 7, Faure and other leaders said they were prepared to form a government and would come up with a name for the prime minister's seat within days. However, no progress has been made since then.

President Emmanuel Macron last week urged the mainstream parties in France's hung parliament to form a coalition able to muster a "solid" majority, putting pressure on the more moderate parts of the NFP to ditch LFI and join Macron's centrists.

Even if the left manages to agree on a name to put forward as government chief, it was still unclear if Macron would accept to appoint a premier from its ranks as any such government would lack roughly 100 seats in parliament to form a stable majority.

Nations gather to negotiate deep sea mining code

REUTERS, *Singapore*

The UN International Seabed Authority (ISA) was due to meet yesterday to consider new rules allowing firms to extract minerals from the ocean floor, despite mounting concerns about environmental risks.

Supporters say deep sea mining will help boost supplies of raw materials like cobalt and nickel, but critics say it could destroy ecosystems and disrupt migratory routes.

As many as 27 countries are calling for at least a temporary halt of activities, and Hawaii last week became the fourth Pacific US state to issue a comprehensive ban.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়
আরআরএফ, সিলেট

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২৪-২০২৫

স্মারক নং-৮৪২/ই তারিখঃ ১৫/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

"পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬, পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা ২০০৮" এবং তদপরবর্তী সকল সংশোধনী অনুযায়ী ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ সালের আরআরএফ, সিলেট কার্যালয়ের জন্য পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির ১৬নং ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত খাতসমূহের মালামাল সরবরাহ ও কাজের নিমিত্তে ব্যবসায়ী, সরবরাহকারী ও ঠিকাদারের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে প্রতিযোগীতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/পুলিশ বিভাগ।
২	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি), আরআরএফ, সিলেট।
৪	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	(১) মোটরযানের কাঁচামাল সরবরাহ, (২) মোটরযানের টায়ার-টিউব ও ব্যাটারী সরবরাহ (৩) ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী ক্রয় এবং (৪) মোটরযান মেরামত
৫	দরপত্র সূত্র নং	৮৪২/ই
৬	তারিখ	১৫/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
কাজের বিবরণঃ		
৭	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
অর্থের উৎসঃ		
৮	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	রাজস্ব খাত।
তথ্যাদিঃ		
৯	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	১৬/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।
১০	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০৫/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১১	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ, সময়ঃ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ, সময়ঃ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা।
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ		
১৩	দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	০১। কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি), আরআরএফ, সিলেট এর কার্যালয়। ০২। ডিআইজি, সিলেট রেঞ্জ, সিলেট এর কার্যালয়। ০৩। পুলিশ সুপার, সিলেট এর কার্যালয়।
	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিস	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি), আরআরএফ, সিলেট এর কার্যালয়।
	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি), আরআরএফ, সিলেট এর কার্যালয়।
১৪	প্রি-টেন্ডার সভার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ, সিলেট ০৬/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ, সময়ঃ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা।
দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য		
১৫	দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা	০১। হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ০২। আয়কর সনদ, ০৩। ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ০৪। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদ, ০৫। অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা যাহা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল-এ উল্লেখ আছে।
১৬	কাজের বিবরণ	

লট নং	আইটেম	দরপত্রের মূল্য (টাকা) (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র আমানত (টাকা) (ফেরতযোগ্য)	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময় (দিন)
১.	মোটরযানের কাঁচামাল সরবরাহ	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছর
২.	মোটরযানের টায়ার-টিউব ও ব্যাটারী	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
৩.	ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী ক্রয়	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
৪.	মোটরযান মেরামত	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	

দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণঃ		
১৭	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	মোঃ হুমায়ুন কবীর।
১৮	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি)।
১৯	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ, সিলেট।
২০	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	টেলিফোনঃ ০২৯৯৬৬৩২৭৫৫

বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ
ক) কমান্ড্যান্ট (অতিঃ ডিআইজি), আরআরএফ সিলেট এর অনুকূলে অব্যবহৃত ডিডি/পে-অর্ডারসহ দরপত্রের সকল কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
খ) দরপত্র ক্রয়ের ইচ্ছুক ঠিকাদারকে প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজ প্যাডে আবেদনক্রমে সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে।
গ) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র বিক্রয়/গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
ঘ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
ঙ) পিপিআর আইন/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।

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আরআরএফ, সিলেট
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ই-মেইলঃ comrrfsylhet@police.gov.bd

GD- 54

The thick line between 'state' and 'government'

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ASINUR REZA

The distinction between 'state' and 'government' is theoretically clear, yet practically complex. If we compare the state to a four-legged chair, the government represents only one leg. Despite this clear theoretical differentiation, the government often assumes full control over the state, especially in weaker democracies. In such contexts, the distinction between state and government blurs, leading to the state often dissolving into the entity of the government.

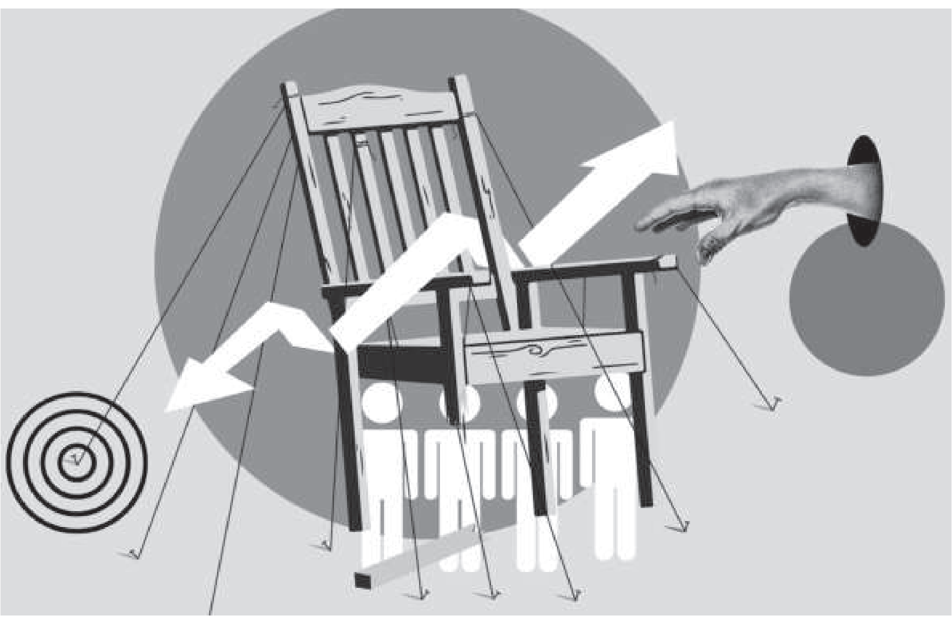
The state comprises four main elements: population, territory, government, and sovereignty. Among these, the government is the most tangible element, consisting of a small number of people elected for a specific period, supported by the larger population. In a republic, the people are the owners of the state and elect representatives to run the state for a designated term. These representatives, forming the government, are tasked with formulating and implementing policies aimed at the welfare and aspirations of the people, assisted by state employees. Section 11 of the Constitution of Bangladesh explicitly states that "effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured," a principle that should be mirrored in all democratic countries.

Governments, composed of people, are inherently prone to errors in their primary responsibility of running the country. A key advantage of a democratic society is the presence of multiple parties and individuals aspiring to form the government. If a government fails to perform its duties adequately, the people have the power to replace them in the next elections, assigning these duties to other parties and individuals. Additionally, various institutions such as parliaments, opposition parties, legislatures, media, civil society, and other related bodies highlight deviations during a government's tenure. The overarching aim is the welfare of the people and the reflection of their aspirations.

These attributes define a democratic state. While many people are familiar with this definition and the related terminology in political science, it is worth repeating because these concepts are often forgotten. Politicians, policymakers, public servants, and the media, along with the public, frequently overlook the structure of the state and the distinction between state and government. As previously mentioned, in weak democracies, this distinction becomes especially blurred, leading to an autocratic shift in the government. To prevent this, modern state systems emphasise the "separation of powers" among the branches of government, a principle that helps maintain a balance of power and prevent autocratic governance.

In a democratic system, the government typically consists of three branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The legislative branch, responsible for making laws and in Bangladesh, is represented by the National Parliament. The executive branch, which includes the prime minister and cabinet ministers, implements and enforces these laws, holding significant power. The judicial branch, distinct from the legislative and executive branches, includes courts and judges responsible for interpreting and applying the law, ensuring justice, and maintaining consistency with the constitution. The judiciary must operate independently to provide checks and balances and protect individual rights, free from political influence. Article 22 of the Bangladesh Constitution mandates the separation of the judiciary from the executive. However, this separation was officially implemented only in 2007 and the executive still seems to exert considerable influence over the legal system, particularly in lower courts. Strict adherence to the separation of powers is crucial to prevent any state organ from gaining absolute power and becoming a "Frankenstein's monster." British politician Lord Acton famously said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." History is replete with examples where absolute power has led to the erosion of civil liberties and increased corruption.

In Bangladesh, political and official discourses often accuse critics and opposition members of "anti-state and anti-government conspiracies," even for merely criticising government policies. Such accusations exploit ambiguities in legal terminology. For example, in August 2022, a student at a public university was handed over to the police by the university authority, accused of "involvement in anti-state activities" simply for liking the Facebook page of an opposition student organisation. The police later released him after finding no evidence of sedition. According to the student, he had criticised the current government in an internal Facebook Messenger group text, which led to him being unjustly labelled "anti-state" and handed over to the police.



VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

The law must clearly differentiate between criticism of the government and opposition to the state. Suppressing government criticism by labelling it "anti-state" will ultimately harm both the government and the state. In September 2016, the Supreme Court of neighbouring India issued a landmark ruling on this matter. The Court stated that harsh criticism of the government does not equate to insulting it or committing treason. Sedition charges apply only when actions incite public disorder or violence. This ruling underscores that anyone can criticise the government without facing defamation or treason charges.

Moreover, it is crucial to clarify the role of "government employees." Are they employees of a particular political party, or the state of Bangladesh? The constitution refers to them as "public servants," making it clear that they are state employees, not political appointees. While political governments change every five years, public servants do not. Their primary role is to serve the state and work under the direction of the legitimate government. Political governments must not use public servants for political purposes, and these servants of state must maintain political neutrality. The Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 explicitly state that no government servant shall be associated with any political party or take part in any political activity, and although they may vote, they must not indicate their voting preferences. However, in practice, some government employees are enticed and inclined towards political parties, undermining the mandated neutrality and compromising the integrity of the democratic process.

Therefore, it is crucial to revisit and reinforce the principles that differentiate the state from the government. The government, composed of transient elected representatives, must operate within the confines of the law, serving the people rather than the other way around. This is especially important in weaker democracies, where the risk of governmental overreach is higher. Public awareness and understanding of these principles are essential to safeguarding democracy and ensuring that the government remains accountable to the people. A clear distinction between the state and the government is fundamental to the functioning of a democratic society. The state, with its permanent structures and institutions, provides the framework within which the government operates. The government, as the elected representative body, must respect this framework, adhere to the separation of powers, and maintain its accountability to the people. By upholding these principles, we can ensure that democracy thrives and that the rights and liberties of the people are protected.

From universal pension to universal social protection system

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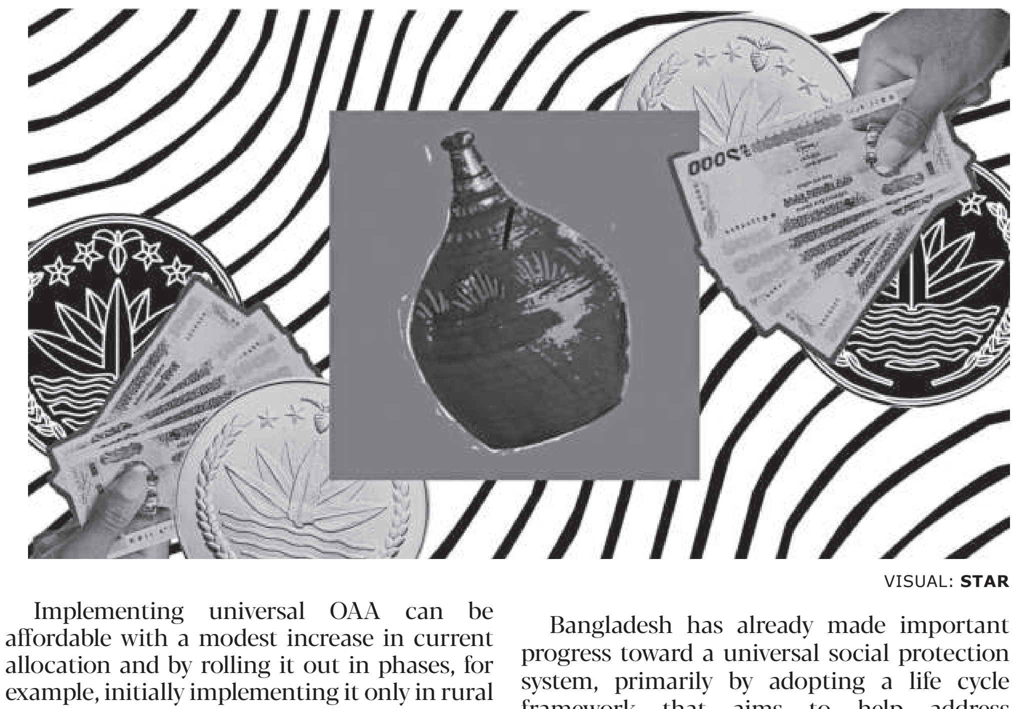
FAZLEY ELAHI MAHMUD

The implementation of the universal pension, particularly the Prottoy scheme, designed for the employees of self-governed and autonomous institutions, is facing a major challenge due to the indefinite strike by public university teachers. At this juncture, the teachers' concern that the benefits under the new scheme would be lower than existing retirement benefits need to be addressed. Additionally, it is essential to ensure equity across all schemes offered to different groups.

Introducing a contributory universal pension scheme was a key commitment of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) adopted in 2015. The government's sincerity in implementing NSSS commitments is commendable. Historically, only government employees in Bangladesh had access to pensions. With the country's recent remarkable economic development and progress toward achieving the status of a developing country, it is time to expand the pension system to all elderly citizens. The universal pension scheme has created such an opportunity by offering pensions to employees of the private sector, informal sector and self-employed individuals. Anyone can register for the new initiative to receive pensions after reaching 60 years of age, including individuals from low-income groups. Participants are required to make monthly contributions during their working years, along with a matching contribution from the employers. The government will make the matching contribution for participants earning less than Tk 60,000 annually.

Yet, the universal pension would be out of reach of the extremely poor, such as day labourers, due to their inability to make contributions. These groups possibly need it most as they cannot save for old age. Many are abandoned by their children due to the shift from traditional joint family systems to nuclear families, making them vulnerable to destitution. The existing non-contributory Old Age Allowance (OAA) programme is intended for this segment of the population. However, the OAA excludes many poor elderly individuals through poverty-based selection, and it is not termed a "pension". To achieve true universal pension coverage, the OAA programme must be declared universal. It should also be rebranded as a "social pension" to demonstrate that the state treats them as valued citizens. The launch of the universal pension has simplified the case for making the OAA universal, especially regarding defining the intended participants and the selection process. The OAA benefits should be available to those unable to access the universal pension, thereby closing the gap in universal coverage. Once universal, a poverty-based selection system will no longer be necessary as the only eligibility criteria would be age threshold to be verified with the National Identity (NID) card, possibly with a proof of residence from the respective local governments.



VISUAL: **STAR**

Implementing universal OAA can be affordable with a modest increase in current allocation and by rolling it out in phases, for example, initially implementing it only in rural areas. Currently, the age threshold for the programme is 62 years for women and 65 years for men. Based on 2022 census data, the rural population in these age groups is estimated at 7.7 million. For 2024-25, Tk 4,300 crore has been allocated for the programme to provide a transfer of Tk 600 per month to six million elderly persons. If all individuals meeting the age threshold are provided with Tk 600 per month, approximately an additional Tk 1,264 crore will be required annually. This additional cost could be spread over multiple years by implementing the programme only in a select number of upazilas each year.

In addition to a phased approach, it is also necessary to reform the social protection budget to secure more funds for transfer programmes for the poor. For 2024-25, 2.43 percent of GDP has been allocated to social protection, but a significant portion of it—Tk 3,65,000 crore—is designated for the pensions of retired government employees. Another Tk 88,000 crore is allocated for interest subsidies on savings certificates. The universal pension will eventually allow funds for retired government employees' pensions to come from contributions, although this transition may take several years. Consideration should be given to withdrawing the interest subsidy for savings certificates since bank interest rates have increased to levels similar to those of savings certificates. The released funds from these items could be used to roll out universal OAA in urban areas and making other life cycle programmes universal.

Bangladesh has already made important progress toward a universal social protection system, primarily by adopting a life cycle framework that aims to help address vulnerabilities of pregnant women and young children, school age children, unemployed/ under employed people, elderly people, widows, and persons with disabilities. Among these lifecycle groups, primary school children have been receiving stipends universally since 2016, regardless of poverty status. The disability allowance programme has achieved universal coverage, though it needs to be formally declared universal, removing the poverty-based selection system.

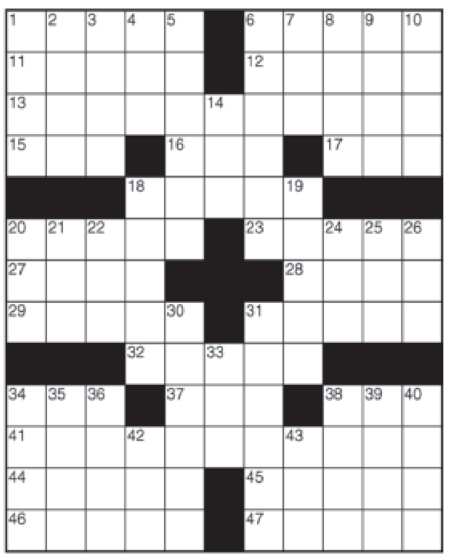
To achieve a universal social protection system, it is urgent to explore options for the remaining life cycle programmes in line with the above discussion on universal OAA. These programmes are the Mother and Child Benefit Programme, the Food Friendly Programme (to support seasonally unemployed agricultural day labourers) and the widow allowance/Vulnerable Women Benefit Programme. Offering these programmes universally to the defined groups is affordable, if implemented in a phased manner, as proposed above for the OAA. Only by implementing a universal approach can the historical problems around social protection including selection errors, nepotism, and corruption be eliminated. A universal approach also ensures right to social protection and improves trust and loyalty of the citizens toward the state, thus promoting social cohesion.

The first NSSS was marked by adoption of a life cycle approach to address the vulnerabilities that citizens face at different stages of life. The second NSSS, scheduled in 2026, could be marked by adopting a universal approach for life cycle programmes that would ensure social protection for every deserving citizen as committed by the Constitution of Bangladesh.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Members of the force
5 Archaeologist's find
9 Bean-bearing tree
10 Find darling
12 Houston player
13 Praline nut
14 Fetters
16 Child
17 Egg layers
18 Spends time at the mirror
21 Ram's mate
22 Is fearful of
23 Intended
24 Peaceful
26 Poker prize
29 Apply hastily
30 Dressed in
31 Cereal grain
32 Laundry problems
34 Impassioned
37 Detail map
38 "Tomorrow" musical
39 Suspicious
40 Halt
41 Whirl of water

DOWN
1 Kidney-shaped nut
2 Gas pump number
3 Louvre location
4 Before long
5 Keg need
6 Keats work
7 Ridiculed
8 Intelligence
9 Secret store
11 Finishes
15 Sports injuries
19 Tear
20 Have lunch
22 Retro style
23 Atlas page
24 Bison's home
25 Hidden
26 Self-assured
27 Stubborn
28 Irritable
29 Couch
30 Diminished
33 Floor piece
35 2016 Olympics host
36 Slangy agreement



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

■	C	O	P	S	■	T	O	M	B	■
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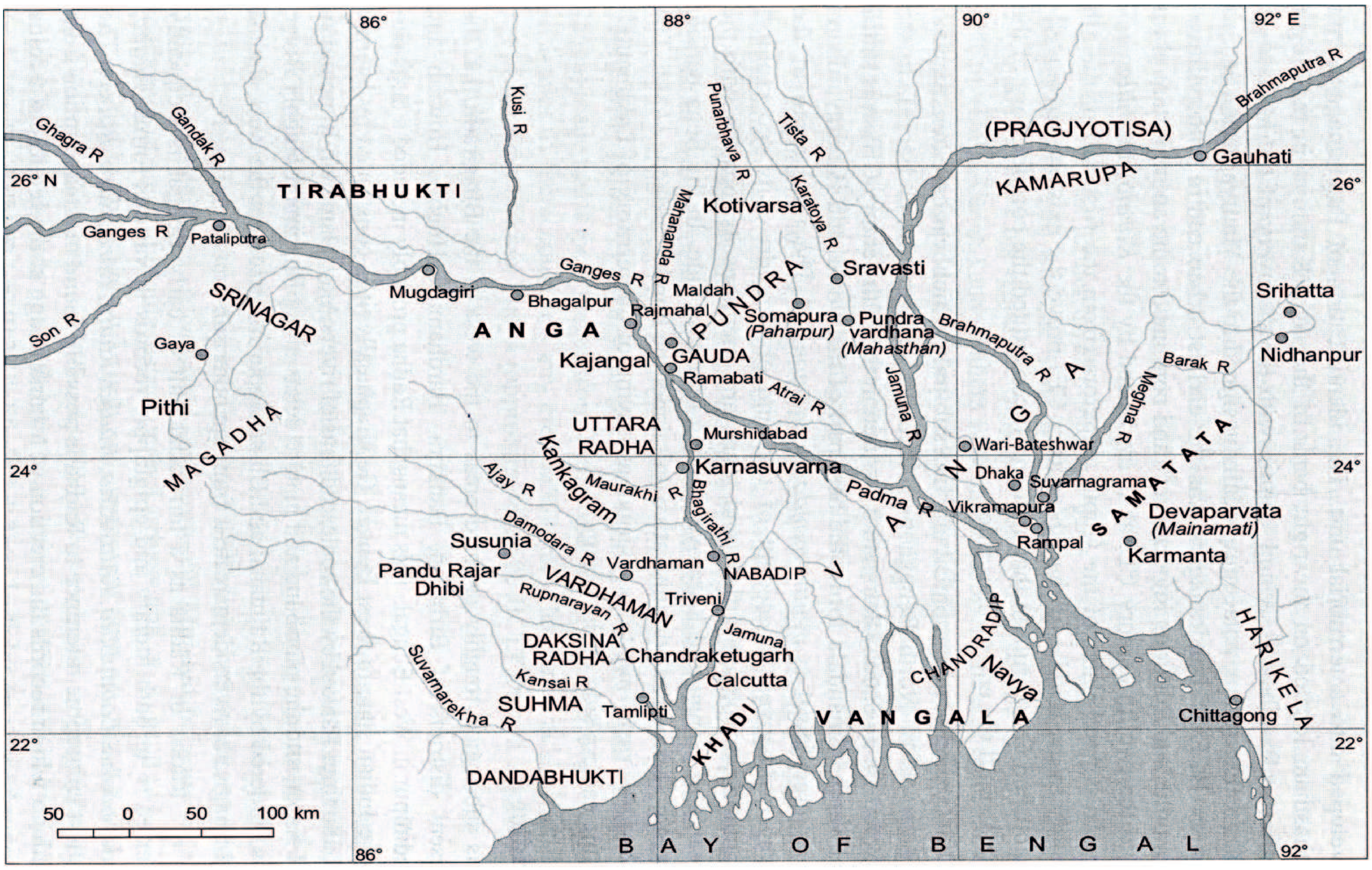


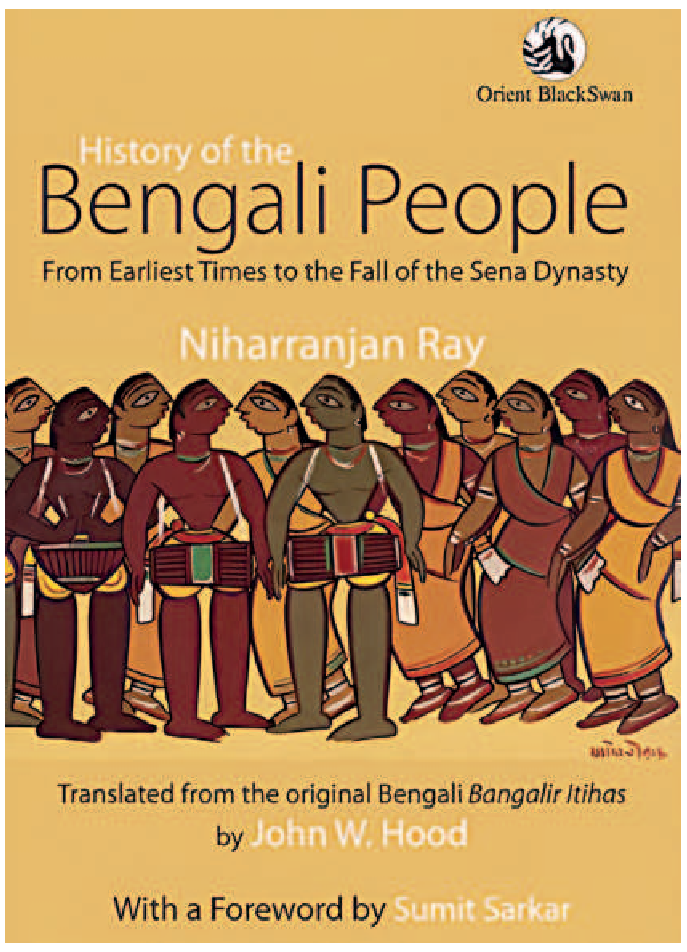
Ancient Map of Bengal. Source: *History of Bangladesh*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2018.

An Iconic History of Bengal

> **Bangalir Itihas does, indeed, bring kings, for example, into the scheme of things, though not so much in their own right; rather, royal worthiness is assessed by what kingship might have done for society as a whole, and that obviously includes the common people. So, Ray's History soon came to be known as 'history from the bottom.'**

JOHN W HOOD

In the sixties of the last century, I earned my primary degree with majors in Philosophy and Indian Studies and became a secondary school teacher. The somewhat recently established Indian Studies Department at the University of Melbourne was a very fraternal institution, one with which it was easy to maintain relations even after graduation. The Chairman of the Department was the very reserved Sibnarayan Ray; the Belgian Indologist, Dr. Joseph Jordens, oversaw the classical offerings of the curriculum; and Mr. (soon to be Dr.) Atindra Mojumder, a man of apparently boundless energy and enthusiasm, managed everything else. Atindra-babu told me about a former teacher of his named Dr. Niharranjan Ray and some of his works, including a history of the Bengali people. He suggested that my Bengali was a lot better than I believed and persuaded me to translate Bangalir Itihas or History of the Bengali People and submit it as a footnote to a thesis on its author. After a year, the undertaking was upgraded to a doctoral project, and a few years after that, Bengali Vernacular Historiography: Niharranjan Ray – A Case Study emerged successfully. Almost immediately, the translation was snapped up by Orient Longman; the thesis part took a bit longer to find a publisher (It was published by Sahitya Akademi in Calcutta in its Makers of Indian Literature series).



Orient BlackSwan

History of the
Bengali People
From Earliest Times to the Fall of the Sena Dynasty
Niharranjan Ray

Translated from the original Bengali *Bangalir Itihas*
by John W. Hood

With a Foreword by Sumit Sarkar

Cover page of the English translation of *Bangalir Itihas : Adi Parba*

I first met Niharranjan Ray in, I think, 1978. I was staying at the Ramakrishna Mission Guesthouse in Golpark, and from the roundabout in front of the stately building runs Purna Das Road, off the far end of which, near Rashbehari Avenue, ran a lane where the Ray family home stood. So, one Sunday after lunch, I set off with Atindra Mojumder's letter of introduction to meet the great man. I found the house easily and rang the doorbell. I was about to leave after the third ring when the door was opened by an elderly and evidently sleepy man wearing a lungi and a slightly tattered genji. I asked the servant if I might see Dr. Ray, and with a warm smile and a soft voice, the servant replied, "I am Dr. Ray." I had yet to learn of one of the best bad habits of the Bengalis - the after-lunch snooze, especially on a Sunday.

He welcomed me into his living room and, having learned that I had translated nothing of any magnitude before, proceeded to offer me some advice, the essence of which was not to try to translate literally. Rather, I should read a paragraph, think about it, and, as though I had concocted it myself, write it in English as I might have written it in the first place. I felt that this was more than a little outrageous. After all, who was I to equate myself in any way at all with such a great man? I made a mental note to look for opportunities to compromise.

And so, once I had returned to Melbourne, I started work on this exciting project. Atindra-babu had said that if I translated only a page a day, I could get a first draft done in less than a year and a half. This was quite persuasive encouragement, but there were times when a page a day was asking too much of myself. This was my first extensive piece of translation, and Bengali is quite different from any European language I have had anything to do with. I was visiting Atindra-babu for a checking session every second weekend or so, and those sessions proved very helpful. Still, I would have to be patient. And then, after a year, the project was upgraded to Ph.D. status.

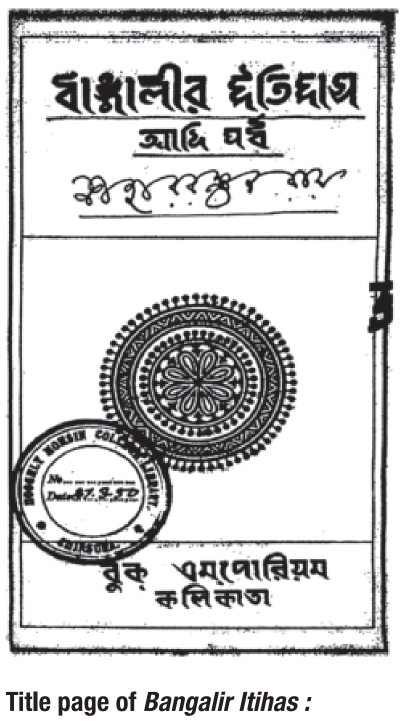
Niharranjan Ray (1903-1981)

Of course, the translation would be simply an appendix to the thesis. The major part of the whole work – major in importance, though certainly not in magnitude – would take quite some time after the translation had been finished. I was prepared for this and not particularly urged by any need to hurry, having become part of Niharranjan's ancient Bengali world, as it were; quite frankly, I liked it there and felt remarkably comfortable in it. I had no urge to get out of it.

Having achieved some familiarity with Bangalir Itihas (whose title I translated literally as History of the Bengali People), I needed to start thinking of Niharranjan Ray as a historian. I remembered, as an earnest schoolboy, finding comfort in the simplicity of Thomas Carlyle's dictum declaring history to be the story of great men and their deeds. Now, having read Niharranjan Ray's history, I was troubled by two words: "great men." I was prompted to wonder if there had been no great women in the past and whether greatness was really necessary to attain historical worthiness.

Some years before Ray came to write his History, G. M. Trevelyan turned English historiography on its head with his English Social History, a monumental work that gave central historical roles to hosts of players from the non-privileged classes. Bangalir Itihas does, indeed, bring kings, for example, into the scheme of things, though not so much in their own right; rather, royal worthiness is assessed by what kingship might have done for society as a whole, and that obviously includes the common people. So, Ray's History soon came to be known as 'history from the bottom' as distinct from Carlyle's 'history from the top'.

This distinction extended from subject matter to sources. The major players in 'history from the top' wrote documents – edicts, treaties, memoirs, and the like. However, most of the stars of 'history from the bottom' could neither read nor write, so their later historians would not be able to lose themselves in documents dealing with their roles in history. Of course, documentary sources that had a pan-Hindu (and, a little later, Buddhist and Jain) pertinence and were as significant to the history of the Bengalis as to the rest of the broader Hindu community were naturally used by Ray wherever it was appropriate. However, he was quick to respect the notion that records of people's lives did not have to be documentary to make them historically significant, nor was the story told by documentary sources necessarily superior to whatever could be gleaned from less orthodox sources. Agricultural implements and rudimentary tools, for example, came to tell many stories, as did artistic items such as engravings on a variety of surfaces, relief sculptures, and icons. And folkloric 'literature' – children's rhymes, folksongs, and stories passed down in oral tradition – bore a wealth of mysteries from the past for perceptive modern scholars to unravel. Ray's History of the Bengali People and his fresh historiography helped to usher in a new era of historical scholarship.



বাঙ্গালীর ইতিহাস
আদি পর্ব
নীহাররঞ্জন রায়

বুক এম্পোরিয়ম
কলিকাতা

Title page of *Bangalir Itihas : Adi Parba*

A truly notable feature of Ray's History is its literary value. The prose is incisive, decorative without being flowery, elegant, and at times majestic in style. But its most prominent strength is its content, for in his selection, arrangement, and treatment of subject matter, Niharranjan enables the long-past adi parva of his beloved Bengal to flourish again in the pages of his classic work. He introduces us to the earliest Bengalis he can find. He describes the land that gave them sustenance and which they learned to use to make themselves and successive generations thrive. He shows us how they developed an economy, first as agriculturalists, then as craftsmen and traders. He describes how they ordered their society and provided for its accommodation in villages and towns. He helps us to share, albeit from a great temporal distance, their everyday lives, their pleasures, and their creativity. And he interprets their contemplative life and their reaching out to the spiritual beyond. In all, it is a recreation of the fabulous richness of a distant world, yet one that forms the foundation of what many revere as contemporary Bengali nationalism.

It is interesting to observe that Niharranjan Ray started his adult life as a librarian and ended it as one of India's eminent polymaths. Indeed, given the sumptuous variety of the substance of his History of the Bengali People, it should be no surprise that the man's own mind encompassed a luxuriant range of academic and artistic interests. A quick glance at his immense bibliography reveals an expert understanding of Indian sculpture, Mughal miniature painting, East Indian bronzes, art in Burma, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, the life and literature of Tagore, and much more. In a world in which so many people continue to see increasingly narrow specialization as a worthy writer's raison d'être, the contribution of Niharranjan Ray to modern India and Bangladesh's understanding and appreciation of themselves is an incandescent reminder of the existence of much further-flung boundaries in the pursuit of the humanities.

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Dr. John W. Hood *is a film critic, translator, and former teacher.*

Star
DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 16, 2024, SRABAN 1, 1431 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Lanka Premier League
Dambulla vs Colombo
Live from 8:00 pm

MESSI'S 45TH CAPS
Argentina's triple crown

MOST COPA AMERICA TITLES WON

- 16 - ARGENTINA
- 15 – URUGUAY
- 9 – BRAZIL
- 2 – CHILE, PARAGUAY, PERU
- 1 – BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA

STAR SPORTS DESK

Lionel Messi has shattered yet another record in his storied career as the Argentine maestro is now the most decorated footballer in the game's history with a record of 45 title wins.

Argentina defeated Colombia 1-0 in the final to win their second successive Copa America title in Miami and with it, Messi edged past his former Barcelona teammate and Brazilian rival Dani Alves to become the most decorated footballer ever.

This was Messi's fourth straight international title, having won the Copa America in 2021, the Finalissima in 2022 and the FIFA World Cup in 2022 before defending the Copa title this year in the USA.

Messi has enjoyed a total of 39 titles in his club career, 35 of which came with Barcelona.

He has won a total of 12 league titles (10 with Barcelona, two with PSG), four UEFA Champions Leagues trophies (all with Barcelona), and 17 domestic cups (a total of 15 with Barcelona, one with PSG and one with Inter Miami).

He has also won three UEFA Super Cups and three FIFA Club World Cups with the Catalan giants.

Messi has also won the Under-20 World Cup trophy and an Olympic gold for Argentina. The 37-year-old is also holder of eight Balon d'Or trophies, most by any footballer. So far, he has netted 838 goals and 374 assists in his career.

The tournament almost ended on a sorry note for Messi who had to be replaced in the second half due to an ankle injury.

- Golden Boot: Lautaro Martinez (Argentina)
- Best Player: James Rodriguez (Colombia)
- Golden Glove: Emiliano Martinez (Argentina)
- Fair Play Award: Colombia

I dreamt it, that's why I said it was the last Copa America and it ended here. I dreamt that I would reach the final, I dreamt that I would win it, that I would retire like this.....I have so many beautiful feelings. I am eternally grateful to this generation, they gave me everything, they made me achieve what I wanted so much, and today I am leaving in this way, how better than this?

Argentina's retiring forward
ANGEL DI MARIA

Start of a new SPANISH ERA?

AFP, *Berlin*

Spain conquered Europe for a record fourth time on Sunday as they beat England to win Euro 2024 and want this historic night to be the beginning of a new period of dominance.

Led by young stars Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams, 17 and 22 respectively, many in Luis de la Fuente's superb side will hit their prime in the years ahead.

Between 2008 and 2012 Spain dominated international football, winning the Euros in those years and the 2010 World Cup in the middle.

A fallow period followed with Spain falling badly short in most competitions until reaching the semifinals of Euro 2020.

It was a positive sign but a last 16 defeat by Morocco at the 2022 World Cup spelled the end of Luis Enrique's reign and the start of what was to come.

No longer dependent on dominating possession, Luis de la Fuente's Spain play to a wide variety of strengths.

Sometimes they do keep the ball, as in the second half of their semi-final win over pre-tournament favourites France, but are not afraid to go direct, with the speedy and skilful Williams and Yamal duo leaving full-backs for dead on the counter.

Spain's football has changed but they are hoping their domination of the international stage will be repeated.

"The European champions have been deservedly crowned, today I am even prouder and I hope this impulse will serve to be even better," said De la Fuente.

"You can always improve and that's our objective... we will do it because these players are an example for everyone, they are so good."

Three of the stars from their golden generation, Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta and David Villa, watched on in the Olympiastadion as La Roja lifted a major trophy for the first time in 12 years.

Coach Luis de la Fuente came under heavy scrutiny after a shock defeat by Scotland in Euros qualifying in March 2023, but steadied the ship by winning the Nations League three months later, confirming Spain were on the right track, at least on the field.

With the team no longer dependent on stars from Real Madrid and Barcelona, but instead a real mix including a strong Basque contingent from Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad, Spain believed in themselves and their plan, even if others viewed them as lacking players to compete with the likes of France and England for the trophy.

They beat both, as well as hosts Germany and Euro 2020 winners Italy -- the other four of Europe's 'big five'.

"This is a dream, we are the best national team in Europe," Rodri told ITV.

"Imagine what we have next -- we are so happy. We made history but it doesn't stop here, we have talent and we'll keep going."

They won Euro 2024 without Barcelona midfielder Gavi, who suffered a bad knee injury in November, and the Catalan club's young centre-back Pau Cubarsi, whom De la Fuente left behind this time, but will likely be a key component in the future.

Spain were also without Pedri for the semis and final after he was hurt early in the quarterfinal win over Germany.

It is clear why De la Fuente believes Spain's present is bright but their future can be even brighter.

- Player of the Tournament: Rodri (Spain)
- Player of the Final: Nico WIlliams (Spain)
- Young Player of the Tournament: Lamine Yamal (Spain)
- Golden Boot: Dani Olmo (Spain), Harry Kane (England), Cody Gakpo (Netherlands), Jamal Musiala (Germany), Georges Mikautadze (Georgia), Ivan Schranz (Slovakia).
- Most Assists: Lamine Yamal (Spain) - 4
- Most Clean Sheets: Mike Maignan (France) - 4

Most Euro titles won

4 - Spain
3 - Germany
2 - France, Italy
1 - Netherlands, Czech Republic, Slovakia Russia, Greece, Denmark, Portugal

Alcaraz plotting golden path to greatness

REUTERS, *London*

There was a moment of euphoria after Carlos Alcaraz finished off Novak Djokovic to retain his Wimbledon title on Sunday, the usual pumped fists and group hugs with his entourage in the players' box.

But an hour or so later the Spaniard was already back down on planet earth, insisting his journey is only just beginning.

"I've seen and I've heard all the statistics that I am the youngest to win at Roland Garros and Wimbledon the same year," the 21-year-old told reporters after his 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(4) demolition of 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic.

"I honestly try not to think about it too much. Obviously it's a really great start of my career but I have to keep going. I have to keep building my path.

"At the end of my career, I want to sit at the same table as the big guys. That's my main goal. That's my dream. It doesn't matter if I already won four Grand Slams at the age of 21."

Alcaraz is indeed the youngest player to complete the French Open-Wimbledon double in the same year during the professional era and emulated Roger Federer in winning his first four Grand Slam finals, although the Swiss triumphed in his first seven.

Alcaraz's four Grand Slam titles, the 2022 U.S Open, last year's Wimbledon when he also beat Djokovic, and this year's French Open-Wimbledon double, required just 69 matches at the slams.

Federer needed 79 matches, Nadal 81 and Djokovic 134 before notching their fourth Grand Slam titles.

With Italy's world number one Jannik Sinner, winner of this year's Australian Open, vying with Alcaraz for top-dog status, the figureheads of a new generation are now established.

Whether or not either can go on to challenge the numbers of the "Big Three" is another question entirely.

"I think being there with Jannik, in the top of the ranking, winning the Grand Slams, I think it is good for tennis to have new faces winning the big things and fighting for the big tournaments," Alcaraz said.

Bangladesh women's cricket team are set to depart for Sri Lanka today to play the eight-nation 2024 Women's T20 Asia Cup, slated to be played from July 19 to 28. The Tigresses yesterday had a photo session in Mirpur before embarking on their Asia Cup mission.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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‘We’re being deprived of justice’

Says Prof Yunus after court hearing

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said it appears that there is an attempt to hurriedly conclude the trial of the case he and 13 others are accused in and that they were being deprived of justice.

“We are not getting justice; the people of the country understand what is in the background. Anyone present in the court will feel that there is an attempt to finish the trial process hurriedly,” he said.

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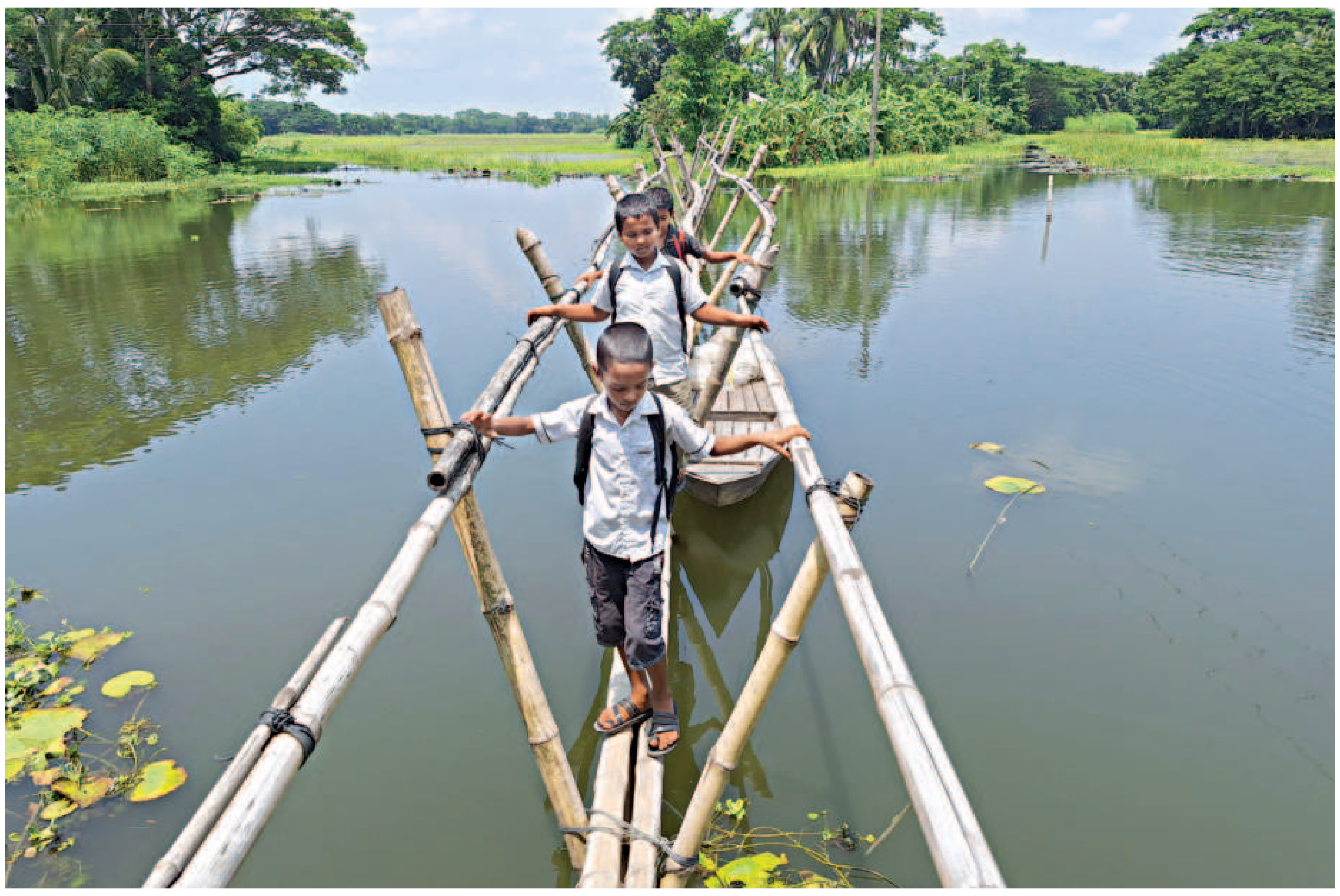

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Children of Kalbila village, adjacent to the Shapla beel, in Barishal’s Wazirpur upazila have to cross a bamboo bridge every morning just to get to school. They used to cross the waterbody by boat until around seven years ago, the locals built this makeshift bridge, which hundreds of villagers have to cross every day. Despite the children having to take such risks, the authorities concerned do not seem to be bothered.

Go for a time-bound roadmap to fight graft

TIB urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday urged the government to adopt and enforce a time-bound roadmap consistent with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s declaration of “zero tolerance against corruption”.

In a statement, it said, “TIB would like to consider the prime minister’s disclosure of action taken against a former employee at her residence, who accumulated huge amount of income and wealth; her declaration that [corrupt people must be removed from society whether] ‘far or near, no matter’; and that ‘zero tolerance against corruption’ will continue as a testimony to her firm commitment against corruption.”

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman in the statement said, “Recently, many instances of high-level corruption have come to light, where individuals have allegedly amassed huge income and wealth through corruption, abusing their entrusted power or leveraging their relationships with those in powerful positions.”

At a press conference on July 14, in response to questions about the government’s initiative, Hasina disclosed that she took action against a former employee of her household who had amassed Tk 400 crore.

Terming the PM’s disclosure as an indicator of political will, Iftekharuzzaman said, “The prime minister has in reality expressed her dismay and discomfort towards the culture of normalisation of amassing illegal wealth

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Pak govt to ban Imran’s party

To file treason case against the former prime minister

REUTERS, *Islamabad*

Pakistan government is planning to ban former prime minister Imran Khan’s political party and move the country’s top court to press treason charges against him, the information minister said yesterday.

The move to ban Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was based on the proven charge of the party receiving foreign funds from sources that are illegal in Pakistan, as well as rioting by the supporters last year that targeted military installations, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said.

“The federal government will move a case to ban the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf,” he said, adding that the plan will be taken up before the cabinet, which was empowered to take a decision.

The government will also file a legal reference against Khan and former President Arif Alvi for treason charges under the country’s constitution before the Supreme Court, Tarar said.

Khan’s aide Zulfikar Bukhari said the decision was a move towards “soft martial law”. “This is a sign of panic as they have realised the courts can’t be threatened and put under pressure,” he said.

PTI candidates contested the February 8 election as independents after it was barred from the polls.

The Supreme Court had last week ruled that the party was eligible for more than 20 extra reserved seats in parliament, ramping up pressure on the country’s weak coalition government.

Israel hits Gaza from land, sea, air

80 more Palestinians killed; truce prospects dwindle

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

Israel hammered the Gaza Strip from the air, sea and land yesterday as the offensive in the Palestinian territory showed no sign of abating, with Hamas saying it was pulling out of truce talks.

Shells rained down on the neighbourhoods of Tal Al-Hawa, Sheikh Ajlin and Al-Sabra in Gaza City, AFP correspondents reported, while eyewitnesses said the Israeli army had shelled the Al-Mughraqa area and the northern outskirts of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

Paramedics from the Palestinian Red Crescent said they had retrieved the bodies of five people, including three children, after Israeli air strikes in the Al-Maghazi camp, also in the central Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, eyewitnesses reported Israeli gunship fire east of Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza, and shelling and Apache helicopter attacks several homes in western areas of the southernmost city of Rafah.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it was continuing its activity throughout the coastal territory, and said it had conducted raids in Rafah and central Gaza that killed “a number of militants”, as well as air strikes throughout the strip over the past day.

It also said its naval forces had been firing at targets in Gaza.

- Israel bombs UN-run school in Nuseirat camp
- Rafah residents say strikes blew up several homes
- Gaza death toll rises to 38,664

More than 38,664 Palestinians have been killed and 89,097 have been injured in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 80 Palestinians were killed and 216 injured in the past 24 hours, the ministry added.

On Sunday evening, Israeli forces struck a UN-run school in Nuseirat camp that was being used as a shelter for displaced people but which the military said “served as a hideout” for Hamas fighters.

The civil defence agency in Gaza said 15 people were killed in the strike, the fifth attack in just over a week to hit a school used as shelter by displaced Palestinians.

The relentless bombardments came as prospects dwindled for a truce and hostage release deal being secured any time soon.

Hamas, the Iran-backed group, said on Sunday it was withdrawing from ceasefire talks.

The decision followed an Israeli strike targeting the head of Hamas’s military wing, Mohammed Deif, which the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said killed 92 people.

Last week, US President Joe Biden had suggested a deal might be close, saying at a Nato summit that both sides had agreed to a framework he had set out in late May.

Hamas yesterday lashed out at the US, accusing it of supporting “genocide” by supplying Israel with “internationally banned” weapons.

Temple older than Machu Picchu found in Peru

CNN ONLINE

Archaeologists in Peru have unearthed the remains of what they believe are a 4,000-year-old temple and theater, shining a new light on the origins of complex religions in the region.

The team began studying the new archaeological site of La Otra Banda, Cerro Las Animas, in June. Last year, the local government alerted them to looting that had been taking place near the northern Peruvian town of Zaña, according to a press release from the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois.

They excavated a plot roughly 33 feet long and 33 feet wide, finding signs of ancient walls made of mud and clay at just six feet deep.

“It was so surprising that these very ancient structures were so close to the modern surface,” Luis Muro Ynoñán, a research scientist at the Field Museum who led the team, said in the release.

The finds predate the country’s best-known archaeological site, the ancient citadel of Machu Picchu, which is believed to have been built by the Inca Empire in the 15th century, by about 3,500 years. They also predate the pre-Inca cultures of Moche and Nazca, researchers said.

Argentina’s glorious era carved into granite

KHALID HOSSAIN

As Argentina edged past Colombia in a high-intensity Copa America final in Miami yesterday (Bangladesh time), the defending champions added a laminated layer to their fascinating journey of serial success.

Also, quite refreshingly and crucial to their long-term output, the Albiceleste’s transformation from heavy reliance on Lionel Messi spreading stardust to becoming a well-rounded team capable of winning without him epitomises their coming of age.

Furthermore, their latest feat became particularly sweet as it mirrored Spain’s historic achievement of winning a World Cup sandwiched between two continental titles (Euro 2008 and 2012).

The narrative of Argentina’s redemption began in the long shadow of painful defeats: the 2014 World Cup final loss to Germany -- who had also eliminated them in preceding edition’s quarterfinals -- and consecutive Copa America final defeats in 2015 and 2016 before a meek, last-16 exit from the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

CAMPEÓN 2024
CONMEBOL COPA AMERICA

Argentina captain Lionel Messi, flanked by his teammates and coaching staff, lifts the Copa America trophy after the world champions beat Colombia 1-0 in extra time in the final at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

2 Bangladeshis shot dead near Sylhet border

Fingers pointed at ‘Khasi’ people in India’s Meghalaya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Two Bangladeshis were shot dead allegedly by Khasi People of India’s Meghalaya along Kalairag border in Sylhet’s Companiganj upazila on Sunday afternoon.

The victims were Ali Hossain, 32, and Kawsar Ahmed, 30, of Kalairag village.

Foyzur Rahman, chairman of Uttar Ranikhai union, said, “So far, we learnt that two people were killed and several others were shot by the Khasi people of India inside Indian territory. But we could not confirm the identities of the injured.”

Quoting locals, Foyzur said the deceased along with others went to a hill to collect firewood.

Golam Dastagir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Companiganj Police Station, said members of Border Guard Bangladesh and India’s Border Security Force recovered the bodies from the no-man’s land around 7:00pm yesterday and handed those over to police after a meeting between the two border security forces.

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REGD. NO. DA 781 VOL. XXXIV NO. 175 SRABAN 2, 1431 BS www.thedailystar.net MUHARRAM 10, 1446 HIJRI 16 PAGES: TK 15.00

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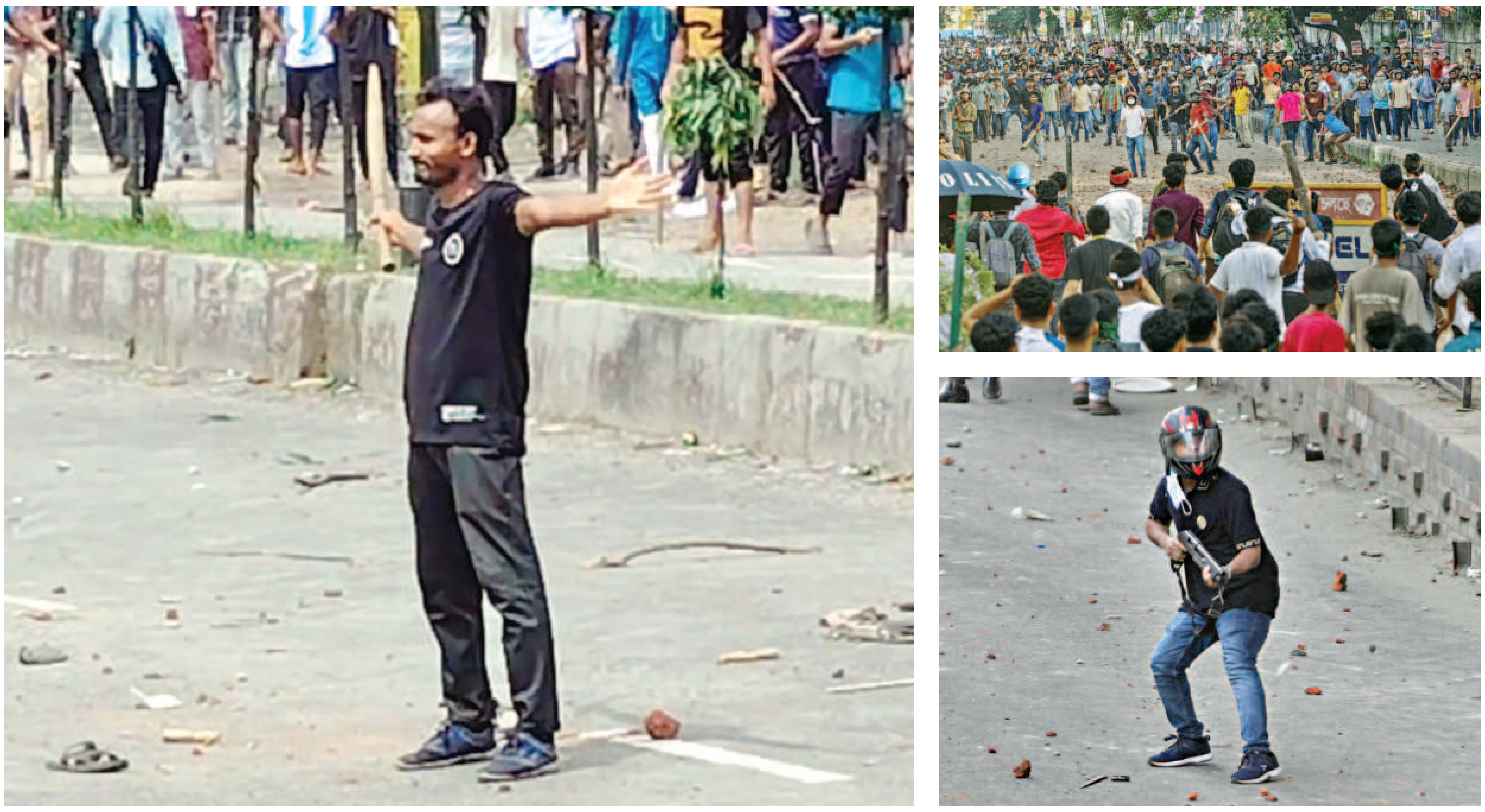

PHOTOS: COLLECTED; RAJIB RAIHAN; RASHED SHUMON

Defiant and fearless, quota reform protester Abu Sayed of Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University faces the police just moments before they shot him down in front of his university around 2:30pm, *left.*. The capital's Science Lab area yesterday turned into a battlefield as BCL members and quota protesters were locked in clashes throughout the afternoon. The photo was taken around 4:00pm, *top right*. An alleged BCL activist shoots at student protesters with a shotgun in Chattogram city's Muradpur area around 4:45pm.

Bullets end life of family's brightest star

MD ABBAS *and* KONGKON KARMAKER

Abu Sayed, the youngest of nine siblings, was studying in the English department at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur.

Poverty forced his elder brothers and sisters to quit education, but they all chipped in to make sure Sayed continued his.

Sayed dreamt of joining the civil service, a job he believed would change his family's fate. So he joined the quota reform protest.

Abu Sayed

But police bullets cut his dream short yesterday.

His peers brought his bullet-hit body to Rangpur Medical College Hospital after a clash between protesters and law enforcers, where doctors said Sayed was already dead.

"Sayed was our only hope," his brother Ramjan told The Daily Star.

"We had big dreams for him, but all those dreams shattered today [yesterday]," he added.

Their father, Makbul Hossain, is ill and bedridden, and can hardly afford a treatment.

"We used whatever little we earned to support his education," Ramjan continued, "hoping that one day he would be successful and better days will come.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

6 killed as violence spreads

Fierce clashes break out in Dhaka, Chattogram, Rangpur between BCL, police and quota protesters; govt deploys BGB in 6 districts; all universities, colleges, secondary schools closed; univ students asked to vacate halls; Thursday's HSC exams suspended

STAR REPORT

In a major escalation of violence, at least six people, including three students, were killed and several hundred injured in clashes between quota protesters and Chhatra League activists and police across the country yesterday.

Three, including two students, were killed in clashes between the protesters and BCL men in Chattogram.

In the capital, two people died after being attacked in Dhaka College and Science Lab areas where protesters and Chhatra League activists fought pitched battles for over seven hours.

In Rangpur, a student of Begum Rokeya University was killed in police firing during a protest.

Incensed by Monday's BCL attacks on Dhaka University campus, the quota protests swelled yesterday with students from private universities and colleges joining.

Soon the violence spread nationwide. Clashes between BCL men and police and students demanding reforms to the quota system were reported in Rajshahi, Bogura, Jhenidah, Cox's Bazar, Narsingdi, Sirajganj, Barishal, Kishoreganj, and Faridpur as well.

The government deployed BGB in Dhaka, Chattogram, Bogura, Rangpur, Rajshahi, and Gazipur.

It closed secondary schools and colleges indefinitely and suspended the HSC exams scheduled for Thursday.

Late last night, the University Grants Commission citing an education ministry decision said all public and private universities and their affiliated colleges would be closed until further notice. It asked the students to vacate their dorms as well.

Hasnat Abdullah, one of the coordinators of the quota-reforms protests, said state-sponsored attacks were carried out against the protesters across the country.

Another coordinator, Asif Mahmud, announced that there would be a coffin procession and a gayebana janaza (funeral without the body) at Raju Bhashkarjo at 2:00pm today to pray for the salvation of those killed during the violence.

He urged all students to join.

Yesterday, they blocked key intersections in the capital, including Jatrabari, Science Lab, Pragati Sarani, Shantinagar, Badda, Motijheel Shapla Chattar, Tantibazar, Uttara,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The demonstrators announced a coffin procession and a gayebana janaza at Raju Bhashkarjo in Dhaka University at 2:00pm today.

The protesters set fire to the residence of vice-chancellor of Begum Rokeya University following the death of its student Abu Sayed in police firing.

In the face of a counterattack by protesters, 10 Chhatra League activists were injured in Chattogram. Two of them fell from a building trying to escape the attack.

Respect freedom fighters of every stripe

Says PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said freedom fighters should always be accorded the highest respect irrespective of their political affiliations.

Handing over Prime Minister's Fellowship (PMF)-2024 to the recipients at a programme at her office, she said it should be always kept in mind that they are valiant freedom fighters.

"Abandoning their dreams, leaving behind

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Govt moves SC to scrap HC verdict that reinstated quota system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday filed a leave-to-appeal petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the High Court judgement, which effectively reinstated quotas in government jobs.

The attorney general's office submitted the petition to the apex court seeking a "leave" to scrap the HC verdict.

In the petition, it has been argued that keeping provision of quotas in the public service is a policy decision of the government and the court cannot interfere with

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

5 rights bodies slam attacks on quota protesters

114 eminent citizens demand justice

STAR REPORT

Several rights organisations yesterday issued statements condemning the attacks on quota reform protesters at Dhaka University and other campuses across the country.

The attacks resulted in the deaths of six people and injuries of hundreds of students over the past two days.

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GDP, per capita income to stay unchanged

Says finance ministry on adjustment of export data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's GDP and per capita income will stay the same after the reconciliation of export data as the two data points are calculated based on the actual export receipts registered by the central bank, says the finance ministry.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the government agency responsible for collecting statistics on demographics and the economy, uses the Bangladesh Bank's figures as export earnings, the ministry said in a statement yesterday.

"As a result, the apprehension the GDP and per capita income will also come down is not right," the statement said.

The statement comes after Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali held a meeting on Monday on the mismatch in export data. Ahasanul Islam Titu, the state minister for commerce, BB Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PREMIER cement
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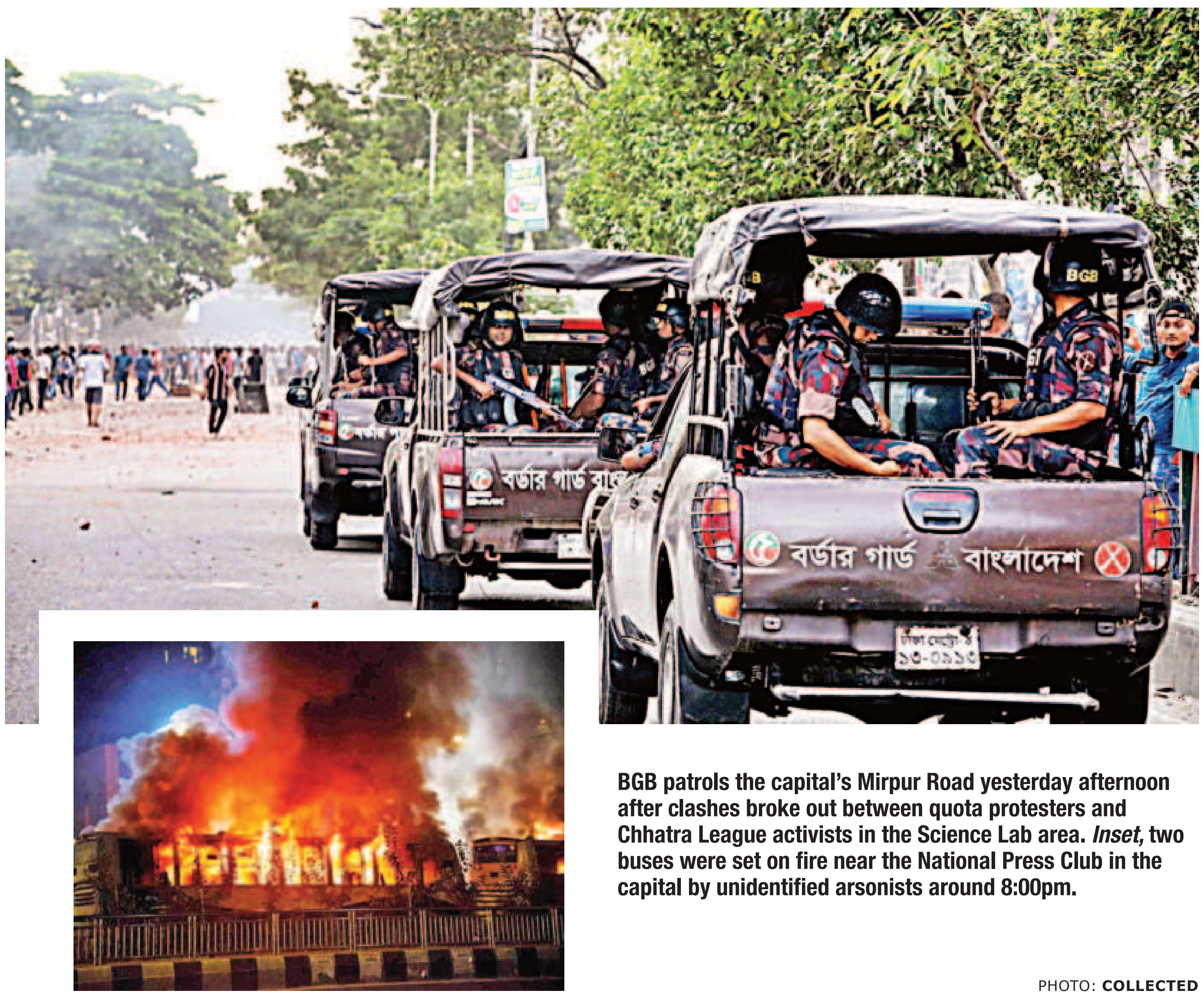


BGB patrols the capital's Mirpur Road yesterday afternoon after clashes broke out between quota protesters and Chhatra League activists in the Science Lab area. *Inset,* two buses were set on fire near the National Press Club in the capital by unidentified arsonists around 8:00pm.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Police raid BNP's Nayapaltan office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police raided the BNP's Nayapaltan headquarters in the capital over the suspected involvement of party members in subversive activities.

A team led by DB chief Harun-or-Rashid launched the raid around midnight.

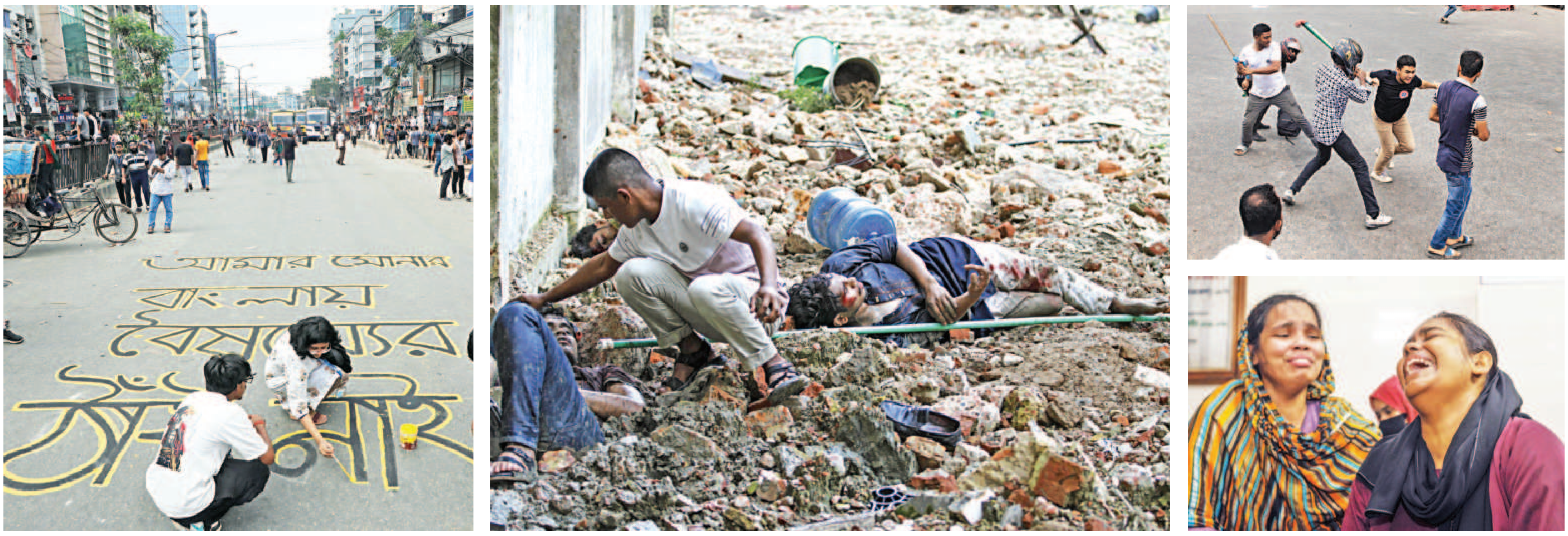
"We conducted the raid after two buses were set on fire in front of Jatiya Press Club," Harun told journalists at the spot.

Around 100 crude bombs, 500 sticks, and five to six bottles of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Ashura. There will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. Visit our website for updates.



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA, PALASH KHAN, RAJIB RAIHAN, COLLECTED

Students paint the road with the slogan, "Amar Shonar Banglay Boishommer Thaai Naai [There's no place for discrimination in my golden Bengal!]" in front of the Brac University campus in the capital's Badda area, *left.* BCL activists injured after falling from a building while trying to flee from attacks by protesters in the Chattogram's Muradpur area, *centre.* Armed with a hockey stick, a helmet-clad youth attacks an unarmed quota protester in the capital's Farmgate intersection, *top right.* Shima Akhtar breaks down next to the body of her husband, Md Faruk, 32, a staffer of a local furniture shop in the port city's Sholokbahar area, a collateral victim of the clashes.

6 killed as violence spreads

FROM PAGE 1

and Beribandh, bringing traffic to a halt.

They also blocked rail lines in Mohakhali for more than six hours, snapping communications between Dhaka and most parts of the country.

The students also obstructed Dhaka-Chattogram, Dhaka-Sylhet, Dhaka-Tangail, Dhaka-Mymensingh, and Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highways for most of the day.

Tension was high on public university campuses yesterday following the incidents of attacks on Dhaka University and Jahangirnagar University students on Monday and early yesterday.

Yesterday, Chhatra League and quota protesters held separate rallies on DU campus. Both the groups ended their programmes without any major incident. Chhatra League held a rally near TSC while the demonstrators held their rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the evening.

But there was mayhem in Dhaka College and Science Lab areas and violence in Chankharpul, Rayshahebbazar of Old Dhaka, Bhatara on Pragati Sarani, Mirpur-10, and Farmgate.

Two youths were killed during clashes in Dhaka College and Science Lab areas between the BCL men and protesters.

One of the two was identified as Md Shajahan, 24, a hawker who had a makeshift shop in front of Balaka Cinema Hall.

He was found in a pool of blood near City College and was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 7:00pm.

"My son had nothing to do with the protest. He was a hawker. Who killed him?" lamented Ayesha Begum, the mother of the youth, at the DMCH.

In the afternoon, another youth with critical head injuries was found near Dhaka College. Sabuj Ali, 25, son of Badsha Ali and Surja Banu, of Nilphamari Sadar was taken to DMCH where he was declared dead. Police had to scan his fingerprint to ID him.

Science Lab area turned into a battle zone as clashes continued between quota protesters, mostly college students, and Chhatra League activists for over seven hours.

Both stick-wielding groups threw brick chunks at each other and chased each other.

The clash ensued around 1:45pm and finally ended after 8:45pm.

At least 127 people, including protesters and BCL activists, were injured.

Ten crude bombs exploded during the clashes.

Chase and counter-chase continued for hours with brief pauses. At least two police personnel were assaulted at the time. And the protesters vandalised a police box.

Around 7:00pm, the protesters chased away Awami League leader and former member of parliament Haji Salim at Science Lab intersection near LabAid Hospital.

Md Babu, who accompanied Haji Selim, told The Daily Star that the AL leader had seen a doctor and was leaving in his vehicle when 300 to 400 protesters stopped his and an accompanying vehicle.

Haji Salim and four of his aides were chased into the LabAid Hospital.

Four students of Jagannath University and a student of Kobi Nazrul Government College were shot at Rayshahebbazar intersection in Old Dhaka.

Protesters claimed that when several hundred students took out a procession around 3:30pm, AL and Jubo League activists attacked them.

The five were undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

Two buses were torched in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the evening.

Around noon, a brief clash broke out between students of Dhaka International University, United International University and American International University, Bangladesh, and activists of Chhatra League in Bhatara area.

Rajon Kumar Saha, assistant commissioner of Badda zone, said, "We removed the Chhatra League activists from the area and the students were demonstrating on the road."

Students of BRAC University blocked a road in Merul Badda area around 10:00am.

Habibur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "We are working strategically to keep the law-and-order situation under control."

"A police sergeant and a constable were hurt ..."

CHATTOGRAM

Three people were killed during clashes between the quota protesters and BCL men in Chattogram.

The victims were Wasim Akram, 24, a student of Chittagong College, Faisal Ahmed, 24, student of management at the Omargani MES College, and Md Faruk, 32, an employee of a furniture shop, said Chittagong Medical College Hospital doctors and police.

Nuzhat Inu, on duty doctor at the CMCH, said the body of Faruk had bullet injury marks while Akram was stabbed.

Some 30 injured people were admitted to the hospital.

CMCH Director Brig Gen Taslim Uddin said the condition of two were critical.

The protesters were supposed to hold a rally in Sholashahar Railway Station area around 3:00pm, but BCL activists occupied the venue since 1:00pm.

When the demonstrators were heading towards the venue in droves, Chhatra League men attacked them at Muradpur, Sholashahar Railway Station and Sholashahar Gate No 2, triggering chases and counter chases, witnesses said.

In Muradpur, Chhatra League activists hurling brick chunks at students, prompting the students to retaliate in kind. There were running battles too.

During the clash, several gunshots were heard.

Chhatra League activists retreated and went inside Meer Manzil, a residential building near Muradpur intersection.

They started throwing brick chunks and flower pots at protesters from the roof of the building, The Daily Star correspondents saw and took footage of it.

The demonstrators then stormed the building and beat up the BCL men.

In the face of the fierce attack by the demonstrators, many Chhatra League men tried climbing down from the building using the external plumbing, shows a video clip making the rounds in social media.

A handful of protesters were seen pelting the Chhatra League activists with stones, causing at least two activists to fall from the five-storey building.

"At least 10 Chhatra League activists were stabbed," said Nurul Azim Roni, former general secretary of Chattogram city unit Chhatra League, who led the Chhatra League activists there.

He claimed that Jamaat-Shibir activists in disguise were behind the attack on BCL men.

Saiful Islam, commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, told this newspaper that they recovered two bodies from Sholashahar Railway Station area around 4:30pm.

RANGPUR

Abu Sayed, 25, a student of English department at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, was killed during a clash between police and the protesters on campus yesterday.

He was the son of Mokbul Hossain from Babanpur village of Rangpur's Pirganj upazila.

Demonstrators said a procession of students from Lalbagh area reached the university Gate-1 around 2:30pm and a clash ensued with the police.

A video clip making the rounds in social media shows a shot being fired at Sayed when he is standing with his arms spread out in front of a group of police across the street. Moments later, he is seen falling to the ground.

A student who took Sayed to the hospital, said, "Police were firing rubber bullets and tear gas at us. Sayed was hit in the chest and fell unconscious on the street. We took him to the hospital in a battery-run rickshaw. I tried to talk to him, but he did not respond."

Eunus Ali, director of Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said, "One injured student was brought dead to the hospital at 3:05pm."

"The emergency unit informed me that he suffered injuries from rubber bullets," he said.

Around 30 students, including several female students, were also injured in the incident.

Md Moniruzzaman, commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that a group of students were demonstrating on the campus around 2:30pm.

He said students from nearby education institutions also joined the protest.

He claimed that the protesters attacked a police station nearby, injuring several police personnel, and damaged vehicles. The clash ensued as police retaliated, he said.

Tension ran high when student attempted to take Sayed's body to the campus as the police intercepted and took the body to the hospital for an autopsy.

The protesters set fire to the residence of Begum Rokeya University vice-chancellor following the death of its student Abu Sayed in police firing. The students also ransacked the ground floor of the residence.

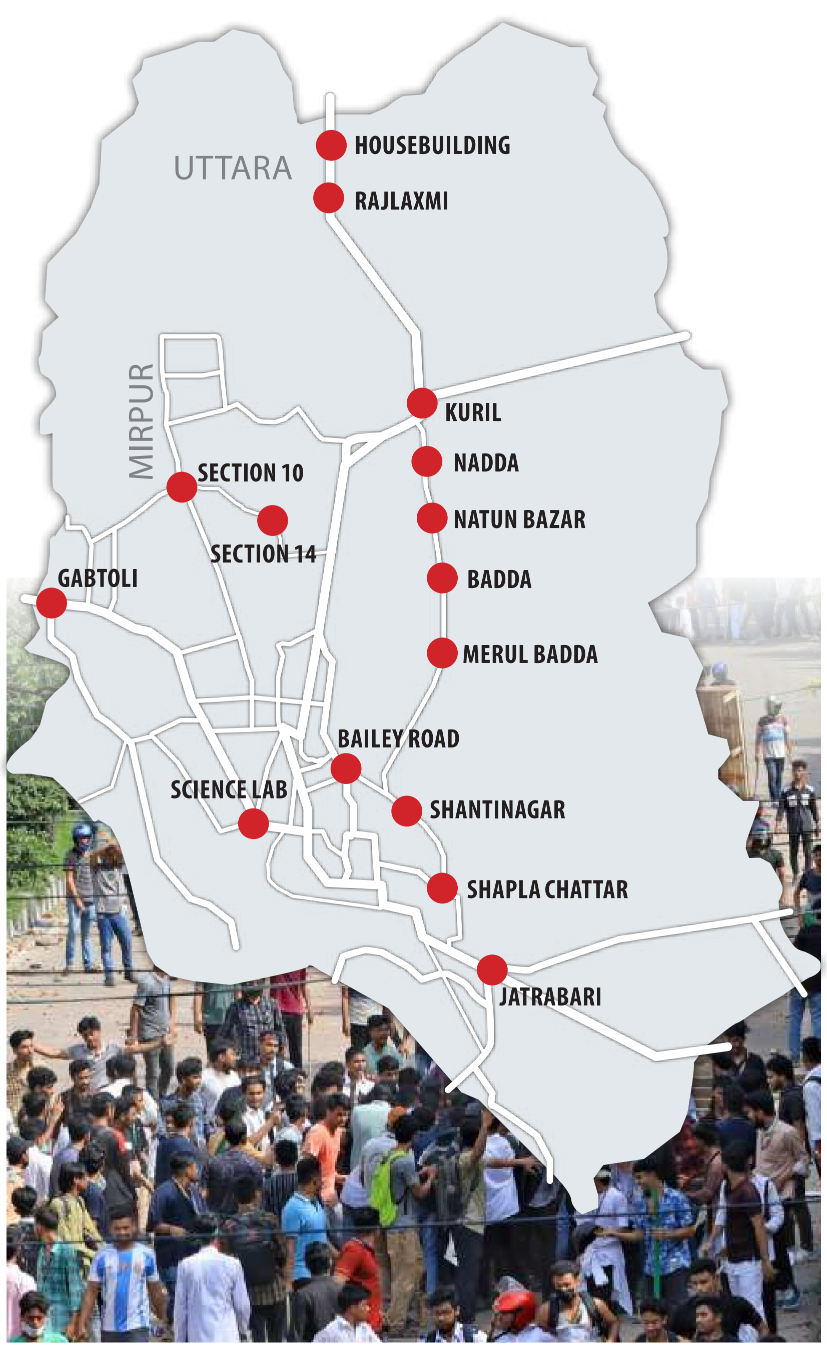
VC Prof Abdur Rashid along with 15 to 20 officials, teachers, and staffers were confined to the building when the students attacked the residence in the evening, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

The protesters also torched five university vehicles, said Asaduzzaman Mondal, general secretary of BRUR's teachers' association, adding that the students left the area after 7:00pm.

Law enforcers later rescued them, the teacher said.

The students also set fire to a BCL leader's room at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall of the university.

AREAS IN DHAKA CITY WHERE QUOTA PROTESTERS BLOCKED ROADS



GDP, per capita income

FROM PAGE 1

and higher-ups from different ministries and government agencies were present.

The same methods will be used by all the government agencies for data collection, the statement said.

"So, it is expected from now on that there will be no major difference in export data collected by the BB, Export Promotion Bureau and the National Board of Revenue. It is worth mentioning that there will also not be any major change in the balance of payment (BoP) although little revision in the current account and fiscal account was done."

The revised BoP has already been published on the BB website, the statement said.

The amount of cash incentive given to the exporters is disbursed after a third party audits the export receipts, it said.

"As a result, the amount of cash incentive that was given to the exporters is also correct," the statement added.

However, economists are predicting the size of GDP will drop once the export data is corrected.

"The most pressing implication of the correction of the shipment value of exports is for the GDP growth estimate," Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, told The Daily Star recently.

BBS has projected GDP growth of 5.8 percent in fiscal 2023-24.

In making this calculation, they projected a 5.63 percent growth in the real exports of goods and services.

Recently, the BB data showed that actual exports in the first 10 months of fiscal 2023-24 were nearly $14 billion less than the shipment value of goods published by the EPB earlier.

Following the correction, economic growth may be about one percentage point lower than the government's preliminary estimate, Hussain said.

"Thus the 5.8 percent GDP growth could be 4.8 percent due to the shortfall in actual export growth relative to the export growth projected, other things equal."

Respect freedom fighters

FROM PAGE 1

their families, parents and everything, they joined the war with whatever they had responding to the call of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

She mentioned that the country's victory was achieved through their sacrifices. "Therefore, they should always be given the highest respect."

Hasina said she knows that many of the freedom fighters may not support her party. "Wherever they go, it doesn't matter to me. It is important to me that they sacrificed everything -- their lives, their blood -- and many were maimed to make this country free and victorious."

She also mentioned that freedom fighters defeated the enemies and brought victory.

Hasina said many freedom fighters might not agree with her opinion, they might not agree with her party, still they are freedom fighters. "I respect everyone. And we want that the people will uphold that honour for ages."

She said the freedom fighters were once neglected. "Since I assumed power, I have given them every kind of support and they can proudly say that I'm a freedom fighter."

She said the country has minorities, differently abled people and autistic people. The government is sympathetic to all of them.

"We are paying special attention to ensure that they get all the facilities of the society, so that they do not fall behind."

The PM asked the fellows of the Prime Minister Fellowship to take responsibilities of the country prior to leaving for higher studies abroad.

"You have many things to give. You have to develop the country further in future."

She asked them to remember that they are going abroad for higher education with the fellowship paid for by the people. "You have to pay special attention to serve the people."

The prime minister asked them to work for the country and its people after returning home upon completion of their studies.

This year, as many as 11 individuals have got PhD and 39 got masters fellowships.

So far, 308 masters fellows and 116 PhD fellows have been awarded the scholarship at the expense of around Tk 336 crore to study at world-class universities. Of them, 215 masters fellows and 26 PhD fellows have already completed their studies.

The fellowship was introduced in 2018 by the prime minister to facilitate the capacity development of resources across all sectors.

Bullets end life

FROM PAGE 1

But bullets ended all that."

The mood in Sayed's village home in Babanpur of Rangpur is one of grief and disbelief. The loss is too heavy for his mother Monowara Begum. The news of Sayed's death has plunged her into a cycle of breakdowns and fainting spells. She was in no condition to talk to The Daily Star.

Anwar Hossain, a neighbour, said, "Sayed was the brightest among his siblings. Humble and gentle, he was the only one among his siblings receiving higher education. His death has deeply saddened us all."

Just a day before his death, Sayeed shared on Facebook how he was ready to sacrifice his life for the cause if needed.

At 12:37pm on Monday, he shared a photo card of Rajshahi University teacher and martyr Prof Dr Shamsuzzoha, who was killed in police firing in 1969 during a student protest.

The accompanying caption read: "Sir! We desperately need you right now, sir! Everyone of your generation has passed away, but you live on even after death. Your legacy is our inspiration. We are enlightened by your ideals.

"And to those of our generation, you too will die one day as per the laws of nature. But as long as you live, live with integrity. Support the just cause, take to the streets, stand as a shield for the students. You will receive genuine respect and honour. You won't be lost in the sands of time after your death. You will live forever like Shamsuzzoha."

Police raid BNP office

FROM PAGE 1

petrol were recovered from the spot, he said, adding that seven Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists were also arrested at the time.

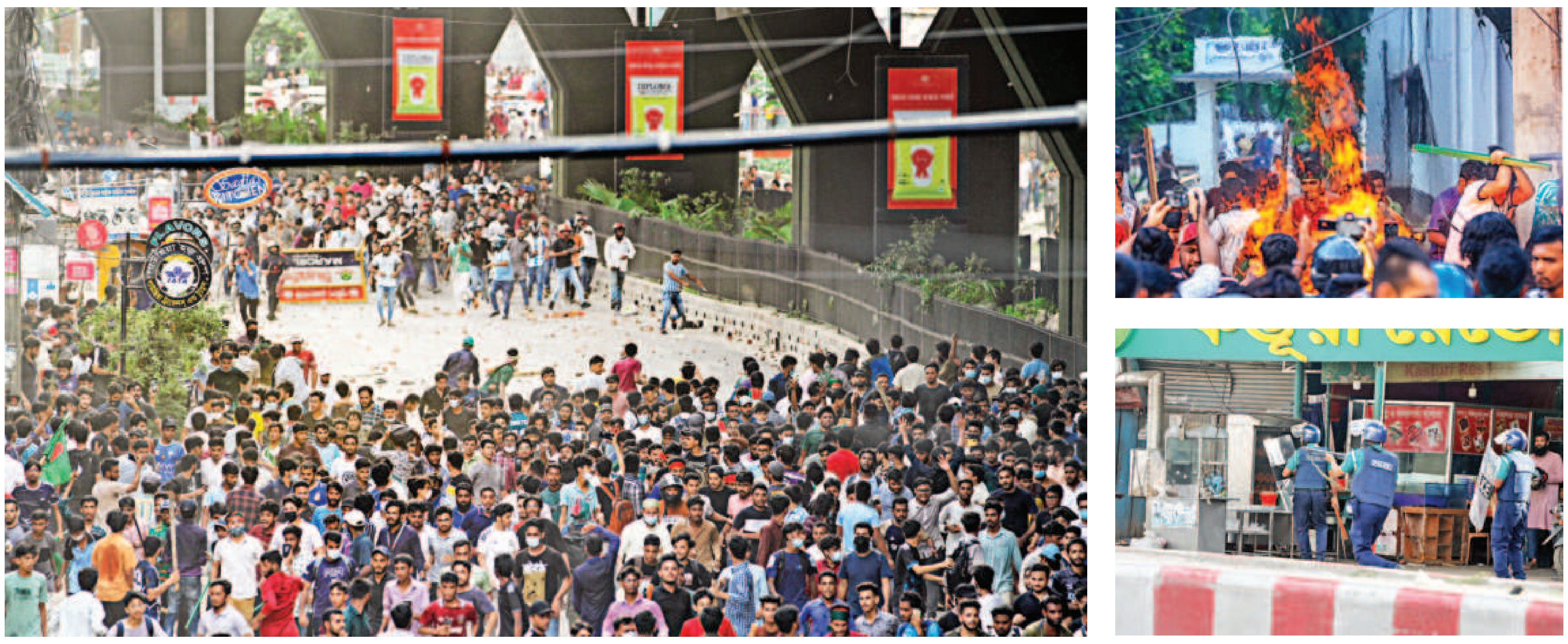
The DB chief said a group was trying to derail the ongoing quota movement by offering financial support and weapons to create confusion.

He assured that the authorities have identified those responsible and will arrest them soon.

Speaking on the issue, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi claimed the raid on the Nayapaltan party office was conducted to divert attention away from the quota reform protests.

"They staged a drama inside the party office. This drama is part of an ongoing attack against Chhatra Dal and affiliated activists," Rizvi told a virtual press briefing following the raid.

"Why didn't they [police] conduct the raid when party leaders and journalists were present at the office? As part of the master plan, the raid was conducted in the middle of the night."



Scenes of unrest across the country as students and BCL clash, hurling bricks at each other (left). Protesters set fire to tyres during demonstrations (top right). Police lob tear gas shells to disperse the crowd (bottom).

PHOTO: STAR

GM Quader terms protesters 'Bir Muktisena'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyo Party chairman and opposition leader of the House GM Quader yesterday expressed his solidarity with the ongoing quota reform movement.

Terming the agitators seeking reform in the quota system "Bir Muktisena" (valiant freedom fighters), Quader condemned the attack on the agitators.

"I congratulate the youth who are leading the quota reform movement," he said in a statement.

"Divisions have been created in the country in many ways under the incumbent government. A beneficiary group has been created following the division. Quota policy is a part of that process," said Quader.

The opposition leader urged [the government] to accept the demand of the protesters. Otherwise, the JP leader said, the country and the future generation will march towards an uncertain and conflicting future.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Quota protests
WHO SAID WHAT

The government will not do anything about the reforms of quota in government jobs bypassing the Supreme Court.

ANISUL HUQ
LAW MINISTER

No one will be spared if destructive activities are carried out in the name of anti-quota movement. Many students are immature. They are saying slogans taught by someone.

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN
HOME MINISTER

Everywhere, we have tried to bring the situation under control by requesting the protesters and not using force. At times, we had to bring in local influential people and teachers to convince the students.

HABIBUR RAHMAN
DMP COMMISSIONER

The government should not ignore the logical demands of the students by passing the burden onto the courts; rather, it should take steps for a logical, modern, peaceful, and constitutional solution.

MD IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
TIB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many BCL leaders resign over attack on demonstrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of Chhatra League leaders have announced their resignation in the last two days over the "attack" on agitating students.

While many BCL leaders expressed their solidarity with the ongoing protests, some came up with their resignation announcement on social media.

So far, 18 BCL leaders of Dhaka University and its different hall units had resigned, according to sources.

The same situation was created during the quota reform movement in 2018. At that time, several hundred BCL leaders resigned from the organisation, protesting the attack on students.

A leader of Jahangirnagar University unit of BCL yesterday announced his resignation through a Facebook post, protesting Monday night's attack on agitating students.

In his account, the leader wrote, "I was involved in Chhatra League politics with an ideology in my heart

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Campuses, streets turn into battlegrounds

Protests, clashes break out across the country as students, BCL lock horns

STAR REPORT

Violence centring quota reforms in government jobs was not only limited to the capital yesterday, it also spread like wildfire across the country.

Students and BCL members clashed on campuses and major throughfares in Savar, Rajshahi, Barishal, Cumilla, Sirajganj, Faridpur, Narsingdi, Tangail, Jhenaidah, Pabna, Gazipur and Mymensingh, among other places.

At Jahangirnagar University, at least 70 individuals, including students, teachers, journalists, and police, were injured in clashes that started when armed individuals, allegedly Chhatra League members, attacked protesters near the vice-chancellor's residence late at night.

The injured were taken to Enam Medical College for treatment, while university authorities convened an emergency meeting to form a committee to investigate the incident and ensure medical support for the victims.

Manosh Chowdhury, a professor at JU, criticised the administration for failing to prevent unauthorised entry onto campus, which he believes exacerbated the violence.

In Rajshahi, students of Rajshahi University yesterday brought out a massive procession on campus, breaking the locks of the hall gates around 3:00pm.

They took position at the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway and blocked vehicular movement.

Around 5:00pm, a section of students stormed various dorms, including SM Hall, Ziaur Rahman Hall, and Bangabandhu Hall, and searched for BCL men in the rooms.

Rooms of RU BCL President Mostafizur Rahman Galib and General Secretary Asadullah-Hil-Galib were vandalised.

Earlier, around 2:30pm, BCL members chased away students and forced them into the halls. They also locked the hall gates. However, around 3:00pm, students broke the locks and brought out protests, carrying bamboo and sticks in hand.

In Barishal, Government BM College, nine protesters were injured as BCL members attacked students.

In response, protestors blocked Barishal-Kuakata highway and attacked a police box.

At least seven police personnel were reportedly injured at the time.

The Daily Star's photojournalist, Titu Das, was injured by a tear gas shell fired by police in Barishal.

The unrest spread to other districts as well.

In Sirajganj, clashes between students and police left at least 20 injured. Two were left with bullet wounds at the time.

In Faridpur, six students were injured as BCL members attacked protesters.

Meanwhile, students of Pabna University of Science and Technology brought out protest rallies and blocked the Dhaka-Pabna highway.

In Tangail, at least three students were injured after a procession of quota protesters came under attack by BCL men in the town's Shaheed Minar area at around 11:00am.

Later, students of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University and different colleges blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway for around an hour from 1:15pm.

In Mymensingh, Bangladesh Agricultural University students staged a demonstration at Mukta Mancha around 3:00pm. Students of Mymensingh Medical College and Community Based Medical College also organised protest rallies and blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

Protesters blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Bhelanagar area under Narsingdi Sadar upazila for hours.

Chase and counter-chase took place between them and BCL activists in the area for around two

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Stand by quota protesters
Fakhrul, JCD urge people

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday called upon the country's people and all political parties to stand beside general students who are demonstrating across the country against the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs.

Speaking at a discussion, he also described the Bangladesh Chhatra League's attacks on anti-quota protesters as the most heinous incident in the country's political history.

"Lying on hospital beds, bloodied students are calling upon us to protect them, stand by them and stay with their movement. This is the appeal of Bangladesh... I think the entire nation should respond to this call. All political parties should come forward and stand by them," Fakhrul said.

Bhasani Anusari Parishad arranged the programme at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the birth centenary of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

BNP and Jamaat instigating quota protests: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday alleged that BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman took over the leadership of the ongoing quota reform movement and his party is openly supporting the movement.

They are conspiring to turn a non-political movement into a political one and unleashing an evil force behind it, said Quader during a press briefing at the AL president's Dhanmondi office.

He said BNP-Jamaat is instigating the ongoing quota movement, but they will never be successful as people's support is not with them.

He once again said the quota reform issue is "sub judice", and thus there is no scope to take any decision in this matter through force or any other means outside the court.

Responding to a question, Quader said allowing quota

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Commuters suffer amid blockades, clashes

STAR REPORT

Major thoroughfares in Dhaka and other parts of the country ground to a halt yesterday as protesters demanding quota reforms blocked roads and clashed with BCL members in numerous areas.

The capital's key intersections and entry points were paralysed for hours, stranding commuters on highways and disrupting both public and private transportation services.

Road blockades were reported at Mirpur-10, Badda, Notun Bazar, Jatrabari, Gabtoli, Uttara, Motijheel, Shantinagar, and Progoti Sarani, while clashes occurred at Science Lab, Mohakhali, and Chankharpool.

"As a private job holder commuting between Mirpur 12 and Bailey Road, I couldn't find any transportation to return home today [yesterday]," said Akhter Sultana, waiting at Shahbagh around 5:00 pm.

Mohammad Kibria, from Kerinaganj, faced similar challenges. "There's chaos everywhere. Very few buses are operating, and rickshaw fares are exorbitant. I might have to walk home to Sadarghat," he said.

Bishwajit Das, who came from Chattogram for a bank recruitment exam, found himself stranded at Sayedabad due to road blockades at Jatrabari.

Kamrul Islam, a journalist, experienced delays on the Kalni Express from Dhaka to Sylhet.

"The train was supposed to depart at 2:00pm but left at 8:00pm due to blockades in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narsingdi," he said.

Anusua Roy, a student at Kumudini Women's Medical College, faced a harrowing journey from Mohakhali to Farmgate after getting caught in between the violence.

Progga Paromita, recovering from a leg fracture, encountered difficulties travelling from Dhanmondi to Green Road by rickshaw.

"I had to disembark near Science Lab due to the chaos and was later picked up by family," she said.

RUQAYYAH HALL

Protesters drive out female BCL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating students of Begum Ruqayyah Hall at Dhaka University yesterday night allegedly beat up female leaders of Chhatra League and drove them out of the hall. The incident took place around 11:00pm.

On the condition of anonymity, a student of Ruqayyah Hall told The Daily Star that 11 BCL leaders were chased, beaten, and driven out of the hall.

They ran and took refuge in the provost's bungalow.

Around midnight, an ambulance ferried them from the premises.Dhaka University Professor Dr M Maksudur Rahman said, "Eleven students were evacuated from Ruqqayah Hall by ambulance."

However, Dhaka Medical College Hospital sources said none of the students were brought to the DMCH.

Ruqayyah Hall Provost Nilufar Parvin said, "I won't comment at the moment." In a video sent by a student from Ruqayyah Hall, it was seen that the general students drove hall BCL President Pritha and Secretary Atika out of the halls.

Petition seeks HC order to take action against Aziz

STAR REPORT

A writ petition has been filed with the High Court seeking its directive on the Anti- Corruption Commission (ACC) to take steps regarding reported corruption allegations against former army chief General (retd) Aziz Ahmed.

A journalist named Md Sohail Rana, son of Yousuf Ali from Kaprangapara village under Panchagar Sadar Police Station in Panchagar, submitted the petition to the HC on Monday through Supreme Court lawyer AM Jamiul Hoque Faisal.

In the petition, he prayed to the HC to pass an order on the ACC to submit a report before this court regarding the steps taken against General (retd) Aziz Ahmed.

Petitioner Sohail Rana, who introduced himself as "currently employed as message editor in a daily newspaper" in the petition, cited reports published about Aziz Ahmed in the daily Jugantor on May 31, the daily Kalerkantha on May 31, and in the daily Manabzamin on June 5 this year.

Lawyer Jamil Hoque Faisal told The Daily Star yesterday that the High Court may hold hearing on the petition next week.

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Keeping onion fresh for over 6 months

Growers in Faridpur happy with model storages

SUZIT DAS, *Faridpur*

Onion growers in Faridpur are optimistic about the newly constructed model storages for onion and garlic, which promise to reduce spoilage and enhance profitability.

According to the Department of Agricultural Marketing, onions, being perishable, are challenging to preserve without proper storage.

Approximately 30 percent of the 3.5 million tonnes of onions produced annually in Bangladesh are wasted due to inadequate storage, leading to a shortfall of 6,00,000 to 7,00,000 tonnes.

This forces farmers to sell their produce quickly and at low prices, said Shahadat Hossain, a senior agricultural marketing officer in Faridpur.

To address this, DAM is building 65 model storages across villages in Saltha (30 storages) and Nagarkanda upazilas (35 storages). Of them, 62 have already been completed.

Each storages are shared by groups of five farmers.

Faridpur ranks second in onion production in Bangladesh, with cultivation expanding from 35,305 hectares to 40,433 hectares between 2018-19 and 2022-23.

Output increased from 4,45,982 tonnes to 5,52,736 tonnes during this period.

A recent visit to villages in Saltha and Nagarkanda revealed that the storages, costing Tk 4.5 lakh each, are constructed from tin-bamboo, iron, and concrete. Each storage, occupying one decimal of land, can store 300 maunds of onion for 6-9 months.

The structures are 25 feet long and 15 feet wide, with a concrete base, 15 concrete pillars, and three lofts.

Six fans ensure air circulation, while a tarpaulin protects them from rain.

Md Amjad Matubbar, 52, from Jonakhali village, received his storage in 2022-23.

"Last year I stored 140 maunds of onion, all of which remained good. This year, two of my neighbours stored 110 maunds," he said.

Mustafizur Rahman from Aduakandi village shared similar success.

"I produce 400-600 maunds of onion yearly and used to store them in tin-shed houses, where they would rot within a month due to heat. The new storage keeps the interior cool, preserving the onions for several months," he added.

MP AZIM MURDER

Daughter gets death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muntarin Ferdous Dorin, daughter of the slain Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar, received a death threat yesterday from unknown miscreants.

The threat was issued via the social media platform IMO to her cousin, Md Ashraful, the mayor of Kaliganj Municipality.

Confirming the development, Dorin said she plans to file a general diary at the Kaliganj Police Station regarding the threat.

Recently, Dorin told reporters that her father Anwarul Azim Anar was killed for political reasons.

Two top leaders of the Jhenaidah Awami League, General Secretary Saidul Karim Mintu and Welfare Affairs Secretary Kamal Ahmed Babu, are currently in jail in connection with Anar's murder.

Babu initially gave a confession statement but has recently applied to recant it, alleging coercion.

Two electrocuted in Narsingdi

UNB, *Narsingdi*

Two workers were electrocuted and five more injured while installing new poles for Palli Bidyut in Raipura upazila of Narsingdi yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abdus Salam, 29, from Dangapara of Dinajpur; and Jamal Hossain, 50, from Mithapukur of Rangpur.

It was learned that a group of seven electricians working for Sujan Mia was replacing wooden poles with cement ones in Ashrabpur area.

After installing the new poles, the power line was reconnected. However, the workers were electrocuted through a line at the base of the poles, resulting in two deaths and five injuries.

Rezaul Karim, deputy general manager of Raipura Palli Bidyut, said the incident occurred due to negligence of the contractor. OC Safayet Hossain Palash of Raipura Police Station, said the bodies were sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue.

UK announces £30,000 for flood victims

UNB, *Dhaka*

The UK is providing £30,000 or Tk 4.5 crore of humanitarian assistance to support flood-affected communities in Sylhet, where over three million people have been impacted and 260,000 are displaced.

The current flooding in Bangladesh has so far affected over 14.8 million people in different parts of the country, said the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

This UK contribution in Sylhet will be managed by Start Fund Bangladesh and implemented by Caritas Bangladesh.

Stand by quota protesters

FROM PAGE 3

Mashiur Rahman (Jadu Miah), one of the founders of BNP.

"What this regime carried out yesterday (Monday), we have never seen before in Bangladesh. We have never seen the ruling party cadres enter the hospital and attack the wounded... We can never think of this, even during the Pakistan period."

The BNP leader also remarked that the ruling party's current atrocities are no less than those of the Pakistani Army and said the government has unleashed its armed cadres to suppress a justified movement of the common students.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, a pro-BNP student organisation, also announced to stand by the students yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference at the BNP's Nayapaltan central office, JCD president Rakibul Islam Rakib strongly denounced the reported attacks on anti-quota protesters by the Chhatra League on different university campuses.

He said July 15 will remain as a black day in Bangladesh's history.

Many BCL leaders resign

FROM PAGE 3

and without any self-interest. If I stay quiet after what happened last night, I can never forgive myself."

Jatir Janak Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall unit BCL leader Hasibul Hasan Hasib wrote, "I am cutting off my relations with the Chhatra League. Many of my younger brothers and friends were beaten up. I feel appalled as I have worked as an activist of the Chhatra League. Goodbye, Chhatra League!"

Besides, several leaders of Jagannath University (JnU) unit of BCL, Comilla University unit and other units have made similar announcements.

Borhan Uddin, joint secretary, Law Faculty of Comilla University unit BCL, wrote on Facebook that student politics was his passion but from today (yesterday) he will no longer keep any ties with BCL.

GM Quader

FROM PAGE 3

Irrational stubbornness will not bring any welfare for anyone, he added.

GM Quader said the way the names of freedom fighters are being used and misused, the valiant freedom fighters might be reluctant to disclose their identity in the future.

BNP

FROM PAGE 3

movements does not indicate administrative weakness.

"We are maintaining patience, and patience does not mean weakness. What would you say if we came down harshly on the movement? You will see everything in time. Befitting action will be taken at the proper time," Quader added.

Campuses, streets

FROM PAGE 3

hours, starting at 2:00pm.

The Daily Star's Narsingdi correspondent, Jahidul Islam, was injured as a group of BCL men attacked him.

In Cox's Bazar, a few protesters were injured after they got into a clash with BCL activists and police around 11:00am.

They engaged in the clash after BCL activists started beating protesters with sticks. Two motorcycles were vandalised during the clash. In the evening, students blocked Cox's Bazar-Chattogram highway.

In Jhenaidah town, at least five students were injured after BCL men attacked protesters at Wazir Ali School and College ground around 11:30am.

In Gazipur, protesters blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh and Joydevpur-Tangail highways. Students of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway for around three hours from 3:00pm.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 17

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

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The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/027:** Provision of Cleaning and Janitorial Services with other Messenger Service for WHO Bangladesh under Long Term Agreement.
Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 31 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**
2. **RFP/BAN/2024/028:** Engaging TV Media buying agency to disseminate the 3D animation on Breastfeeding through Bangladesh TV Channels.
Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 31 July 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:
https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

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Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: commerce@cddl.gov.bd, contact@cddl.gov.bd,
Website: www.cddl.gov.bd

23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.68 Dated: 16 July 2024

TENDER AMENDMENT NOTICE

Tender Ref No 23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.57 Date: 07 July 2024 for purchase of **MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE Q235B)** has been published on 08 July 2024 in The Daily Star and The Daily Jugantor shall be amended as follows:

1.	Procuring Entity	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd
2.	Invitation for	Tender Documents For **MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE-A)** (Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned in Tender Document)
3.	Tender Reference No	**23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.69 Date: 16 July 2024**
4.	Tender Closing	**25 July 2024 at 12.15 PM**
5.	Tender Opening	**25 July 2024 at 12.30 PM**

N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website (www.cddl.gov.bd)

Head of Commerce & Purchase Department

TANVIR AHAMMAD TALUKDAR
Commander BN
For Managing Director

GD-59

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Memo No. 45.02.0000.002.07.012&013.24-62 Dated: 16/07/24

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works, details are given below:

Sl No.	e- Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of work	Last date & time of selling tender document	Tender closing date & time
1.	1002449	Rajshahi/ Male Students-7	Construction of 15 (Fifteen) Storied Male Hostel Building with 15 (Fifteen) Storied Foundation at Rajshahi Madical College in Rajshahi.	13.08.2024 16.00	14.08.2024 14:00
2.	1002450	Barishal/ Male Students-11	Construction of 10 (Ten) Storied Male Hostel Building with 10 (Ten) Storied Foundation at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barishal.	13.08.2024 16.00	14.08.2024 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Brigadier General
Mir Sarwar Hossain Chowdhury, afwc, psc
Chief Engineer
E-mail: hedhq@yahoo.com

GD-57

Carrying locally-made fish traps on his shoulders, Sumon Biswas heads out to a nearby market to sell those. He sells these traps to fishers for Tk 100-200 each, depending on size, and makes around Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 per month. The photo was taken in Jhalakathi recently.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

14KM BAJUA-PODDERGANJ ROAD

Unpaved for 50 years

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

The 14-kilometre-long Bajua-Podderganj road of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Khulna's Dacope upazila has been connecting around 8,000 people across several villages in the upazila for around half a century.

Surprisingly, throughout this long time, the road has remained unpaved, with no step to improve it from its earthen condition.

As such, every monsoon, the entire 14-km stretch of the road turns into a muddy ordeal, leaving the people with a harrowing time using the road for commute.

This monsoon, the scenario is no different than it has been in the past 50 years.

The local residents could hardly find answer to the question why the road has not received any attention from public representatives or government agencies over this time.

"There is no alternative to this earthen road for going to my college. When it rains, the road becomes covered by deep mud. No vehicles can ply the road in that condition, and we have to walk through the mud for our commute. It needs urgent renovation," said Imran Sheikh, a student of Bajua Surendranath College and a local resident.

Sakhina Begum of Bhangapara village said elderly people seldom use the road in the monsoon as it becomes very risky.

"To make the matter worse, the social forestry department planted thousands of trees with sharp thorns along this road. As a result, if one is careless while walking on this muddy road, he might slip and hit a tree, eventually getting injured," Saidul Sheikh of Pashorder Chunkuri village.

"Taking patients to hospital using the road becomes an arduous task," he added.

Mizanur Mirza, local union parishad member of Ward-4, said around 8,000 residents of at least eight villages have been suffering for the road over the years.

"Students of three primary schools, two high schools and two colleges use this road. Often, the younger ones have to skip school as they cannot use the road after it rains. Also, after evening, hardly anyone uses the road to avoid mishaps in darkness," he said.

"Locals complain to me about the road almost every day. However, our budget from the union parishad is too small to work on the road. Also, Local Government Engineering Department has been very reluctant about doing development work in this upazila. Many other roads in my union are also lying unpaved," said Manosh Roy, chairman of Bajua union parishad.

"I heard that a Tk 798 crore project is awaiting approval of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council, which might solve the problem if approved," he added.

Contacted, M Zahangir Alom, upazila engineer of LGED in Dacope upazila, said they sent a proposal to the higher authorities for renovating 3-km portion of the road with bricks.

"We will start the work after receiving DO letter from the local lawmaker," he added.

ACC sues Sadeeq Agro owner, livestock dept officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against seven people, including Sadeeq Agro owner Imran Hossain and livestock department officials, on charges of irregularities and corruption.

ACC Assistant Director Abul Kalam Azad filed the case with the ACC's Dhaka-1 integrated office, said ACC Public Relations Officer Akhtarul Islam.

Apart from Imran, the six other accused are -- Livestock Department's Director (Production) ABM Khaleduzzaman; its Deputy Director ABM Salah Uddin; Central Cattle Breeding and Dairy Farm Director Md Monirul Islam; its Buyer Officer Saiful Islam; Upazila Livestock Officer (Leave Reserve) Firoz Ahmed Khan; and Sadeeq Agro's Touhidul Alam Zenith.

"After a preliminary investigation into Sadeeq Agro's scandal involving American Brahma breed cattle, the ACC has filed the case," said Abul Kalam Azad while talking to reporters.

Confiscate more properties of Matiur, family: court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate more moveable and immovable properties of Matiur Rahman, former National Board of Revenue official, and his family members in connection with corruption allegations against them.

The other family members are Matiur's wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, also upazila parishad chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura, their son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman, and daughter Farzana Rahman Ipshita, and Matiur's second wife Shammi Akhter Shewly and one of their close relatives MA Kaiyum.

Judge Mohammad Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Md Anowar Hossain, also the enquiry officer applied to the court in this regard.

In the application, the ACC official said Matiur and his family members were attempting to transfer the properties and to launder the money. So, an order was needed to prevent them from making such attempts, said the IO.

The immoveable properties are a total of 137.28 decimals in Gazipur's Tongi and a flat (8,070 square feet total) located in Dhaka's Basundhara residential area.

They also opened 19 beneficiary owner's (BO) accounts of different brokerage houses.

ACC public prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir moved the application on behalf of the watchdog.

Earlier on July 11, the same court ordered confiscation of all moveable and immovable properties of Matiur and his family members.

The immoveable properties are a total of 2,212.35 decimals in Dhaka's Savar, Mymensingh's Valuka, Gazipur, Natore's Singra and Narsingdi's Shibpur, and four flats (7,248 square feet total) located in Dhaka's Mirpur.

The moveable properties are Tk 13,44,36,471 deposited at 116 bank accounts in the country.

However, the court also ordered to freeze of all 116 bank accounts.

They also opened 23 beneficiary owner's (BO) accounts of different brokerage houses.

On June 24, the same court issued a travel ban on Matiur Rahman, Laila and Arnob in connection with corruption allegations against them.

Earlier, the ACC formed a three-member committee to enquire into the allegations brought against them over amassing a huge amount of wealth through illegal means.

TK 9.30 LAKH BRIBERY CASE

Bail of 2 HC Division staffers cancelled

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two days after granting the bail, a Dhaka court yesterday cancelled bail of two High Court Division employees, who were arrested for their alleged involvement with taking Tk 9.30 lakh as bribe in a judge's name.

The employees are Md Abdur Rashid, a peon of the HC Division bench, and Md Hafizur Rahman, a peon of the Supreme Court registrar general office.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sultan Sohag Uddin issued the order after Rajib Sheikh, a sub-inspector of Shahbagh Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case, on July 14 submitted an application for cancelling their bail in the case.

In the application, SI Rajib said the two will need to be taken into custody for quizzing about the issue. So their bail should be cancelled, said the IO.

On July 12, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Tarikul Islam granted them bail after they were produced before the court with a forwarding report.

In the forwarding report, the IO said both were directly involved in taking bribes in the name of a judge for acquitting death-row convicts in a murder case, which are serious offences. So they need to be confined to jail until the investigation is completed.

But the magistrate turned down the prosecution pleas and granted them bail, considering the depth of the offences brought against them in the case.

The bail order had created a mixed reaction among people, litigants, and lawyers.

According to the case statement, it was alleged that the two allegedly took Tk 9.30 lakh in bribes from the people of death-row convicts in a murder case, in front of the court No-21 of the Supreme Court's main building around 5:00pm on July 10.

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unesco

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Education
Secondary and Higher Education Division
International Mother Language Institute (IMLI)
1/Ka, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
www.imli.gov.bd

Memo No. 37.26.0000.114.23.001.22-499 Date: 16th July 2024

Application/proposal for International Mother Language Award 2025

Honorable Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Chief Patron of the Institute would kindly present the "International Mother Language National Award 2025" and "International Mother Language International Award 2025" on the Glorious Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day 2025.

2. Following the instructions of International Mother Language Award Guidelines notified (Memo No. 37.00.0000.082.22.005.16.1551; Date: 24 Dec 2019) with the approval of Secondary and Higher Education Division under Ministry of Education, applications or proposals from foreign nationals or institutions/agencies are being invited for "International Mother Language International Award 2025". Applications/proposals shall be sent in prescribed format for 2 (Two) awards in international category. Applicants are requested to download the prescribed formats in the appendices A/B and of the notification for International Mother Language Award Guidelines 2019 available on the website: www.imli.gov.bd
3. Application/proposal would be processed in the light of Articles 7.0 (Eligibility for receiving the award) and 8.0 (Instructions for processing the applications or proposals) of the aforesaid "International Mother Language Award Guidelines 2019". Three hard copies of applications or proposals would be sent to the Director International Mother Language Institute, either by hand or by post or by courier service, within 15 September, 2024. The application/proposal must reach the office on or before 15th September 2024 during Bangladesh office time (office time: 09:00am to 05:00pm). Right at the time of sending the hard copies, soft copy of the same would also be sent to the email address: imli.moebd@gmail.com and cc to imliaward2025@gmail.com

   It is to be noted that the performance of the prospective awardee up to December 2024 and in special cases the total contributions of the awardee or institution would be taken into consideration.

4. For sending documents by post:
   Director
   International Mother Language Institute (IMLI)
   Shahid Captain Mansur All Sarani
   1/Ka, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.
5. Value of Award
   An 18 (eighteen) carat Gold Medal of 35 (thirty-five) grams along with a Certificate of Appreciation and USD Dollar equivalent to taka Four Lakhs would be conferred as awards.
6. Eligibility for the award
   6.1 Contributions towards the protection, promotion and revitalization of mother languages;
   6.2 Specially proven contributions towards the practice and culture of mother language (Published standard books would be submitted as evidence);
   6.3 Special contributions towards the research of mother language;
   6.4 Special contributions towards the innovation of digital technology with regard to the preservation, protection and revitalization of mother language;
   6.5 Special contributions towards the publicity and spread of mother language and foreign language in the world;
   6.6 Special contributions in the translation of literary works written in mother language and in the translation of original books on other discipline/subjects (Published standard books would be submitted as evidence);
   6.7 Special contributions in the translation of books written in foreign language as well as in translation of books on other subjects into Bengali (Published standard books would be submitted as evidence).
7. Instructions to be followed for processing the applications or proposals
   7.1 Three (03) copies of application or proposal filled in duly in prescribed format (available in the appendices A/B of International Mother Language Award Guidelines 2019) shall be sent to the Director, International Mother Language Institute, either by hand or by post or by courier service, within the specified time stated above. Soft copy of the same shall also be sent to the email address imli.moebd@gmail.com with a copy to imliaward2025@gmail.com
   7.2 Applications or Proposals shall be 'rejected' in case of providing any false or incomplete information or indistinct/vague statement in the application/proposal, as well as due to the failure of properly enclosing the certificates/testimonials;
   7.3 Conferment of International Mother Language Award in any category (National and International) shall remain 'postponed' for the concerned year unless the competent person/institution is found;
   7.4 The same person or institution/agency shall not be eligible for 'International Mother Language Award' for the second time;
   7.5 This award shall not be conferred posthumously. In case of the death of the person after being nominated for the award, the selected successor among the heirs or heiresses, upon the submission of succession certificate duly countersigned either by Deputy Commissioner or by Ambassador/High Commissioner, or having no heirs or heiresses an appropriate person would receive the award on his/her behalf.
8. This notification would be available on the following websites. For unavoidable circumstances, in case of any correction of the notification particular portion shall be uploaded on the following websites.

www.shed.gov.bd, www.dshe.gov.bd, www.bncu.gov.bd
www.mopa.gov.bd, www.ugc.gov.bd
www.mofa.gov.bd, www.en.unesco.org
www.imli.gov.bd, www.naem.gov.bd

১৬/০৭/২৪
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GD-58

Celebrities rally behind quota reform amid violent clashes

In the wake of recent violent clashes between student protesters and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists at Dhaka University, a wave of support from celebrities has emerged for the quota reform movement. The incident, which occurred on July 15, resulted in approximately 300 injuries, including female students and BCL members.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

As of July 16 (7:30pm), six people have been reported to be killed nationwide due to the ongoing clashes.

The unrest spread to other public universities across Bangladesh, including Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Eden Mohila College.

As tensions escalated, prominent figures from the entertainment industry took to social media to express their views on the contentious issue. Their statements reflect a growing concern over the government's response to the students' demands and the use of force against non-violent protesters.

Veteran actor and freedom fighter Sohel Rana advocated for the quota's removal. He shared his opinion on his Facebook account, stating, "Freedom fighters fought at the call of Bangabandhu for independence... We achieved that immediately after the War. We freedom fighters have nothing more to ask for." While acknowledging the system's past merit, Rana questioned its current relevance: "53 years have passed since the country's independence. At this point, neither freedom fighters nor their children are of age to seek government jobs. So, I don't see the need to keep the quota system active even now." He suggested the system might now serve "hidden self-interests," as it no longer logically benefits freedom fighters or their children.

Actor Rawnak Hasan, general secretary of Actors Equity Bangladesh, advocated for a nuanced approach to quota reform, "Quota reform is certainly possible. The quota for freedom fighters and their children will naturally become ineffective in a few years. A minimum honorary quota from the state for our valiant freedom fighters is necessary." However, Hasan also hinted at possible ulterior motives, noting, "The way this movement of thousands of students has been directed clearly indicates who the masterminds are."

Director Ashfaque Nipun showed solidarity with the students by sharing a powerful image of two female students being assaulted during the protests, simply stating, "Stand by the students."

Filmmaker Mishuk Moni expressed his sorrow over the violent scenes unfolding in the city. He criticised the government's tendency to label dissenters as traitors, saying, "In this country, speaking against the government labels you a traitor. Criticising any government official's corruption also makes you a traitor. Participating in a movement for rightful demands makes you a traitor." Moni questioned the use of force, asking, "Why did BCL activists, wearing helmets and armed with sticks, injure students in the quota reform movement? The government could have sent representatives to negotiate with the students."

Ayman Sadiq, content creator and founder of 10 Minute School, strongly condemned the violence against protesters, expressing his dismay: "Dhaka University is covered in blood. Why is it that blood has been spilled on our campus? I strongly protest against such acts."

Musician Ziaur Rahman of the Shironamhin band argued that the quota system may have outlived its original purpose. He explained, "The quota system now only serves as a path for severe misuse. As a result, talented and qualified youth are losing their opportunities, forcing them to navigate their daily lives with frustration." He called for change, stating, "Let the youth be freed from the quota system. Let merit and qualifications be recognised."

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Author and publisher Mohammad Nazimuddin offered a scathing critique of the situation, dismissing claims that the protesters were misled by opposition parties. He stated, "They are not naive or misled by BNP-Jamaat as they say. The real culprits are the vote-rigging thieves and sycophants!" Nazimuddin warned of the consequences of suppressing dissent, saying, "Now, the exploited people are their nemesis."

Director Khijir Hayat questioned the judiciary's role, asking, "Can't the Appellate Division of the Honourable Court expedite their decision considering the current situation of the country, instead of delaying it for a month?"

Dhallywood actor Siam Ahmed expressed his dismay at the transformation of his alma mater into a battleground, questioning, "Why has my campus become a war front? Why are students being attacked?"

Noted actor Nasir Uddin Khan shared images of the brutal attacks on protesters, showcasing the extent of injuries inflicted during clashes with BCL leaders. His question cuts to the heart of the issue: "If the country is moving towards progress, then why is it that blood is shedding all over the place?"

Cartoonist Morshed Mishu took a creative approach to express solidarity with the protesters. He illustrated a student as a Hulk-like figure draped in the colours of the Bangladeshi flag, bravely confronting agitators and trampling the quota system. Mishu's caption reads, "No matter how lightly you take it, throw as many taunts as you like. We will take bullets with our chests out, we will break the system of 'quota'."

Actor Shohel Mondol criticised the government's tactics, describing them as "catching fish in muddy waters" and urged the public to cultivate social awareness to avoid being deceived by political machinations.

Niloy Alamgir made a heartfelt appeal to the prime minister, saying, "Honourable PM, today's students are tomorrow's future leaders. They can't all be wrong in their demands. As a freedom fighter's son, I urge you to reform the quota system."

Popular YouTuber and actor Salman Mohammad Muqtadir took a proactive stance, offering accommodation and assistance to students affected by the violence. He stated, "If there are any students who have been attacked or cannot enter their halls, I will try to manage accommodation for you. If you need a place to stay or require medical assistance, I am here for you."

Khairul Basar shared an emotional post with the photo of an injured female student, expressing his anguish: "She is my sister. My heart aches to see this! You are staining this divine campus, beloved Dhaka University, with blood. Do you ever reflect on your actions?"

Actress Pori Moni added her voice to the chorus of dissent by sharing a disturbing image of a female Dhaka University student being brutally beaten during the quota reform clash. The caption reads, "If you remain silent about violence against women, you are a hypocrite."

As the quota reform movement continues to gain traction, these celebrity voices add weight to the students' cause, highlighting the need for peaceful dialogue and reform. Their diverse perspectives reflect the complexity of the issue and the widespread concern over the use of violence against protesters.

NEWS

AL, BCL men to take position at unit offices

FROM PAGE 12

leaders and workers will also take position at the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue as "striking forces" and will rush whenever and wherever needed.

"We don't want any confrontation. But we will also not allow anyone to block roads and carry out vandalism," said Dhaka South unit AL president Abu Ahmed Mannafi, adding that all BCL units under Dhaka City were asked to remain vigilant.

The city AL activists will lend law enforcers a hand to keep the situation under control, he added.

AL also has taken initiatives to ensure presence of different professional bodies on the streets to "counter insulting remarks against freedom fighters and uphold the spirit of Liberation War," sources said.

Meanwhile, police were asked not to use force unless necessary.

Police have already increased vigilance and instructed its members to ensure security of all key infrastructures, public transport, government establishments and police establishments, police sources said.

They have been asked to take footage and photographs of agitations to identify any infiltrators. Police will later file cases against these "troublemakers and instigators".

Law enforcers will conduct raids and arrest the "troublemakers" once the situation returned to normal, according to police sources.

"We are working strategically to keep law and order under control. Violence has been taking place in some places, but police are not using force and not taking a frontline position, as it may instigate the protesters," Dhaka Metropolitan Commissioner Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

"A police sergeant and a constable got hurt, and the police outpost at Science Lab was vandalised but still we acted patiently and did not use any force," he said.

The protesters blocked 29 points in Dhaka, he said, adding, "Everywhere, we brought the situation under control by requesting the protesters and sometimes bringing local influential people and teachers to convince the students."

Govt moves SC to scrap HC verdict

FROM PAGE 1

this policy decision, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told reporters at his office.

Replying to a question on whether his office will move the petition before the Appellate Division's chamber judge soon, the attorney general said the apex court is scheduled to hold a hearing on the petition on August 7.

In response to another question, AG Amin Uddin said he thinks that those who are instigating the students for the quota protests are diverting them in the wrong way for political agendas.

Even though the apex court has asked the students to place their arguments before the court, they are continuing their demonstrations, he said, adding that, "Nobody can change the apex court verdict."

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 this year declared illegal the circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, which cancelled the quota system in government jobs.

The circular said in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class-1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class-2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

The HC in the full text of the judgement, which was released on July 13, has also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for "districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, ethnic groups and others, if any," and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible, preferably within three months from the date of receipt of this order.

The HC also said the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs, if necessary, and can fill the vacant posts from the general merit list if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

Protesting the HC judgement on June 5, students staged demonstrations at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University. They took to the streets on July 1. Since then, the protesters have been continuing demonstrations, demanding reforms to the quota system through the formulation of a law.

On July 10, the SC delivered the status quo order following two separate petitions filed by the government and two Dhaka University students seeking a stay on the HC judgement.

"The impugned judgement of the High Court shall remain inoperative till that period," the Appellate Division said in the full text of its order.

Govt cancels Tk 5cr fund

FROM PAGE 12

public Facebook page with nearly 7 million followers on July 13.

The post was shared 6,400 times and generated about 2.5 lakh likes and 38,000 comments at the time of filing the report.

Sadiq, a graduate of the University of Dhaka's Institute of Business Administration, posted on the issue again on Monday, the day that Chhatra League activists swooped on quota protesters on the Dhaka University campus, leaving at least 300 people injured.

"Dhaka University is bloodied. Why is there blood on my campus? I protest," he posted.

Sadiq's post was followed by the official Facebook page of 10 Minute School changing its profile picture to a black screen, often used to express grief or solidarity with a cause or event.

About 16 hours after Sadiq's post, Startup Bangladesh on its official Facebook page announced cancelling its proposed investment into 10MS.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister of ICT Division, the parent of Startup Bangladesh, made an identical post minutes later.

Palak and 10MS did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

But in a dialogue organised by the Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum at the secretariat yesterday, Palak said that disclosing the reasons for funding cancellation would breach the non-disclosure agreement signed by Startup Bangladesh with 10MS.

Asked if Sadiq's Facebook posts were the reason behind Startup Bangladesh's pulling out from the deal, Palak said: "Whoever the person or whichever the organisation, they must uphold the sovereignty of Bangladesh and the spirit of the Liberation War. Someone can be a successful entrepreneur, journalist, lawyer and have different political ideologies, but there should be no debate on the Liberation War, Bangladesh, and the Father of the Nation."

"In that case, if anyone takes a stand or expresses opinions against the spirit of the Liberation War, there is a saying that even though the wretch is a scholar, he is abandoned," Palak added.

Startup Bangladesh was supposed to disburse the funds to 10MS over the next few days, according to people informed with the proceedings.

Founded in 2015 by Sadiq and Abdullah Abyad Raied, 10MS provides content material for school curriculum and skills development. It also offers a video library, preparation tips, model tests, and pre-scheduled live classes for admission preparation, competitive examinations, and university courses.

Until yesterday, 10MS raised $7.5 million, including Tk 5 crore from Startup Bangladesh.

Editors' Council

FROM PAGE 12

Ittefaq, and Shakib Ahmed of an online news portal, the statement said.

The statement added that The Daily Star senior photographer Prabir Das, Prothom Alo staff photographer Dipu Malakar, Daily Janakantha photojournalist Sumanta Chakraborty, and its Dhaka University correspondent Motahar Hossain, Pulak Raj of Daily Bhorer Pata, and Miraj Uddin of Daily Amar Sangbad were wounded on Dhaka University campus.

In Chattogram, Shyamal Nandi, photographer of online news portal sarabangla.net, and Runa Ansari, bureau chief of Deepto TV, were hurt while covering clashes in Chattogram's Sholashahar yesterday, it added.

Somoy Television cameraperson Shimul and Bijoy Television cameraperson Mostafa were wounded while gathering information during clashes in Dinajpur.

In Bogura, Jamuna Television senior reporter and bureau chief Meherul Sujon, Daily Karatoa photojournalist Shafiqul Islam, Daily Ittefaq photojournalist Bimu Rahman, Gazi Television cameraperson Enamul Haque, and an online journalist were injured.

"We call upon the government, all student organisations, and law enforcers to ensure the safety of journalists while they discharge their professional duties," the statement said.

Punctuality of Biman

FROM PAGE 12

To improve efficiency, Biman has taken various measures including closing the check-in counters 60 minutes before the departure of international flights.

Biman is providing its employees training to increase its capacity in ground handling at the Dhaka Airport, the Biman officials said.

Ashura today

FROM PAGE 12

the religion of peace and harmony, is a shining example in the history of humanity.

The day is a public holiday.

On the eve of Ashura, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages, paying deep respect to Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) and other martyrs of Karbala.

The president hoped that the great teachings of Ashura would reflect in the lives of all.

The PM, in her message, termed Ashura a very mournful, significant, and glorious day.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television, and private TV channels will air special programmes while newspapers and online news portals publish supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

On the occasion, special prayers and discussions highlighting the significance of Ashura will be held at mosques and other places.

Israeli forces battle Hamas

FROM PAGE 12

Israeli jails, had appeared to be making some progress, negotiators had said.

US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday that two senior advisers to Netanyahu said Israel is still committed to reaching a ceasefire.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the Israeli officials that casualties among Palestinian civilians "still remain unacceptably high".

A Palestinian official close to the talks told Reuters yesterday that Hamas was keen not to be seen as halting the talks despite the stepped-up Israeli attacks.

"Hamas wants the offensive to end, not at any price. It says it has shown the flexibility needed and is pushing the mediators to get Israel to reciprocate," the official, who asked not to be named said.

Mobile internet sluggish

FROM PAGE 12

Jahangirnagar University, also said they were experiencing slow mobile internet connections.

Alin Khan Farhan, a student of Rajshahi University, said mobile internet connection was too slow to use around the campus area.

Multiple students from Jahangirnagar University, including Amit from the philosophy department, said mobile internet became slow in the evening, making it impossible to use social media or browse the web, adding that the slow speeds lasted till late last night.

However, even though the internet was slow, they said they were still able to make regular phone calls.

Nine killed in Oman Shia mosque gun attack

REUTERS, *Dubai*

Nine people were killed, including three attackers, in an assault on a Shia Muslim mosque in Oman late on Monday, authorities said, in a rare breach of security in one of the most stable countries in the Middle East.

Four Pakistani nationals and a policeman were among those killed in the gun attack, according to Pakistani and Omani officials. Authorities said 28 people of various nationalities were wounded, including security personnel.

Pakistan's foreign ministry said the attack took place in the Ali bin Abi Talib mosque. A local source said it was also known as Imam Ali mosque.

Describing the incident in the Wadi al-Kabir district of Oman's capital Muscat as a "terrorist" attack, the Pakistani ministry said 30 injured people were in hospital.

An injured man lies on a cart while arriving at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli bombardments across the enclave.
PHOTO: AFP

Musk pledges $45m a month to electing Trump

AFP, *Washington*

Tech billionaire Elon Musk said he plans to commit roughly $45 million each month to a new fund backing Donald Trump for US president, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

Musk's donations will go to a political group dubbed America PAC, which will focus on promoting voter registration, early voting and mail-in ballots among residents in swing states ahead of the November general election, the Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

Musk is one of several major backers of the new fund, with others reportedly including Palantir co-founder Joe Lonsdale, former US ambassador to Canada Kelly Craft and cryptocurrency investors Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss.

The Tesla founder formally endorsed Trump's candidacy for US president on Saturday after the former president survived a shooting at a political rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

"I fully endorse President Trump and hope for his rapid recovery," Musk wrote on the social media platform X, which he acquired in 2022.

Musk, the wealthiest man in the world with an estimated net worth of $250 billion, has grown increasingly friendly with Trump over the course of the 2024 US election.

In March, the two met in person during a donor breakfast hosted at the Florida residence of billionaire Nelson Peltz.

J&K FIGHTING

Five Indian security personnel killed

AFP, *Srinagar*

Five security personnel were killed in a firefight with gunmen in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, the army and police said yesterday, with security sources saying militants had made a "tactical shift" in attacks.

A security official, who asked not to be named, said militants had shifted operations from the mainly Muslim Kashmir valley to the Hindu-dominated southern Jammu area, where "counterinsurgency measures are not as strong".

Kashmir's top political official Manoj Sinha said forces would "avenge" their deaths. The Indian army's 16 Corps said security forces had launched an operation in the Doda forest on Monday evening, some 135 kilometres southeast of the territory's capital Srinagar, in the Jammu area.

A "heavy firefight ensued," the army said, saying four men were killed, including a captain.

Indian army chief Upendra Dwivedi sent his "deepest condolences" to the families of the men.

A police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP a police officer also died of his wounds, adding two other soldiers had been hospitalised.

Access to Gaza getting increasingly difficult

Warn 13 leading NGOs, denounce Israel's ongoing attacks on aid operations

AFP, *Paris*

Access to Gaza has become increasingly difficult for humanitarian groups, 13 leading NGOs warned on Monday, accusing Israel's military of blocking much-needed aid from reaching the Palestinian territory.

Denouncing "Israel's systematic obstruction of aid and its ongoing attacks on aid operations", the humanitarian organisations said that Israel had facilitated only 53 -- less than half -- of the 115 relief missions they had planned.

The aid groups slammed what it called Israel's "siege tactics" in its struggle against Hamas.

The so-called "humanitarian zone" had become "an active combat zone", say aid groups

It said the so-called "humanitarian zone" where most of the strip's population of 2.4 million people now reside had become "an active combat zone" and "extremely unsafe".

The charities also criticised the bombing of UN schools used as shelters by displaced Palestinians. At least six schools have been hit over the past nine days.

"These recent events are exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe at a time when NGOs continue to come up against the obstacles imposed by the continuation of Israeli military operations on the ground," a press release summarising the 13 NGOs' views warned.

Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council were among the charities to contribute to the document.

Since Israel began its ground offensive in Rafah in May, humanitarian workers have faced major difficulties in delivering aid to the Gaza Strip's south.

Israel's capture at the beginning of May of the Rafah crossing, which has since been destroyed, brought aid deliveries to a "complete halt", the NGOs added.

Tonnes of "absolutely necessary aid" were left blocked at the crossing points in the south "due to the deterioration in security conditions", the statement said.

More than 1,500 trucks of humanitarian aid containing medicines, first-aid kits and basic necessities were stuck in the Egyptian city of Al-Arish as a result.

Meanwhile, in the north of the Gaza Strip -- which has been isolated from the south by the Israeli army -- aid delivery is "very limited". Oxfam said it took it five weeks to transport just 1,600 food parcels from Jordan to Gaza -- a journey it said "should take no more than six hours".

At Kerem Shalom, designated since May as a priority crossing point for humanitarian aid, the situation had "deteriorated significantly since Israel's offensive in May", the aid groups said.

More than 10m displaced by Sudan war

Says IOM

REUTERS, *Cairo*

More than 10 million Sudanese, or 20 percent of the population, have been driven from their homes since the war there began, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said yesterday, as the world's largest displacement crisis continues to worsen.

The number is the latest dire figure out of the east African country, devastated by a conflict that began in April 2023. The war has left half the population of about 50 million facing a hunger crisis and in need of humanitarian aid, the most of any country.

More than 2.2 million people have fled to other countries since the war began, while almost 7.8 million sought refuge inside the country, the IOM said. An additional 2.8 million people were already displaced by previous conflicts in the country.

Fighting between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces that broke out in the capital Khartoum last year quickly expanded across Darfur, with RSF taking control of most centres. UN experts say hunger has replaced violence as the largest driver of migration from Darfur, where they face difficulty delivering aid.

Metsola wins 2nd term as EU Parliament chief

Warns against polarisation

REUTERS, *Strasbourg*

Roberta Metsola, a Maltese lawmaker from the centre-right European People's Party, easily won a second term yesterday as president of the European Parliament and she appealed for a more inclusive politics to help combat polarisation.

Metsola, who in 2022 became the first woman in 20 years to head the European Union assembly, has emerged as a strong supporter of Ukraine in its war with Russia and its bid to join the EU. President Volodymyr Zelensky sent his congratulations.

Some 562 EU lawmakers out of the 623 who took part in yesterday's vote backed her reappointment to the mainly ceremonial role for a further two and a half years, the largest margin of victory ever for a president of the European Parliament.

"Polarisation in our societies has led to more confrontational politics, even political violence," Metsola, 45, told the assembly.

"We need to move beyond this zero-sum thinking that has excluded people, that turns people away," she said.

Metsola urged the European Parliament to remain a strong supporter of Ukraine, the rule of law, and women's rights, while preparing to add new countries to the EU.

In his message of congratulations, Zelensky wrote on X: "I greatly appreciate President Metsola's personal involvement in supporting Ukraine, as well as her unwavering commitment to protecting people and upholding our European way of life."

5 rights bodies slam attacks on quota protesters

FROM PAGE 1

Amnesty International South Asia, in a statement posted on its verified Facebook page, called on the government to immediately guarantee the safety of all peaceful protesters and proper medical treatment of the injured.

"Bangladesh must uphold its obligations under international law and its own constitution to fully respect the people's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and protect peaceful protestors from further harm."

Transparency International Bangladesh, in its statement, expressed outrage over the attacks on the student protesters by the ruling party's student wing and external attackers, urging that these attackers be identified and held accountable.

In the statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman termed the attacks on students "disgusting and barbaric".

Reliable media sources have reported that even female students faced indiscriminate attacks and public harassment while a student in Rangpur has died during clashes, said the statement issued in the afternoon.

"We are appalled, outraged, and disappointed by the attacks. We demand the attackers be identified and brought to book, regardless of their political positions and identities."

He added that the government should not ignore the logical demands of the students by passing the burden onto the courts. "Rather, it should take steps for a logical, modern, peaceful, and constitutional solution."

The International Human Rights Commission's Bangladesh chapter, Manobadhikar Sangskriti Foundation, and Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik have also expressed concerns over the attacks.

They urged that effective steps be taken to solve the crisis and said the human rights situation in the country will deteriorate to the extreme, creating obstacles for common people, if the crisis continues.

The statements said the attacks on protesting students, especially the females, are gross violations of the constitution and human rights, adding that the state failed in protecting the students.

114 CITIZENS CONDEMN

At least 114 eminent citizens in a statement yesterday strongly condemned the attacks on quota protesters over the last two days.

They demanded justice for the students and exemplary punishment to those responsible for the attacks.

The statement said, "We've observed with deep concern that yesterday [Monday] and today [yesterday], the quota reform activists and students of different universities were indiscriminately attacked. Media reports state that Chhatra League leaders and activists of different units attacked the protesting students with pistols, rods, sticks and sharp weapons.

"Even female students were not spared ... We're outraged and saddened by this barbaric attack. We strongly condemn the painful news of the deaths of at least four people in the attacks on the protesters."

"Attacking the demonstrators, killing several and injuring hundreds of them are serious criminal offences under the country's customary law. The injured students were attacked again while they were at the emergency of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment, which is equivalent to crimes against humanity," it added.

They also demanded that the ministers and Awami League leaders concerned be brought to book for ordering these attacks.

Condemning the failure of the police and university administrations to prevent the attacks, they extended their support to the logical demands of the quota reform movement.

Ali Imam Majumder, former cabinet secretary; Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik; Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association; Prof Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University; Prof Swapan Adnan; CR Abrar, executive director of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit; Prof Asif Nazrul and Prof Shahnaz Huda of DU; Shahidul Alam, renowned photographer; and Maha Mirza, development researcher, were among the signatories.

World's rarest whale washes up on New Zealand beach

AFP, *Christchurch*

The body of a spade-toothed whale -- a species so rare it has never been seen alive -- appears to have washed up on a New Zealand beach, scientists said.

The remains of the obscure, five-metre long, beaked creature were found near a river mouth in southern Otago province on July 4, government researchers said.

It was identified by experts from New Zealand's Department of Conservation and the national museum, Te Papa, as a male spade-toothed whale. A DNA investigation has been launched to confirm its classification.

"Spade-toothed whales are one of the most poorly known large mammalian species of modern times," said the conservation department's coastal Otago operations manager, Gabe Davies.

POST-POLLS FRANCE

PM Attal to take caretaker role

AFP, *Paris*

President Emmanuel Macron was set to accept the resignation of the French government yesterday, but ask Prime Minister Gabriel Attal to head up a caretaker administration for now, cabinet sources told AFP.

French politics have been in gridlock since an inconclusive snap election earlier this month, with parties in the National Assembly scrambling to put together a governing coalition and no successor to Attal in sight.

Macron made the announcement yesterday at the first cabinet meeting since his allies got roundly beaten in the snap parliamentary election he called to "clarify" the political landscape.

Macron told the ministers that he would accept Attal's resignation "at the end of the day", but ask him to stay on "for some weeks", probably until after the Paris Olympics, which open on July 26, meeting participants said.

This gives political parties more time to build a governing coalition after the July 7 election runoff left the lower house without an overall majority.

A broad alliance called the New Popular Front (NFP) which includes Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) won the most seats, with 193 in the 577-strong lower chamber.

Macron's allies came second with 164 seats and the far-right National Rally (RN) third with 143. The divided NFP alliance has been scrambling to come up with a consensus candidate for prime minister.

But internal conflicts -- notably between the LFI and the more moderate Socialists -- have thwarted all efforts to find a personality able to survive a confidence vote in parliament.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Stop this violence before more deaths

We protest mindless attacks on students

We are horrified by the atrocious violence carried out by the members of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) across campuses and on streets in Bangladesh over the past 48 hours in the name of teaching anti-quota dissenters a "lesson." Countless protesters have been injured in the attacks that show no signs of abating, and as of writing this editorial, at least six individuals have died during clashes. We urge the government to immediately stop this bloodbath before any more loss of lives and a complete breakdown of law and order.

On Tuesday, both protests and attacks escalated, spreading across the country. Along with public university students, students from some private universities and even schools and colleges too joined hands to protest BCL's attacks on the previous day. Science Lab in Dhaka turned into a warzone for most of the day, with chases and counter-chases between students and BCL leading to at least a hundred individuals getting injured. The situation in Rangpur and Chattogram were also very volatile, with clashes leading to at least one death in Rangpur and three in Chattogram. A number of students were also reportedly shot.

These attacks began on Monday when Dhaka University turned into a bloody battlefield for over five hours. According to media reports, BCL men, armed with sticks and rods, swooped upon students who had gathered to protest what they called a "disparaging comment" by the prime minister. Their brutality did not stop with injuring over 300 students, many of whom were women; they stormed into DMCH's emergency department in the evening and beat protesters again, causing unimaginable panic among critically-ill patients who had come for emergency treatment. At midnight and early morning on Tuesday, they continued their mayhem across other campuses. During these clashes, lethal weapons including machete and petrol bombs were used.

It is unimaginable that such violence could take place with impunity, without any attempt by law enforcement agencies to stop them from happening—not even when it took place in the biggest public hospital in the country. Are we to assume that our law enforcers are helpless in the face of BCL's wrath, or that BCL is now an armed extension of the state machinery? Even if we assume that the protesters were in the wrong and needed to be apprehended, what legal or constitutional mandate does a student wing have to carry out such attacks? While the home minister had previously warned of police action against quota protesters if they crossed the line, he seems to now see no excesses in BCL's actions, which are directly undermining the role of his ministry and that of law enforcers. In fact, he has gone so far as to dismiss the ongoing violence as mere "difference of opinion" between opposing groups.

By allowing and enabling such attacks, the government is essentially pushing the protesters to a point of no return, which can have disastrous consequences for the country and its citizens. It must act as a government should—sensitive to citizens' needs and demands. It has to take stern action against those carrying out attacks against members of the public and making a mockery of the democratic and constitutional processes that we fought the Liberation War for.

The government should realise that the ongoing protests are more than just about quotas—they signify a deep sense of dissatisfaction among the youth about the way the country currently operates. The way out is to hear the students' concerns and engage them in dialogue, not to allow violence inflicted upon them, which can only exacerbate their frustrations against the status quo.

Out of control healthcare costs

A holistic approach needed to reduce out-of-pocket expenses

A research finding has confirmed our fear that many people are facing poverty because of high healthcare costs in Bangladesh. A study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), according to this daily, showed that approximately 6.13 million people were pushed below the national poverty line in 2022 because of out-of-pocket health expenditures.

The findings also revealed that more than half the population faces financial difficulties while seeking medical services in hospitals and that a large portion of the healthcare cost is spent on medicines. This is no surprise since many people in Bangladesh visit a pharmacy for basic ailments and buy medicine based on the shopkeepers' recommendations instead of consulting physicians, who are often not available at primary healthcare centres in unions and upazilas. Even when doctors are available, the poor quality of services at health facilities and the high cost of private ones often discourage people from seeking professional help. There is also a tendency among health professionals to overprescribe drugs and write brand names of medicine in prescriptions as a favour to pharmaceutical representatives who shower doctors with incentives.

The most disheartening part is that while out-of-pocket health expenditure continues to rise for the public (from 68 percent in 2020 to 73 percent in 2021), a portion of the health sector allocation remains underutilised. Plus, a significant portion of the allocation is spent on the salaries and wages of staff and health professionals, which often do not benefit patients directly. Although the health minister hinted at introducing a government-based health insurance system, many other ills in this sector need to be fixed to reduce people's healthcare burden. First, our focus needs to shift from curative to preventive care. Then the shortage of doctors and other health professionals must be resolved by instituting proper incentives and monitoring systems at duty stations. Policies and regulations should be introduced and implemented strictly to prevent the over-prescription of drugs, unethical practices of pharmaceutical companies, and regulate fees at private healthcare facilities. Corruption and inefficiencies in health sector procurement processes must be checked. Besides, a well-developed patient referral system will also decrease costs, stopping people from unnecessarily visiting specialists and paying higher fees. Only an overhaul of the entire sector, not just ad hoc measures, can re-establish people's trust in the health sector and reduce healthcare costs.

Is political violence transforming Awami League?

Kamal Ahmed
is an independent journalist. His X handle is @ahmedka1

KAMAL AHMED

The images that surfaced on online news portals, including this newspaper and social media, showing helmet-wearing activists of Chhatra League attacking protesters, including girls, with various weapons and sticks to break student demonstrations at several universities are deeply depressing, outrageous, and deplorable.

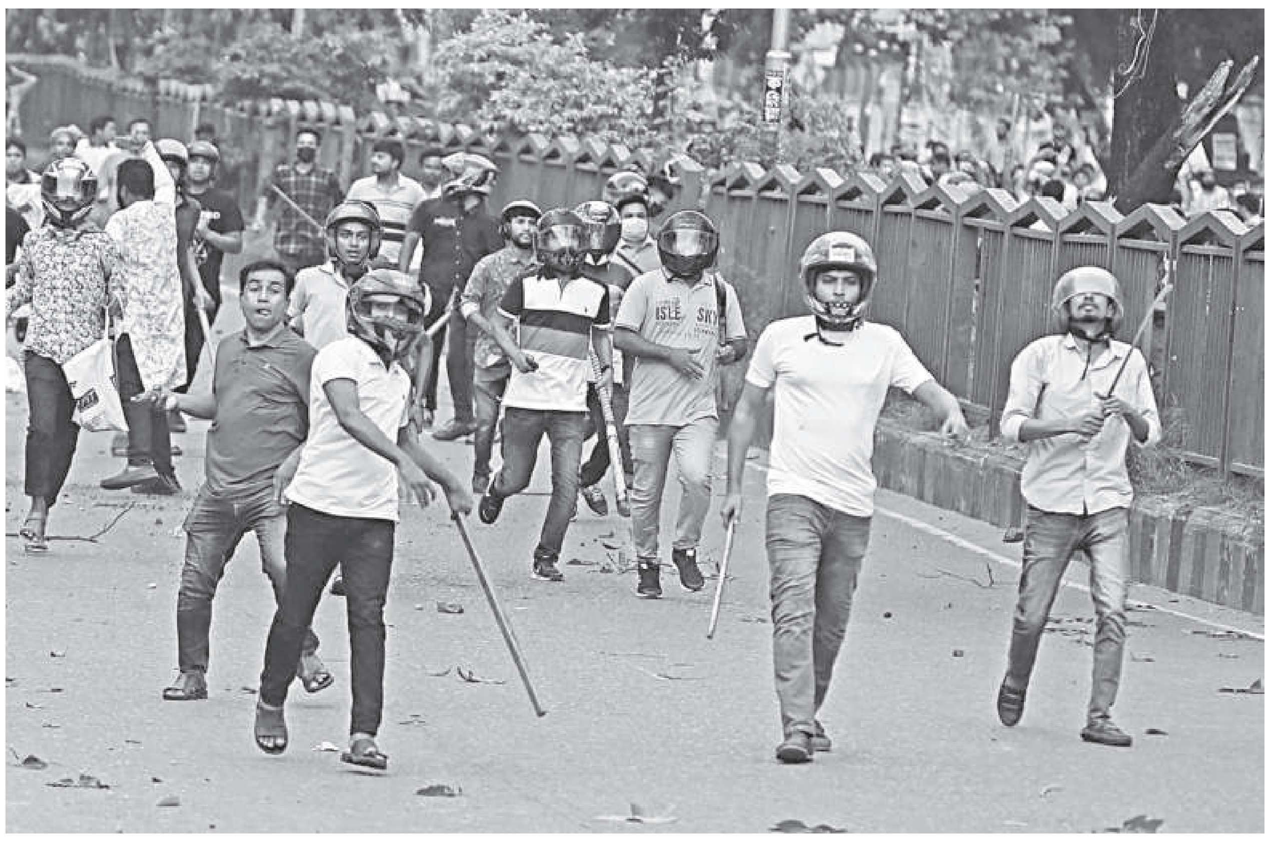
These demonstrators were demanding reforms to the quota system in civil service recruitment, which was scrapped in 2018 following a similar protest but restored on June 5 following a judicial ruling. This ruling shocked many young people. The government's appeal against the ruling suggests it also wants a change in the outcome.

The latest wave of violence against the protesters follows a public pronouncement by the ruling party's general secretary, Obaidul Quader, that Chhatra League would teach a lesson to those who allegedly undermined the spirit of the war of independence. This allegation centres around distortions, selective quotations, miscommunications, and a lack of empathy and understanding. These unnecessary escalations involving party members punishing protesters must stop immediately, and the responsibility squarely falls on the leadership of the ruling party.

These latest developments add to the concerns over the increasing tendency towards intolerance and the preference for violent means to suppress any dissent, whether political or apolitical. The latest data on casualties of political violence in Bangladesh, despite their shortcomings in accuracy, clearly show that the ruling party, Awami League, has seemingly lost control over the organisation. Consequently, the party has turned into fertile ground for factionalism and turf wars. It must be acknowledged that there is no established institutional mechanism for monitoring political violence in Bangladesh, and some civil society organisations, mainly rights groups, compile data from media reports on violence without independent verification, and their choice of news outlets is not always consistent.

This perhaps explains why the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), in its latest report, stated that 91 people were killed in "political violence" in the first six months of this year, while Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), another rights group, reported 41 deaths during the same period due to political rivalry and clashes.

Deadly political violence is not rare in our political culture, where the winner-takes-all principle drives political activists to the extreme. In a democracy, a strong opposition acts as a powerful deterrent to deadly violence. But in the absence of an effective opposition, it is natural for the rulers to face opposition from within, leading to internecine conflict. The ASK data, too, cited elections that led to incidents of violence.



Activists of the ruling party swoop on student protestors on July 15, 2024. PHOTO: **STAR**

The HRSS report, published on July 7, stated that 91 people were killed in 1,004 incidents of "political violence" in the last six months, leaving at least 4,026 people injured. The report observed that most casualties were due to election violence, dominance, and internal conflict between the ruling Awami League and Chhatra League. There were also a few clashes between police and opposition party leaders and activists.

According to the report, 50 people were killed in violence due to Chhatra League's dominance and infighting on public university campuses. While some may argue that the higher levels of violence and casualties during this period were due to the parliamentary election held on January 7 and subsequent upazila elections, both were boycotted by the main opposition BNP and most other opposition parties. Allies of the ruling party, including the current parliamentary opposition Jatiya Party, also largely stayed away from upazila elections, leaving these elections as intra-party contests for the ruling Awami League.

It could be argued that the ruling party's decision to allow and, in some cases, encourage its members to run against its official nominees propelled intra-party rivalry. Many political observers had warned about this likelihood well before these elections, and their reasoning cannot be dismissed outright.

However, looking at historical data of political violence over the last 10 years suggests a disturbing political transformation largely within the ruling party. For example, the number of casualties of political violence in 2022, compiled by ASK, shows that Awami League versus Awami League conflicts resulted in 12 deaths that year, compared to one death from violence between the Awami League and the BNP. According to a *Dhaka Tribune* report, an earlier publication by ASK compiling data over nearly five years (57 months) between January 2013 and September 2017 found that Awami League and its affiliate organisations had an average of 15 incidents of internal conflict per month, leading to the loss of three lives each month.

This situation raises the question of whether the current leadership of Awami League, on its 75th anniversary, will consider answering crucial questions about whether this transformation into violent politics will help or harm the party in the long run. Additionally, will they take urgent measures to stop further loss of lives among their members and political rivals?

A slogan lost in translation

Azmin Azran
is digital features coordinator at The Daily Star.

AZMIN AZRAN

The course of the ongoing quota reform protests has taken a drastic turn over the last two days. On Tuesday, at least six individuals, mostly students, died during clashes between protesters and members of Bangladesh Chhatra League and the police—marking a further escalation from the previous day's events. Few would have imagined this scenario when students gathered in Dhaka University and other campuses on Sunday night.

For over two weeks prior to this, they had been boycotting classes and exams, and blockading key intersections in Dhaka and major highways in different places of the country with the demand to reform the quota system in civil service recruitment. But what made them flood campus streets on that night was a specific comment that touched a nerve for the wider student community. On Sunday, in response to a journalist's question during a press conference, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "Why do they [anti-quota protesters] have so much resentment towards the freedom fighters? If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?"

This questionable dichotomy is what lit the fuse, leading to students exploding with renewed vigour. And among all the slogans heard across the DU campus that night, the one that seems to have had the most intense impact is the one that goes: "Tui ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar!]" There have been other, more explanatory variations of the slogan, but for whatever reason, those didn't get much coverage. The question is, what made these students—otherwise proud citizens of an independent Bangladesh, and carrying the legacy of our independence struggle—utter such incendiary slogans?

Grievances over the preferential quota system are nothing new; in fact, the way the protests have panned out this time are starkly reminiscent of what happened during the 2018 quota reform movement. Protests began at Shahbagh then as they did now, before spreading across the country. In 2018, like this time around, a senior member of the ruling party remarked in parliament, "Will the children and successors of those who risked their lives to fight for independence not get an opportunity? Will the children of Razakars get the chance? Will the quota for the freedom fighters be shrunk for them?"

Six years ago, students protested this particular line of reasoning—as they did on Sunday night. And the reaction to it on both occasions was nothing short of extraordinary. That said, it is totally unfortunate that in a movement that concerns the wellbeing of general students in modern-day Bangladesh, the word "Razakar" has occupied so much of the conversation. On principle, we must say we are against any identification—however unintended—with this term. Students, having been familiarised with the history of our nation from a young age, should have known better than to use something that only invokes the hateful memories of the atrocities committed by Razakars in 1971.

> **After Sunday night, we have seen the ministers of road transport and bridges, education, and social welfare, and state ministers for ICT and information all come out with hardened words against the protesters. None of them seemed to have noticed that the protesters themselves offered further explanation of their mood by chanting, "Chaite gelam odhikar, hoye gelam Razakar [Demanded rights, only to become Razakar]".**

But students say the slogan was lost in translation. Their use of the term, they say, was sarcastic and heavy with context. Take away that context, and you have a totally different connotation. And this is what is happening at the moment. Unfortunately, despite the clarification from students, there has been little hint of reciprocation from those protesting the use of the word Razakar. Clearly, a mismatch exists between the protesting students and the powers that be. But what was stopping Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student party made up of students, from trying to understand the feelings of pain and anguish that led to such utterances? Why, instead of trying to impress upon them the inappropriateness of their slogan or supporting their just cause for quota reforms, did Chhatra League unleash violence on them?

After Sunday night, we have seen the ministers of road transport and bridges, education, and social welfare, and state ministers for ICT and information all come out with hardened words against the protesters. None of them seemed to have noticed that the protesters themselves offered further explanation of their mood by chanting, "Chaite gelam odhikar, hoye gelam Razakar [Demanded rights, only to become Razakar]". Instead of trying to engage with the students and bridge any gap in communication, the Awami League general secretary has instead called BCL to provide a "fitting reply".

We have seen the destructive nature of that reply over the past two days. Such violence and brutal attacks over a naive use of an objectionable slogan are hard to accept. We must remember that these students would never support anti-liberation ideals. Attempts could have been made to clear any confusion through amicable means. That would have been a much wiser way to deal with these realities instead of the violence that has ensued since.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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How Trump's assassination attempt affects the US election

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SARZAH YEASMIN

Throughout history any attempted assassination has been memorialised, canonised and imprinted onto the public psyche. In many cases the act of assassination has been a turning point—from Benazir Bhutto, to Indira Gandhi to John F Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln, all these world leaders have had an abrupt end to their flaring political careers, but are remembered more for their good than bad, regardless of which side of the political line the public of the day inclines. While many have come up with conspiracy theories after the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump in a rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday, Trump has received words of assurance, condolence and kindness across the board. The imagery of blood trickling down his face and fist up in the air is quite iconic and heroic—supporters who loved him love him more, and the ones who did not look at him are looking at him now.

Former President Donald Trump pumps his fist as he is rushed offstage following his assassination attempt at a rally on July 13, 2024 in Butler, Pennsylvania.

PHOTO: AFP

This unprecedented event has not only pivoted attention away from major world issues, at least in the US, but it could also be a major turning point for the outcome of the current election. It has already charged the Republican Party, and it will continue to shape their strategy as they move forward with packaging their rhetoric. However, despite the fact that the attack could have been avoided with some form of gun control, the party's position on gun control and the Second Amendment will remain intact. Two of the most talked about US presidents in history, who were party favourites—Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan were also survivors of assassination attempts and Trump has now joined that list. Though his felony cases did not really play a pivotal role in the public's decision to support or not support him, this incident takes away any clout from the hush money, falsification of business records, corrupt dealings and hearings might have had. Following the attack, a Florida judge dismissed the federal classified documents case against Donald Trump on the grounds that the Department of Justice unlawfully appointed special counsel Jack Smith.

> **Since the last week of June, Trump has held a lead in the national polls according to FiveThirtyEight; after the assassination, it has gone up by two percent over Biden, while Biden's national disapproval rating is on the rise.**

Since the last week of June, Trump has held a lead in the national polls according to FiveThirtyEight; after the assassination, it has gone up by two percent over Biden, while Biden's national disapproval rating is on the rise. The political ground has been made fertile for Project 2025—a $22 million project led by the right-wing think tank, Heritage Foundation, with an autocratic bend that aims to realise staunch Christian nationalist principles, undermine separation of power, eliminate the department of education, curb climate change and civil liberties related regulations, push for significant cut to social security provisions and establish partisan leadership in major agencies. It is a presidential transition operation specifically intended for the republican nominee, Donald Trump, and if it becomes a reality, it would significantly alter US policy and institutions.

The much-talked about debate between the two-party candidates was a smudge, a mishmash of dubious claims—the optics of which takes the public further away from considering the real policy changes and tangible upheavals that they will encounter. The debate did nothing to change minds—undecided voters are still undecided and will likely remain undecided and the ones who have decided not to pick the lesser of the two evils won't hit the polls. The Republican National Convention proved to show a Republican Party recharged with Trump's words minutes after surviving the attempt: "Fight, fight, fight." Security was ramped up for the convention so that the security failures were not repeated, although questions still remain both for the security apparatus and the public on how the shooter got so close and why there was a failure. The Justice Department under Attorney General Merrick Garland can be trusted to carry out a full-fledged impartial investigation, but the question persists if the same can be expected from the Justice Department under another Trump presidency. It is vital to save institutions from the flare of party politics so that they can be dependable service providers for the public. It is the public that should be pushing politics not the other way round, but the opposite is the reality.

The Secret Service which shot the shooter down, has a long discreet relationship with the Trump family with a reputation for spending millions of taxpayer dollars on Trump's hotels, private properties and clubs.

What we are witnessing is a monumental loss of institutionalisation for the Republican Party, as its politics revolve around amplifying Trump, a move from defending conservative ideals which are fundamentally against debasing the branches of the government. The creation of the new party platform for the Republicans is a closed process, which is unlike other election cycles. As Biden attempts to try his chances by declaring he knows how to say the truth, in many ways, so does his opponent Trump is clearly adept at speaking his version of the truth.

While many of Biden's liberal and progressive voter bases are lacklustre—with much of the lethargy stemming from the US' role in the ongoing genocide in Gaza—Trump activists are on the move, and this shooting event has only added more fuel to the movement. Trump has established, although mostly rhetorically, that he is the commander-in-chief who gets things done and he is the one who is taken seriously by the world leaders. The assassination attempt could legitimise Trump's rhetoric for swing voters. Regardless of the sound bites we must not forget what was actually accomplished during Trump's last term and the risks associated with the promises of Project 2025. From the cusp of misinformation, we slid into the labyrinth of fake news, alternate and multiple realities, loss of objectivity, immense push backs against reproductive rights, scandalous turnovers in the government.

The extent to which the public has been exposed to chaos has truly made them immune to the likes of such ruptures in US institutions which were meant to be trusted. The ultimate and the biggest numerical outcome of the Trump presidency was the number of Covid deaths and insensitivity at a time when the world needed to come together. Sure, there was some progress in foreign policy, but the magnitude of loss is much greater. And an important question needs to be considered: would the genocide of Palestinians by Israel stop if Trump takes office? That is a complicated question given that Trump courts evangelical Zionists who are quite influential in the broader national political landscape. He also called Biden a "bad Palestinian" denigrating an entire people and glossing over the constant trauma and brutality against humanity.

Technocracy of the Democratic Party may have made it a party of the elites, but the Republican Party is not quite the people's party and it hasn't been in a long time. People may rather prefer doctors to run a hospital versus a family who would run the healthcare establishment like a business. Trump is known to appoint his family members and loyalists in influential government posts, which reeks of corrupt "third world" family-run governments with compromised institutions. But whether American citizens will see that truth, and the problem with that, seems further away today than it was before the assassination attempt.

Joe Biden—whose candidacy was in doubt, with talks of his replacement dominating the headlines before Trump's assassination attempt—is now in a more precarious position. Biden is a leader who has delivered before, both on the goods and bads, but he has reached a ceiling with his support for the genocide—another political move to keep Israel sympathisers in the Democratic party's pocket. Pollsters can make sound predictions about the general election, but the future of both parties, particularly the Republican Party, looks bleak as its institutional rigour erodes and the party turns into a movement around one man and his family cantered top-down leadership. The optics of the shooting event will only expedite that erosion. In this market place of democracy, we have only a few bad choices.

The most incredible election in French history

Zaki Laidi
is a professor at Sciences Po.

ZAKI LAIDI

By calling a snap parliamentary election in the wake of his party's defeat in the June European Parliament election, French President Emmanuel Macron hoped to "clarify" the political situation for his own benefit. Clearly, he failed. The election produced no parliamentary majority, only a great deal more confusion. With many losers and very few winners, it is the most astonishing election in the country's modern history.

Among the many losers is National Rally (RN), the far-right party that clinched a decisive and shocking victory in the European elections just weeks earlier. Though RN has increased its seat count and emerged as the largest party in the National Assembly, it fell far short of expectations. The second round featured a powerful anti-RN mobilisation, as voters shifted tactically from the centre to the left, and from the right to the centre. Many French apparently concluded during the campaign that RN's candidates were ill prepared to hold power.

Most pundits had come to believe that the French electoral system's natural immunity against the far-right no longer worked. But this election disproved that. Though the far-right is now the country's leading political force, it cannot do anything without allies, and it has none.

Supporters of French far-left opposition party gather to celebrate the results of the early French parliamentary elections in Paris, France, on July 7, 2024.

PHOTO: REUTERS

The second loser is Macron, whose party lost around 100 seats. Before the election, his Ensemble grouping could anchor a relative majority. Now, it is dwarfed by the left-wing New Popular Front (NFP), which won the most seats overall.

But while Macron probably will be forced to appoint a new prime minister from the left, the NFP remains around 100 seats short of an absolute majority. Moreover, it is a loose coalition whose members disagree on much and whose leader, Jean-Luc Melenchon of France Unbowed, has only one objective: to radicalise public debate and create the conditions for a face-off between him and RN's Marine Le Pen in the 2027 presidential election. Thus, it is not necessarily in Melenchon's interest for a left-wing government (under a different figurehead) to succeed.

To benefit Melenchon personally, the NFP would need to be able to execute on its entire electoral programme; but that will never happen without an absolute majority. Moreover, the next government—whatever shape it takes—will soon have to answer to the European Commission, which recently launched an "excessive deficit procedure" against France.

Still, the NFP is not likely to break up anytime soon. While the Socialists and Greens drew much criticism for allying with Melenchon despite their fundamental differences with him, the arrangement paid off electorally. Of the 40 additional seats won by the left, all went to the Socialists and Greens, whereas France Unbowed made no new gains. One is reminded of the left-wing union that French President Francois Mitterrand led after his election in 1981: by forging an alliance with the Communists, he was in a better position to weaken them later.

> **Most pundits had come to believe that the French electoral system's natural immunity against the far-right no longer worked. But this election disproved that. Though the far-right is now the country's leading political force, it cannot do anything without allies, and it has none.**

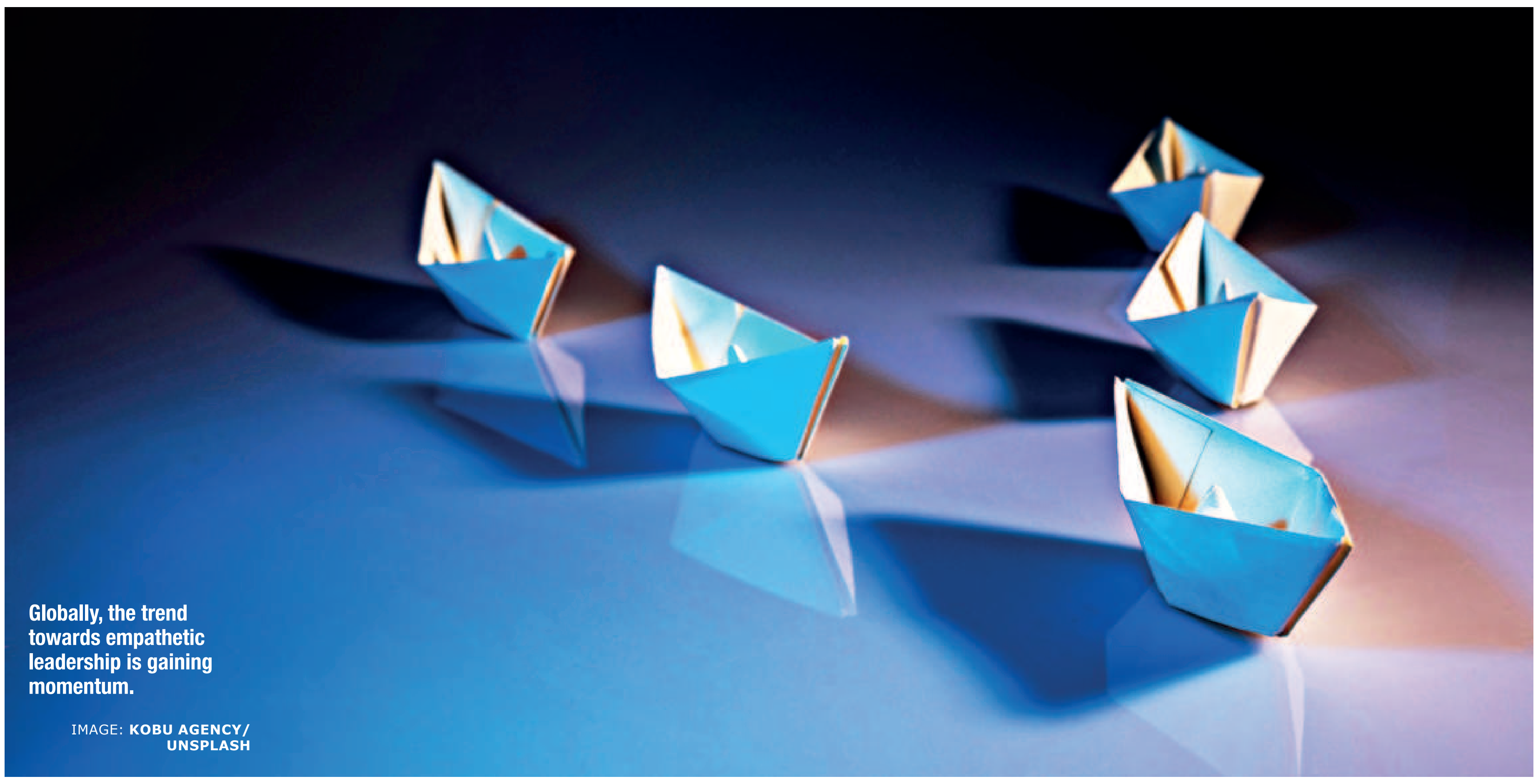
Looking ahead, the most likely scenario is that a moderate minority government will be formed to serve as a caretaker for the next year (the president cannot dissolve the National Assembly again until June 2025). But with Macron on the defensive and lacking a parliamentary majority, France will be in uncharted waters. Specific political personalities will play a much larger role than labels like "left," "right," or "centre." As in every political system, some French politicians want to pursue stability and compromise, while others are bent on crushing perceived enemies.

Thus, the coming year will be marked by deep political uncertainty, which will not help France's economic outlook. No matter what, though, the next government must agree on the 2025 budget within the next few months.

Perhaps the new National Assembly will find some common ground on electoral reform. The current two-round procedure is suited for a bipolar political system, but this election provided further confirmation that French politics is now tripolar. Given the emergence of distinct left-wing, right-wing, and centrist blocs, the only solution is to introduce proportional representation, with each party establishing its level of support and then pursuing voluntary coalitions after the votes are counted. Within the left, for example, the Socialists would not have to tie themselves to France Unbowed to get elected, and they could form alliances with others—such as Macron's party—once in parliament.

France's fragmented politics are not so different from those of other European countries. But its political culture and institutions are unique in the degree to which they favour confrontation over coalition-building.

Will this election outcome spur French politicians to see things differently, or will everyone just keep behaving as they always have? In the latter scenario, RN need only bide its time, capitalise on the government's ineffectiveness, and sooner or later win everything.



Globally, the trend towards empathetic leadership is gaining momentum.

IMAGE: **KOBU AGENCY/ UNSPLASH**

The future of leadership is KINDNESS

> **In our personal lives, we strive for happiness, fulfilment, and love, actively avoiding toxic relationships. Yet, paradoxically, in the workplace, many still believe that power and toughness are the keys to success.**

ZARIF FAIAZ

In recent years, the business world has seen a paradigm shift in the qualities we value in leaders. Long gone are the days when assertiveness and strength were seen as the sole indicators of effective leadership. Instead, a new wave of thinking, championed by figures like Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, is advocating for kindness and empathy as core tenets of leadership. Ardern aptly put it, "We've placed over time so much emphasis on notions of assertiveness and strength that we have assumed it means you can't have those other qualities of kindness and empathy." This evolution in leadership ethos is not just a passing trend but a necessary transformation for the future.

The paradox of power and happiness

In our personal lives, we strive for happiness, fulfilment, and love, actively avoiding toxic relationships. Yet, paradoxically, in the workplace, many still believe that power and toughness are the keys to success. This dissonance is baffling. Why should our professional lives be any different from our personal lives when it comes to the qualities we value and the environments we create? It's time to debunk the myth that kindness and empathy are weaknesses in the corporate world.

The myth of niceness as weakness

There is no scientific basis for the belief that being nice, charismatic, or likeable makes one a pushover or unworthy of respect. This outdated thinking lacks evidence and ignores the numerous studies that highlight the benefits of supportive and empathetic leadership. For instance, a 2019 US study revealed that 57 per cent of employees quit their jobs because of their boss. Moreover, 14 per cent have left multiple jobs due to managerial issues, and an additional 32 per cent have seriously considered leaving because of their managers. The evidence is clear: poor leadership, devoid of empathy and support, drives people away.

The science of supportive leadership

On the contrary, the science supports the benefits of kind leadership. Gallup's surveys of US workers consistently find that receiving compliments, recognition, and praise boosts self-esteem, improves self-evaluations, and triggers positive emotions. Similarly, a study by the American Psychological Association found that employees who feel supported by their supervisors are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work. Google's data collection has reached similar conclusions: in the best teams, members listen to one another and show sensitivity to feelings and needs. This approach fosters a collaborative and innovative environment where employees feel valued and engaged .

Competitive advantage through empathy

In their book CEO Excellence, McKinsey noted that the most successful CEOs treat the 'soft stuff'—talent, culture, and organisational design—with the same rigour as financial performance. These CEOs understand that getting the people aspect right is a source of competitive advantage. This insight is not just applicable globally but is highly relevant to the Bangladeshi corporate sector as well.

The Bangladeshi context

In Bangladesh, the corporate culture is gradually evolving. Historically, hierarchical and authoritarian leadership styles have dominated, often leading to high employee turnover and low morale. However, forward-thinking companies in Bangladesh are beginning to embrace a more compassionate approach to leadership. This shift is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. As the local job market becomes more competitive, retaining top talent requires more than just competitive salaries; it necessitates a supportive and empathetic work environment.

Global perspectives on employee satisfaction and leadership

Globally, the trend towards empathetic leadership is gaining momentum. According to a survey by Deloitte, 94 per cent of executives and 88 per cent of employees believe that a distinct corporate culture is important to a business's success. Moreover, a study by the Harvard Business Review found that leaders who project warmth are more effective than those who lead with toughness and power. This is supported by findings from the University of California, Berkeley, which suggest that compassionate leaders are more likely to be respected and followed.

The World Economic Forum has also highlighted the importance of empathy in leadership, noting that empathetic leaders can better connect with their employees, understand their needs, and foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment. This is particularly crucial in today's diverse and dynamic work environments, where employees come from various backgrounds and have different needs and expectations.

The future of leadership

The future of leadership lies in kindness. As we move forward, it is imperative that we redefine what it means to be a leader. Empathy, kindness, and support are not just nice-to-have qualities but essential components of effective leadership. They create a positive work environment, reduce turnover, and drive organisational success. In Bangladesh, as in the rest of the world, businesses that embrace this new paradigm will not only survive but thrive in the competitive landscape. It's time to leave behind the old notions of power and toughness and pave the way for a kinder, more empathetic future in leadership.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "Do what you can, with what you've got, where you are."
>
> **THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

What you should know about TSMC, Asia's most valuable company

AFP, *Taipei*

With a recent market valuation of over $1 trillion, the Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturer TSMC has cemented itself as the most valuable company in Asia. This achievement takes place after a strong second-quarter revenue from the company. Experts believe the number will rise again soon due to the ongoing boom in AI chips' market demands. Meanwhile, here are five things you should know about this Taiwanese chip manufacturer.

How it began

MIT and Stanford graduate Morris Chang founded TSMC in 1987 after an extensive tech industry career in the United States. Taiwan's government was trying to set up a semiconductor industry that would compete with the countries, such as Japan, that led the sector at the time.

TSMC has become one of the world's most important companies in the nearly four decades since -- a leader in producing the chips that help run everything from smartphones to advanced robots.

Chang, who was born in mainland China in 1931, retired from TSMC in 2018. He was revered in Taiwan by then and often described as the "godfather" of the island's chip industry. Taiwan awarded him one of its highest medals of honour in April.

IMAGE: **ANN WANG/REUTERS**

TSMC has become one of the world's most important companies in recent times.

AI boom

Thanks to the revolution in artificial intelligence sparked by the success of ChatGPT, TSMC has been riding a massive wave of demand for the advanced semiconductors needed to train and run AI apps. It works closely with AI leader Nvidia, which became the world's most valuable traded company in June with a market capitalisation of around $3.3 trillion.

TSMC also supplies Nvidia competitors Qualcomm and AMD, among others, and such is the demand for its chips that production has been reportedly booked for years in advance. Arguably its best-known client is Apple, which relies on TSMC chips for the latest iPhones and MacBooks.

"We have established a research pipeline for technology to enable leading-edge AI devices, circuits, and systems for decades to come," TSMC says on its website.

Fears about China

Taiwan is one of the most important links in the supply chain for semiconductors, the lifeblood of the modern global economy, and TSMC is its crown jewel. However, China claims the self-ruled island as its territory and has not ruled out the use of force to bring it under its control.

Beijing has ramped up pressure on Taipei in recent years, including with large-scale military drills, sparking worries in capitals and boardrooms around the world about its chip industry.

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told a Congressional hearing in May that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan and seizure of TSMC would be "absolutely devastating". "Right now, the United States buys 92% of its leading-edge chips from TSMC in Taiwan," she said.

US, Japan expansion

TSMC has faced pressure to diversify away from Taiwan, where the bulk of its factories are based, to guard against any further escalation of the tussle between Washington and Beijing.

It is building two "fabs" -- manufacturing plants -- in the United States and announced plans for a third in April, bringing its total investment in the state of Arizona to $65 billion. But its US projects have faced obstacles in the past year, which the company attributed to a lack of human resources because making chips requires highly specialised skills.

TSMC also launched an $8.6 billion plant in Japan this year -- a coup for the country as it vies with the United States and Europe to woo top chip firms with huge subsidies. With "strong" Japanese government support, TSMC has announced a second factory to make more advanced chips. The firm is also planning a new factory in Germany -- its first in Europe.

Quake threat

Geopolitics is not the only worry for TSMC and Taiwan's chip industry. The island is prone to natural disasters, too. It sits on the "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity along the Pacific Rim, and -- much like neighbouring Japan -- has a long history of catastrophic quakes.

TSMC was one of the firms that halted production because of a 7.4-magnitude earthquake in April this year, the most severe to hit Taiwan in decades. It told customers the impact of the quake was minimal.

TSMC has invested in several seismic resistance features at its facilities to reduce damage and casualties, including an earthquake early warning system, according to its website.

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1
Major League Cricket
New York vs Washington
Live from 6:30 am
Seattle vs Los Angeles
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

PHOTO: AFP/X

Thousands of fans joined street celebrations in Madrid after Euro 2024 champions Spain returned home to a royal welcome on Monday, having beaten England 2-1 in the final in Berlin on Sunday. After receptions with King Felipe VI and prime minister Pedro Sanchez, the record four-time Euro winners paraded through the capital city on an open-top bus as supporters gathered at Cibeles Square and lined the streets in anticipation of seeing their heroes and the coveted trophy. Meanwhile, similar scenes were witnessed at the Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires on Tuesday, as thousands of people gathered around the airport to receive the Argentina team that returned home to a heroes' welcome about 24 hours after they beat Colombia to win a record 16th Copa America title. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, winger Angel di Maria, who on Sunday played his last match with the Albiceleste, and the Argentine Football Association president Claudio Fabian Tapia posed with the trophy upon the team's arrival.

The debate over Rishad's red-ball readiness

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

In Test cricket, the importance of having a skilled leg-spinner cannot be overstated as they bring a unique variation and unpredictability that can turn the tide of a match, even when there is little assistance from the pitch.

Bangladesh, traditionally reliant on orthodox, finger spinners, saw the impact of leg-spin with Rishad Hossain's stellar T20 World Cup performance in the USA and West Indies: the 22-year-old went on to pick 14 wickets, including two match-winning spells against Sri Lanka and the Netherlands.

However, as the team prepares for Test series against Pakistan and India, Rishad's readiness for the longer format has sparked a debate.

While all-format captain Najmul Hossain Shanto has reservations about his current Test credentials, chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu considers Rishad "a prospect for the longer version".

Moreover, the player himself has expressed his willingness to get integrated into the Tigers' Test setup.

Rishad has recently returned for individual practice in Mirpur after completing a two-week vacation following Bangladesh's World Cup campaign.

On Tuesday, the player was seen honing both his batting and bowling skills at the National Cricket Academy, keeping an eye on the national team's next white-ball assignment: against India in October, where they will play three T20Is after a two-match Test series.

Before the T20I series, Bangladesh will feature in Tests against hosts Pakistan, between August 21 to September 3. However, it seems the 22-year-old will have to sit idle during these four Tests as he is yet to be in consideration for Bangladesh in red-ball cricket despite having made his first-class debut in 2018.

The kind of spin Rishad produces can be an asset for the Bangladesh Test team, who have often found wanting in away series due to a lack of variety.

Although Bangladesh possess Test specialist spinners like Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, and Nayeem Hasan, alongside their superstar all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, none provide the variation of a leggie.

However, asked about his stance regarding Rishad's inclusion in the Test fold, captain Shanto was skeptical.

"I think it would be better to ask this to the selectors, but from my experience, I don't think he [Rishad] is fully ready for red-ball cricket at the moment," Shanto said during yesterday's private programme at Pragati Sarani.

When this reporter contacted Rishad for his comments on playing Tests, he said that he has "no conditions" about playing any format.

"I'm currently preparing for white-ball games... Let's see how it [prospect of playing Tests] turns out for me," Rishad told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the chief selector Lipu believes that Rishad can be counted on as a prospect in the Test fold, but it is dependent on many factors.

"Rishad has been in the pipeline for a long time. Regarding his inclusion in red-ball [format], we can't reach a conclusion by ourselves," said Lipu, who is in Chattogram to oversee the ongoing white-ball series between HP Unit and Bangladesh Tigers alongside one of his deputies, Abdur Razzak.

"Rishad is definitely a prospect for the longer version as well. But when we will give the exposure, only time can tell. The kind of caliber he possesses, he will definitely be in the plan.

"But a Test match is a different ball game, and it's a test for every bowler; it's not like T20. He needs to be competent for it. He is working on googlies and all other variations.

"We will definitely try to give him exposure, but we need the opinions of the captain and head coach as well," the chief selector concluded.

Having received a big round of applause from the country's cricketing fraternity for Rishad's selection in the World Cup squad, now it remains to be seen whether the selectors and team management opt for a similar bold move by having Rishad on board for the upcoming Test hurdles.

Spanish players dominate Euro team of the tournament

REUTERS

Spain midfielder Rodri and 17-year-old Lamine Yamal were among six Spain players named in UEFA's team of the tournament for Euro 2024 on Tuesday.

UEFA's technical observers chose a 4-3-3 formation, which was one of the most frequently used during the tournament, with defender Kyle Walker earning his second successive appearance in it. He was England's only player named in the team.

Spain defeated England 2-1 in the final for their fourth European Championship title.

The remainder of the team was: Mike Maignan (France); Manuel Akanji (Switzerland), William Saliba (France), Marc Cucurella (Spain); Daniel Olmo (Spain), Fabian Ruiz (Spain); Jamal Musiala (Germany), and Nico Williams (Spain).

UEFA's technical observer team was made up of 12 former players and current or former coaches.

Southgate: England's nearly man

AFP, *London*

Gareth Southgate leaves his job as the second most successful England manager in history but with a string of agonising near-misses to his name.

Two days after the Three Lions came up just short yet again -- losing the Euro 2024 final to Spain -- the 53-year-old has stepped down, deciding it is time for a "new chapter".

The mild-mannered Southgate transformed England into a consistent force on the international stage after decades of under-achievement.

He also reshaped the team culture, breaking down barriers that had previously existed within the camp between players from rival clubs.

But he ultimately failed to end the nation's long wait for a major trophy dating back to Alf Ramsey's 1966 World Cup victory despite having a richly talented generation of players to work with.

Southgate took over with England at a low ebb after a series of humiliations on and off the pitch.

A woeful Euro 2016 exit against Iceland brought a suitably depressing end to Roy Hodgson's reign, while his successor, Sam Allardyce, lasted only 67 days and one match before being forced out after a newspaper sting.

Southgate, short of top-level managerial experience, gained credibility among previously sceptical fans with a surprise run to the 2018 World Cup semifinals in Russia.

He followed that impressive achievement by leading England to their first major final for 55 years at Euro 2021, where they lost on penalties to Italy.

England went out to eventual finalists France in the quarterfinals in Qatar in 2022 but there were still positive signs that this was a young and exciting team heading in the right direction.

Southgate's men were among the favourites to finally get over the line at Euro 2024 but it turned into a roller coaster of emotions for the manager, who went from having beer cups thrown at him to within touching distance of winning the cup in Berlin.

Despite England's success, criticism of his perceived lack of tactical nous and inflexibility has always simmered.

At Euro 2024 he was accused of being too cautious, of an unwillingness to allow his men to express themselves.

But he leaves an important legacy and a framework in place for a tilt at future honours.

'My target is to qualify for the final round in Olympics'

Robiul Islam will become the ninth shooter from Bangladesh to compete in the Olympic Games through wild-card entries. The multiple-medal winner in junior and senior level, in both air rifle and air gun events, dreams of becoming the first shooter from the country to make it into the final round of the Olympics. The 25-year-old spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman regarding his preparation and ambition in an interview, the excerpts of which are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): There were whispers that Shaira Arefin, who got an IOC scholarship, would receive the wild card for Paris Olympic but eventually you got it. What do you think was the reason behind this?

Robiul Islam (RI): I missed a quota by only 0.3 points in an event in Indonesia in January. I also produced good results in two other quota-place tournaments. I think the IOC considered these scores when considering awarding the wild card to Bangladesh.

DS: How has your preparation been for the Olympics?

RI: My 10m air rifle event is on 28 July and I have been preparing for a long time by setting a goal. The preparation got hampered a bit over the speculation regarding Shaira's wild card entry. But once I got the wild card, I started afresh with maximum motivation. Our coach has also intensified the training to make up for the lost time. I have been practising 250 to 300 shots per day now, compared to 150 shots in the past.

DS: Since Barcelona Olympics in 1992, Bangladeshi rifle shooters have participated in every edition but there has been no remarkable performance. Will that be the case for you too?

RI: I never think that I will go there, participate and return home. I feel I am carrying Bangladesh on my shoulders; it is a matter of pride and I want to deliver for the nation. My target is to qualify for the final round.

DS: Bangladeshi shooters have never been able to convert practice scores into competition scores. What makes you confident about qualifying for the final with a best score of 627?

RI: I recently scored 630.2 points in a competition in Dhaka. Besides, we recently visited Munch where I fine-tuned my rifle, tested the barrel and did some small things which help a shooter to increase his scores. I have also been doing yoga and meditation so that I can stay focused during the event.

DS: Where does Bangladesh shooting lag behind?

RI: We lag behind in many areas. If you compare, a total of 138 Indian shooters participated in a World Cup in Korea while there were only four from Bangladesh. We need to participate more in overseas tournaments to make a mark in big events.

DS: Bangladeshi shooters won many medals in SA Games and Commonwealth Games but always failed in Asian Games and Olympics. Do you believe the shooters can succeed in coming days?

RI: The shooters from our generation are scoring more than 625 and some even finished among 20 in ISSF World Cup. I believe Bangladesh will take part in 2028 Olympics with direct quota and more international medals will be earned during this time.

DS: What do you expect from the other athletes from Bangladesh?

RI: I will expect that they play for the nation. When athletes play for the nation, their responsibility and focus are boosted but when they play for themselves, they only focus on improving own performance. So, I hope everyone will play for the nation.

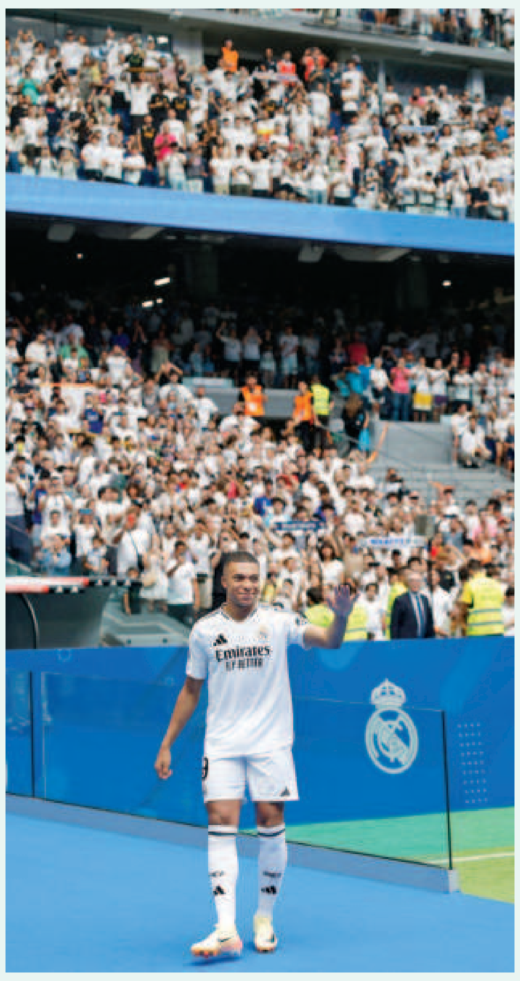

PHOTO: REUTERS

'A dream come true'

AFP, *Madrid*

French superstar Kylian Mbappe was officially unveiled as a Real Madrid player on Tuesday, telling 80,000 fans "my dream has come true".

The striker, who had completed his medical earlier on Tuesday morning, signed a five-year contract and was handed a No. 9 shirt by club president Florentino Perez.

"Wow," Mbappe said in Spanish to roars from a packed Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

"For years, I've dreamed of playing for Real Madrid and today my dream has come true," said the 25-year-old former Paris Saint-Germain player.

Even though the crowd was expected to be bigger than that 15 years ago when Cristiano Ronaldo was unveiled, the attendance remained somewhat similar.

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AL, BCL men to take position at unit offices

To 'help' cops keep law and order

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE *and* **MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN**

Leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its associate bodies will take positions at their respective unit offices across the country from early morning today and remain vigilant against blocking of roads and highways.

Sources say AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday gave the instruction as the quota reform movement turned violent yesterday, killing at least six people in Dhaka, Chattogram and Rangpur.

They say the party wants to face the student movement politically.

The ruling party's student wing Chhatra League has also been asked to take position at their respective units. BCL leaders were also instructed not to initiate any attacks, but resist if they come under attacks, according to the sources.

AL's Dhaka city's north and south units will take position at their ward offices from early morning. A section of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

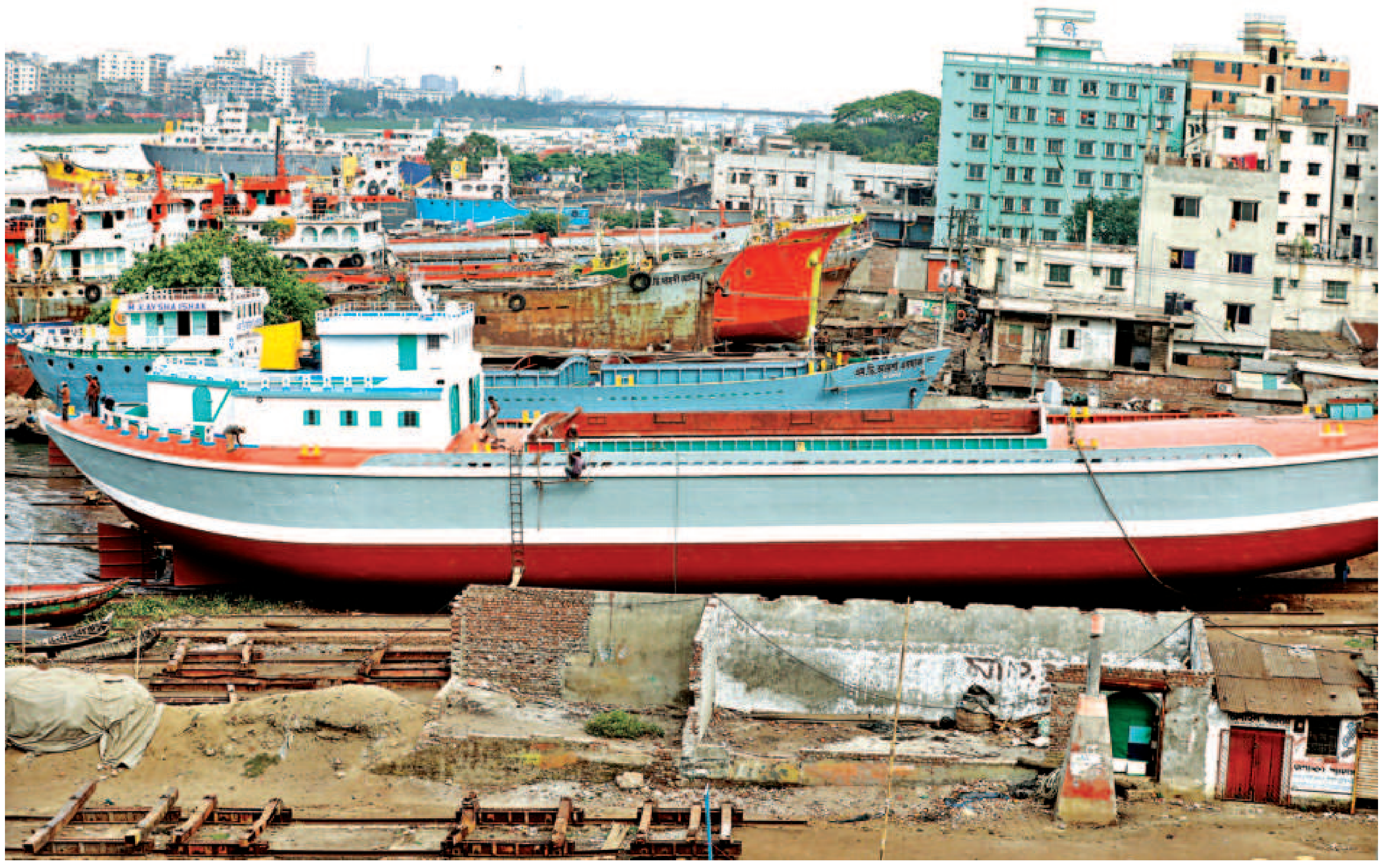


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A dockyard has been built occupying a part of the Buriganga in Keraniganj's Telghat area inside the demarcation pillar. The grabbers construct bulk carriers and repair launches at the dockyard. BIWTA often evicts the grabbers, but they soon return. The photo was taken yesterday.

Editors' Council calls for ensuring safety of journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing deep concern over the attacks on journalists covering the quota protests, the Editors' Council yesterday called upon the government, student organisations, and law enforcers to ensure the safety of journalists.

Mentioning that at least 25 journalists were wounded in the attacks in different parts of the capital over the last two days, the council condemned such assaults on journalists on duty.

Several of them were undergoing treatment at hospitals.

Citing media reports, the statement, signed by the council's President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud, said eight journalists were injured at Jahangirnagar University on the night of July 15, six at Dhaka University, and nine others in Chattogram, Dinajpur, and Bogura during clashes yesterday.

The injured include Mehdi Mamun of Daily Bonik Barta, Abdur Rahman Sarjil of Dainik Bangla, Jobayer Ahmed of Bangladesh Today, Mushfiqur Rizwan of Somoyer Alo, Hasibur Rahman of bdnews24.com, Wajhhetul Islam of Daily Janakantha, Arifuzzaman Ujjal of Daily

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Punctuality of Biman found wanting

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman is lagging far behind the international standard for on-time performance for its flights, an indication of the continued operational inefficiency of the national flag carrier.

The on-time performance of airlines is the percentage of flights that arrive or depart within 15 minutes of the scheduled time. Globally, airlines target 80 percent and above.

Some 69.37 percent of Biman's flights between July last year and June this year departed on time, according to the flag carrier's own data. During that period, 66 percent of the flights arrived on time.

Biman's poorest on-time performance for international departures from Dhaka was recorded in December last year, 47.25 percent. Its best was in March, 72.24 percent.

Many airlines have embedded on-time performance as a key performance indicator as delays affect productivity and cost airlines thousands of dollars every year.

"It means flights spend longer on taxiways burning fuel unnecessarily -- it means passengers miss connections and get upset," said ATM Nazrul Islam, an aviation expert.

The knock-on effects of the disruptions to onward travel are far-reaching, he said.

In Europe, where passengers are entitled to compensation for late flights, there is a direct cost associated with poor on-time performance.

In 2023, Biman failed to make it to the list of the top 20 most punctual airlines in the Asia-Pacific region.

Biman has identified at least 20 reasons for the flight delays, including the non-availability of adequate number of check-in counters, delays in allocating gates, and assiging a gate to multiple flights.

> **Many airlines have embedded on-time performance as a key performance indicator as delays affect productivity and cost airlines thousands of dollars every year.**

Space constraints at airports also make it difficult to load baggage containers onto aircraft.

The other reasons include the breakdown of carousels, bad weather, and delays in cabin cleaning.

Biman admitted that passengers become displeased due to flight delays, documents show.

The newly-appointed Biman Managing Director and CEO Zahidul Islam Bhuiyan said maintaining on-time performance is one of his main challenges.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Mobile internet sluggish at campuses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students on many university campuses experienced issues accessing mobile internet last night.

The issue was first reported in the evening, hours after the day's violence surrounding the quota reform protests.

Meanwhile, BTRC officials could not be reached over the phone for comments in this regard.

Ashrefa, a student at Dhaka University and a resident of Shamsun Nahar Hall, said, "We started getting poor mobile network coverage on campus in the afternoon, with the internet speed slowing down in the evening."

"As a result, my parents couldn't reach me after repeated attempts, causing them to worry about my safety."

Several more Dhaka University students, as well as those at Rajshahi University and Jahangirnagar University,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Israeli forces battle Hamas across Gaza

57 Palestinians killed in bombardments in southern, central areas of enclave

AGENCIES

Israeli forces battled Hamas-led fighters in several areas across Gaza yesterday, while Palestinian health officials said at least 57 people were killed in Israeli bombardments in southern and central areas of the enclave.

In Rafah, a southern border city where Israeli forces have been operating since May, five Palestinians were killed in an air strike on a house, while in nearby Khan Younis, a man, his wife and two children were killed, they said.

An Israeli airstrike on a car killed at least 17 Palestinians and wounded 26 others in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, the officials said.

In the historic Nuseirat camp in central Gaza, at least four Palestinians were killed in separate shelling and aerial strikes in central Gaza, medics said. An Israeli airstrike killed four in Sheikh Zayed in northern Gaza, they said.

Hours later, an Israeli air strike on a school in the Nuseirat camp killed 16 people and wounded many others, health officials said.

The Israeli military said troops continued "intelligence-based" activities in Rafah, killing many Palestinian gunmen over the past 24 hours. It said air strikes had targeted Hamas fighters, tunnels, and other military infrastructure.

- Israeli air force strikes 40 targets across enclave
- Truce talks appear to be making progress: negotiators
- Gaza death toll rises to 38,713

It added that the Israeli air force had struck around 40 targets across the enclave.

The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said in separate statements their fighters attacked Israeli forces in several locations with anti-tank rockets and mortar fire.

More than 38,713 Palestinians have been killed and 89,166have been injured in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Efforts mediated by Egypt and Qatar to end the conflict and release the hostages, as well as Palestinians in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Govt cancels Tk 5cr fund for 10 Minute School

CEO's Facebook post backing quota reform appears to be the reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Startup Bangladesh, the government's venture capital fund, yesterday pulled back its proposed investment of Tk 5 crore in 10 Minute School (10MS), Bangladesh's largest edtech platform.

No official explanation was given by Startup Bangladesh for withdrawing its planned investment in the edtech start-up announced in October last year.

However, the move comes after Ayman Sadiq, the co-founder and chief executive officer of 10MS, made a Facebook post supporting the ongoing student movement for reforming the quota system for government jobs.

"We want quota reform. Merit should be the biggest quota. #QuotaMovement," Sadiq, also a media personality, posted on his

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Ashura today

BSS, *Dhaka*

Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hossain Ibn Ali (RA), the grandson of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), will be observed in the country today with due religious solemnity.

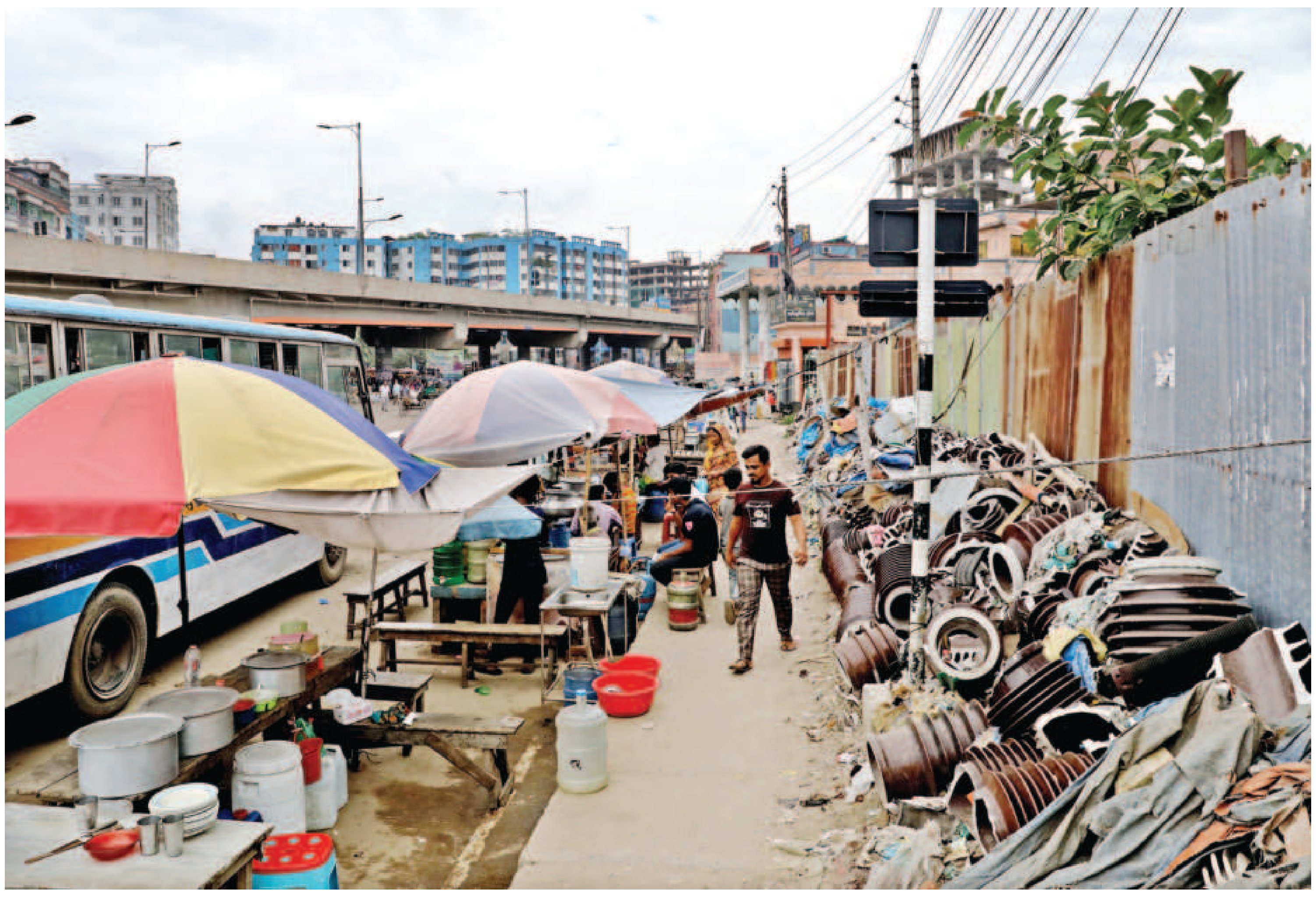
Today is the 10th day of the month of Muharram in Hijri calendar-1446. This day is well-known as Ashura.

It is regarded as the day of Karbala, a "mourning and heartbreaking event", which has a special religious significance for the Muslim community across the globe.

Muslims across the world recall the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers, who embraced martyrdom in 680 AD in the desert of Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates river in Iraq while fighting for truth and justice against the Yazid forces.

Their self-sacrifice at Karbala Maidan to uphold the great ideals of Islam,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



A portion of Jurain road near the Dhaka-Mawa expressway is occupied by makeshift shops, parked vehicles and discarded equipment, obstructing pedestrians. But the authorities seem to have turned a blind eye. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

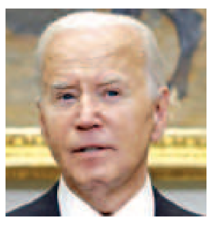
Biden defends 'mental acuity'

Says 'bullseye' remark about Trump a mistake

AFP, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden defended both his "mental acuity" and his rhetoric about Donald Trump Monday, in a second TV interview aimed at ending calls for him to quit his re-election bid following a disastrous debate.

The 81-year-old delivered an often combative defence of his mental and physical fitness for office during the one-on-one with broadcaster NBC, which nevertheless featured some of the word salads that have worried Democrats.



"I'm old," Biden told host Lester Holt in the interview at the White House. "But I'm only three years older than Trump, number one. And number two, my mental acuity has been pretty damn good."

He added: "I understand why people say, 'God, he's 81 years old. Whoa. What's he gonna be when he's 83 years old, 84 years?' It's a legitimate question to ask."

Biden's interview was the latest attempt by the White House to assuage growing fears over the Democrat's age and mental state following the dismal debate performance on June 27.

The sit-down was announced last week, before the assassination attempt on Republican candidate Donald Trump on Saturday -- which inevitably became a key subject of the interview.

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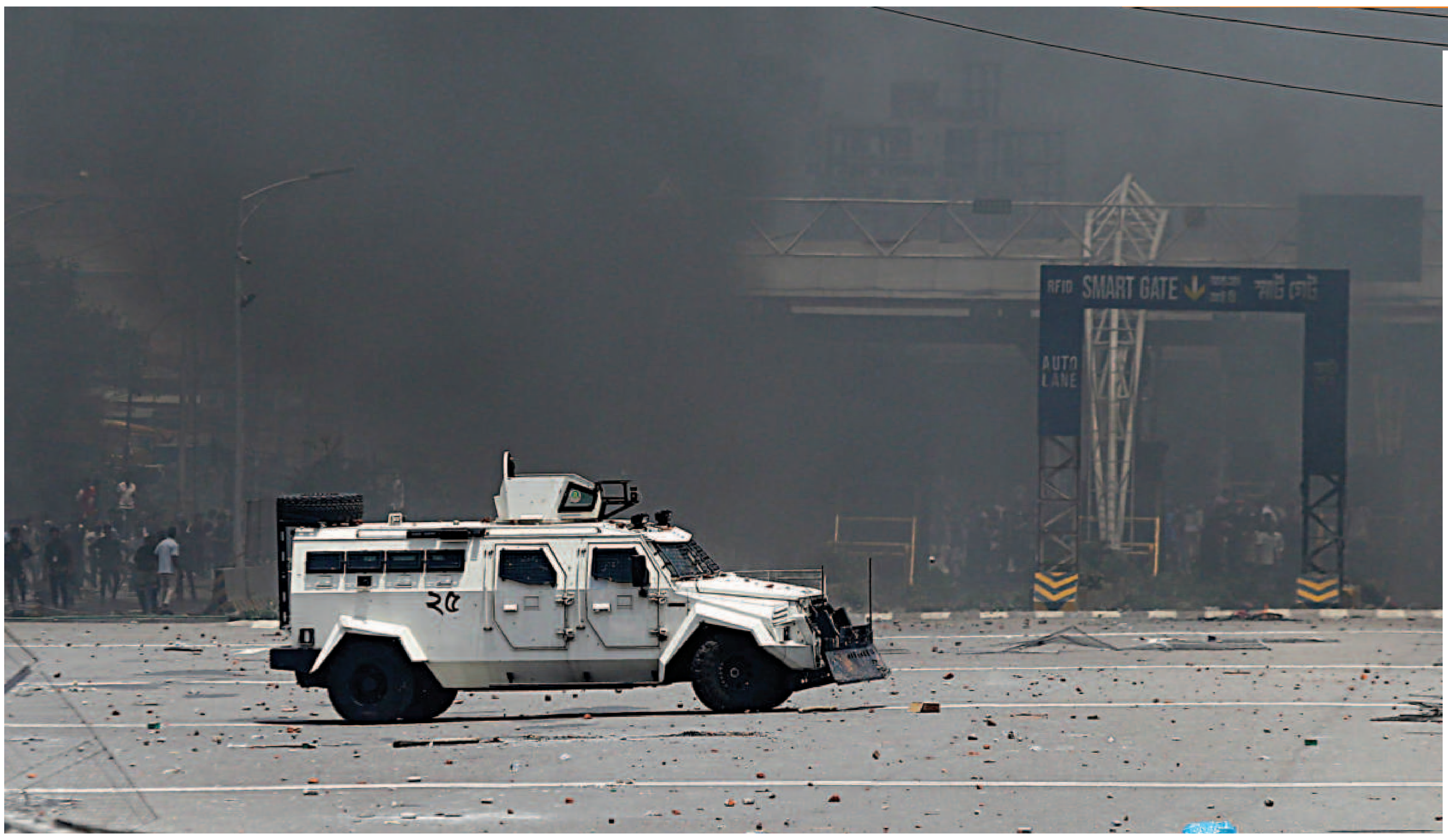


At least 29 dead in daylong mayhem

11 of them students; over 3,000 hurt, many hit by shotgun pellets; protesters reject govt call for talks; violence rocks 19 districts; several establishments including BTV centre set afire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an unprecedented scale of violence across the country, at least 29 people, including 11 students and a journalist, were killed and more than 3,000 wounded in fierce clashes between quota protesters and law enforcers joined in by ruling party activists yesterday.

The 11 students are from Dhaka, Chattogram, Savar, Madaripur, Narsingdi and Sylhet. Many of the victims are yet to be identified, so the number of students killed may rise.

The protests began from where it was left off on Wednesday night, and continued in Dhaka and other parts of the country throughout yesterday.

The violence saw at least two government establishments, including state-run BTV Bhaban in the capital's Rampura, attacked and set alight.

In the afternoon, after many were already killed and injured, the government invited the protesting students to sit for talks, but the students rejected the call and vowed to continue their movement.

"No dialogue will take place over the blood of the martyrs. It is the government that has to find the solution," Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers of the movement, said in a Facebook post in the evening, just hours before the government shut down the internet.

The intensity of violence, and the death toll that climbed to 36 so far are unprecedented in any student movement in recent memory. By the afternoon, parts of Dhaka's skyline turned black with thick smoke coming from burning buildings and cars.

Earlier on Tuesday, six people were killed in Dhaka, Chattogram and Rangpur. Another man who was injured in the previous day's violence died yesterday.

The death toll from yesterday's clashes may go up.

Different private hospitals, especially in Uttara where one of the fiercest clashes took place, struggled to treat the injured patients that rose by the hour.

Violence ensued when law enforcers and ruling party activists carrying firearms, rods, iron pipes, sticks and hockey sticks tried to disperse students enforcing a "complete shutdown" of transport networks, businesses and offices yesterday, demanding quota reforms.

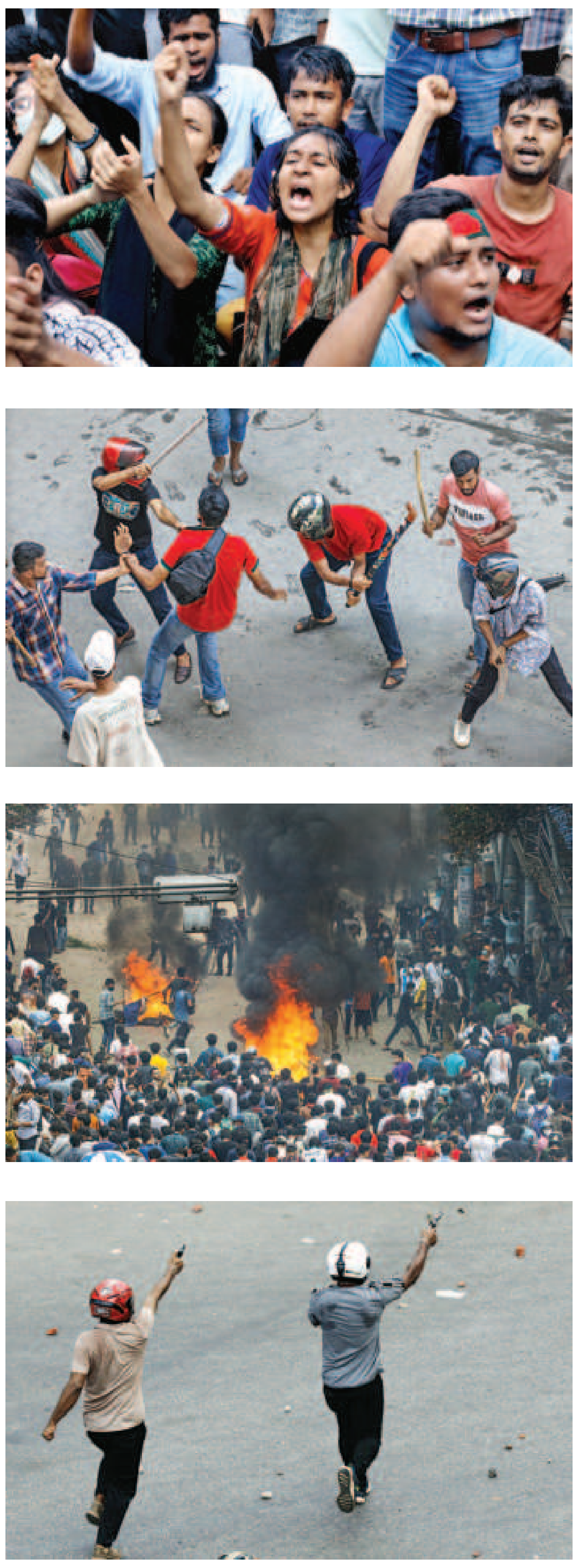
Dhaka was cut off from the rest of the country, as rail and road communications came to a halt.

The protesters also vandalised and set fire to the disaster management office building in the capital's Mohakhali and at least three police outposts in the city.

Parts of Dhaka looked like warzones as law enforcers used shotguns, teargas shells and sound grenades against the protesters, who responded by throwing brick chunks. AL activists and police also hurled bricks at the demonstrators.

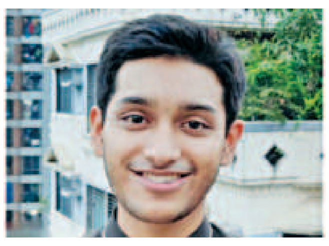
Of the dead, 23 were in Dhaka. Of them, 10 were killed in Jatrabari, Shanir Akhra and Azimpur. One of them was a journalist of Dhaka Times. Another nine in Dhaka's Uttara and nearby areas; two in Badda; one

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



The country witnessed scenes of mindless bloodletting for the third day yesterday. Deadly clashes between quota protesters and law enforcers/ruling party activists took place across the capital and beyond. Violence was worst in Uttara, Dhanmondi, Rampura, Jatrabari and Mohakhali as protesters pressed on with their demonstrations for quota reforms and against the attacks on students on the previous days. Police, BGB and Rab teams were deployed in many areas, where they lobbed teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse the agitating crowds. PHOTO: **STAR**

A life we will remember



MD ABBAS

"One day, you'll leave this world behind. So live a life you will remember." -- Farhan Faiyaaz's Facebook profile bio.

In a chilling video footage that went viral on Facebook yesterday, a woman was seen breaking down at the sight of a body in Mohammadpur's City Hospital.

That body belongs to 17-year-old Farhan Faiyaaz, a first-year HSC student at Dhaka Residential Model College (DRMC), who died during the clashes between protesters and ruling party activists in the capital's Dhanmondi area.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

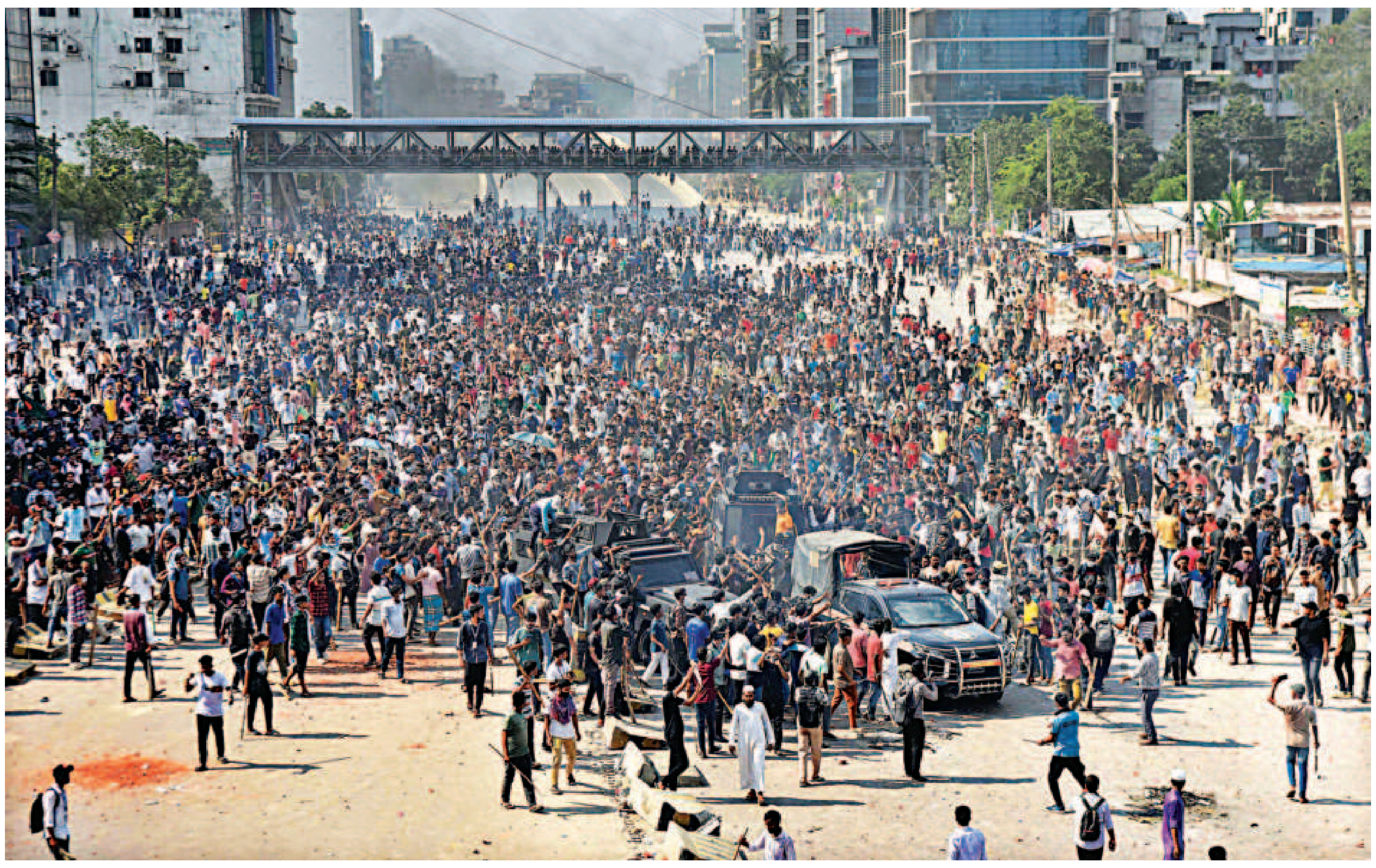


PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

Rab vehicles leave in the face of fierce protests by students in the capital's Uttara, where clashes left at least nine people dead.

Govt for 80pc jobs on merit

Says Quader after meeting PM; law enforcers to be firm against destructive activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

During a hearing before the Supreme Court on Sunday, the government will appeal to the court to keep 80 percent government jobs based on merit and rest on different quotas.

> **'No dialogue when shots are being fired.'**
> Protest organiser Asif Mahmud

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said this at a press conference at party president's Dhanmondi office last night after a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

The PM directed all law enforcers to control the situation with a firm hand, he said quoting Hasina.

She also asked all AL leaders and activists, its associate bodies, and public representatives to stay on the streets to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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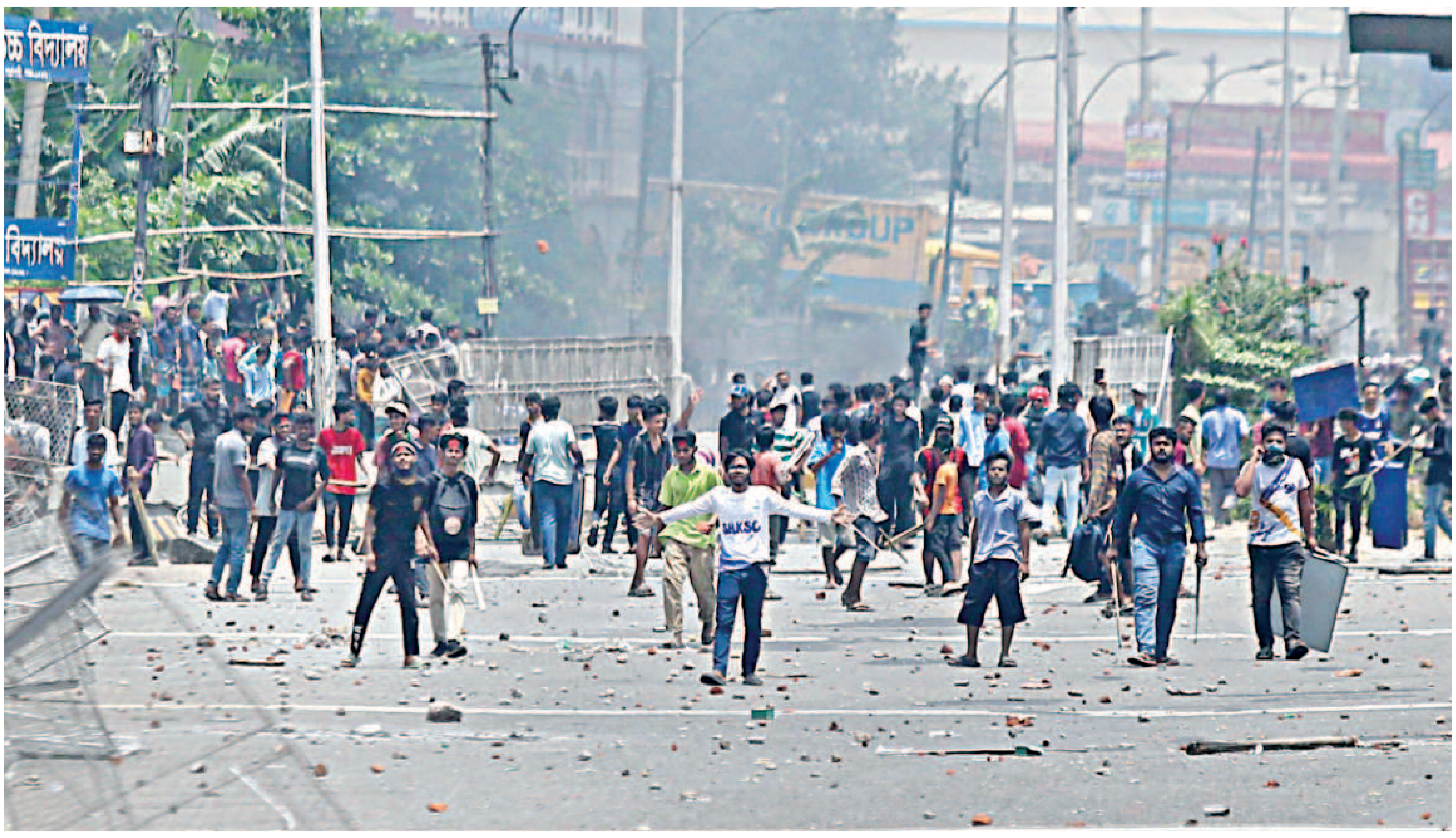


Photos capture moments from yesterday's clashes between quota reform demonstrators and members of law enforcement across the capital yesterday. *Clockwise:* Protesters assemble for a face-off with cops in Jatrabari. Fitted with riot gear, policemen shoot rubber bullets and lob teargas shells at protesters in Rampura. A toll plaza torched at the Jatrabari end of the Mayor Hanif Flyover. Agitators set fire to a police outpost in Rampura. A Rab chopper evacuates a group of stranded policemen from the campus building of Canadian International University in Badda. Police attack protesters for blocking the Mohakhali rail crossing. Quota reform demonstrators had called a "complete shutdown" across the country yesterday to protest the attacks on their fellows over the past few days along with their demand for reform to the quota system in government jobs. PHOTO: **STAR**

POLICE
S3-CHP

Committee formed to probe Abu Sayed's killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Rangpur police yesterday launched an investigation into the killing of Abu Sayed, of Begum Rokeya University, during a clash between cops and quota reform protesters on Tuesday.

In a video footage of the incident, Abu Sayed, 25, an unarmed protester and a student of the English department, was seen getting shot down by policemen in front of his university around 2:30pm.

The persons found responsible for the incident will be held accountable, said Rangpur Metropolitan Police (RMP) Commissioner Md Moniruzzaman.

The four-member probe body, led by RMP Additional Commissioner Saifuzzaman Faruki, has been asked to submit its report in two weeks, he added.

Meanwhile, a case has been filed with RMP's Tajhat Police Station over Tuesday's violence at BRUR.

Bhupoti Roy, sub-inspector of Tajhat Police Station, filed the case on charges of assaulting police, obstructing them from discharging their duties, and disregarding law and order.

So far, nine people have been arrested over Tuesday's clashes.

Ukraine attacked Russian base on Crimea: Kyiv source

AFP, *Kyiv*

Ukrainian aerial and maritime drones struck Russian military targets on the annexed Crimean peninsula, a defence source in Kyiv told AFP Thursday, after Moscow reported an overnight drone assault.

Ukrainian forces have recently escalated drone and missile attacks on Russian military installations on the peninsula that was captured by Russian forces in 2014.

The source said an operation carried out by the navy and the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) had damaged or disabled a command centre and an ammo depot among other facilities at Lake Donuzlav in western Crimea.

At least 29 dead in daylong mayhem

FROM PAGE 1

each in Dhanmondi and Savar lost their lives in the violence, police and hospital sources confirmed to The Daily Star.

Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship Hospital in Uttara, told The Daily Star around 11:30pm that eight victims were brought dead at their hospital. Six bodies were handed over to relatives, and the rest two were still at the hospital.

At the Crescent Hospital, also in Uttara, our correspondent saw relatives collect a body around 10:30pm.

At least six people were killed outside the capital -- two each in Chattogram and Narsingdi and one each in Madaripur and Sylhet, police and hospital sources said.

Many of the victims were hit by shotgun pellets, as law enforcers fired indiscriminately.

Violent clashes between the demonstrators and law enforcers and AL activists took place in Dhaka's Uttara, Jatrabari, Badda, Rampura, Dhanmondi, Mirpur and Science Laboratory Intersection.

Our district correspondents reported violence in at least 19 districts.

Along with police, Rab and Ansar members, 229 platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh personnel were deployed nationwide.

Many government and private offices were open yesterday in the capital. On the streets, there were very few threewheelers, motorcycles, buses and private vehicles. The metro rail service from Uttara to Motijheel was partially halted.

Agitating students called the shutdown to protest the attacks by police, BGB, Rab and SWAT teams as well as ruling party activists, the deaths of fellow protesters, and also to demand punishment to the culprits, terror-free campuses and a logical reform to the quota system.

Violence erupted on Tuesday when at least six people, including three students, were killed and several hundred injured in clashes as the quota protests swelled after Chhatra League and AL activists attacked them at different universities on Monday.

The students continued their protest on Wednesday though it was a government holiday. They organised funeral and coffin processions and blocked roads and highways at different places. Chases and counter-chases and running battles took place in different parts of the country, including the capital.

The authorities have since closed all public and private universities, colleges and primary and secondary schools. They also asked university students to leave their halls by Wednesday, and dispatched riot police and paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh members to the campuses.

In a press release last night, the home ministry issued a stern warning against violence.

"Law enforcers have been showing extreme patience so far. But if the miscreants continue to engage in destructive activities, law enforcement will be compelled to use the full force of the law to protect people's lives and public properties," said the release, signed by the senior public relations officer of the ministry.

UTTARA

In Uttara, at least nine people were killed and more than 500 injured during daylong clashes between quota protesters and police.

The dead were taken to different local hospitals. Doctors said some bodies were taken away by students and families.

The violence broke out around 10:30am as police and Rab members tried to disperse students of different private universities, colleges and schools who blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway near ABC Centre.

During the clashes, which continued till evening, law enforcers fired several hundred times from shotguns, over 100 tear shells and more than 100 sound grenades. The protesters hurled brick chips, said witnesses.

Around one kilometre stretch of the highway up to Rajlakshmi turned into a battlefield.

As students took many wounded protesters to local hospitals, doctors struggled to accommodate them all.

Doctors of three hospitals said they had to treat victims on the road in front of their hospitals as a large number of injured people were rushed there.

They said many of the dead were hit by shotgun pellets fired from close range.

In the evening, protesters gathered around Uttara Purba Police Station, and police fired from shotguns, leaving several of them injured, witnesses said.

Several establishments and a BGB vehicle were torched near the police station, according to witnesses.

JATRABARI

A clash between police and protesters erupted at Jatrabari intersection at 9:25am as police fired teargas shells.

The protesters regrouped at Shanir Akhra intersection and marched again towards Jatrabari where another clash took place at 11:00am.

Police fired teargas, rubber bullets, and sound grenades at the protesters. Activists from Chhatra League and Jubo League joined forces with police, throwing bricks at the protesters from the Mayor Hanif Flyover.

Around 1:30pm, the agitators reorganised and moved towards Jatrabari Police Station. They set fire to an abandoned private car next to the station. Police used water cannons to extinguish the fire and also to disperse the protesters.

Police and Rab fired several hundred rounds from shotguns and lobbed teargas shells.

Rab-10 Commander Mohammad Farid Uddin said they fired teargas, shotguns, and sound grenades to disperse the demonstrators.

DHANMONDI

A clash between quota protesters and police, who were joined by stick-wielding Jubo League men, ensued in Dhanmondi around 11:30am as police tried to disperse the students after they blocked the roads at Dhanmondi-27, witnesses said.

Farhan Faiyaaz, 17, an HSC student of Residential Model College suffered injuries and was taken to City Hospital.

Osman Gani, assistant manager of the hospital, said Farhan was dead before he was brought there.

About 200 injured people, mostly students, took treatment at the hospital.

Police fired teargas canisters to break off the agitating crowds, while Jubo League men chased the students.

The protesters later took position at different alleys, and violence spilled over to nearby areas.

Chased, students took shelters at different residential buildings where police lobbed teargas shells, creating panic, residents said.

BADDA

In Badda and Rampura, a man was killed and over 200 others, including students and police, were injured during a series of clashes.

Victim Dulal Matbor, a microbus driver, suffered serious wounds while crossing the area during the clashes. He was taken to a nearby hospital with a hole in his chest around 12:30pm where doctors declared him dead. Doctors could not immediately confirm whether the hole is from a bullet.

The protesters torched 12 motorcycles and the office of the assistant commissioner (traffic) of Rampura zone police box.

Police charged batons and fired teargas canisters at the students. They also lobbed teargas inside the campus of Canadian University of Bangladesh at Merul Badda, witnesses said. Both police and protesters also hurled brick chunks at each other.

Witnesses said several hundred students took to the street in front of the university campus around 10:30am. The clash began as police tried to bar them.

Later, students regrouped and chased away the police members. The clash spilled over to Rampura Bridge, where students of East West University joined the protest. The students allegedly vandalised a traffic police box and torched several motorcycles in Rampura.

At one point, policemen entered the Canadian University of Bangladesh and the demonstrators took position outside. Police fired from shotguns and lobbed teargas shells from inside the university, leaving many wounded. Several shops and establishments were vandalised by the protesters at the time.

Around 3:00pm, Rab helicopters airlifted 60 police personnel from the rooftop of a building.

The protesters also took position in Badda Link Road where some commoners also took part.

MIRPUR-10

Quota reform activists and police aided by Awami League men clashed at Mirpur 10 intersection. Police lobbed teargas shells and sound grenades, dispersing the protesters.

The protesters set fire to a footbridge at Mirpur 10.

Earlier, over 100 students chased AL leaders and activists who were holding a rally at the intersection. They also vandalised chairs brought for the rally and tore down banners.

Later, a chase and counter-chase between stick-wielding demonstrators and AL activists took place.

Govt for 80pc jobs on merit

FROM PAGE 1

resist the creators of chaos, Quader said.

In a statement last night, the home ministry said law enforcers would be compelled to use the highest level of force according to the law if the destructive activities continue.

Meanwhile, four organisers of the quota reform protests yesterday on their Facebook pages said that it is the government that has to devise a solution to the prevailing crisis.

They rejected the law minister's call for dialogue and vowed to continue their demonstrations.

"No dialogue will take place over the blood of martyrs. It is the government that has to devise a solution," Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers, said in a Facebook post.

He said he feared that they might be arrested and may become victims of enforced disappearances. He urged others to continue with the demonstrations.

Protest organiser Asif Mahmud on his Facebook page said there can be no dialogue when shots are being fired. "I would rather die than betray the blood of martyrs."

Sarjis Alam, another organiser, said, "How can there be dialogue over my brothers' death?"

Hasnath Abdullah said it is not true that they made proposals for talks with the government.

The Daily Star could not reach the four protest organisers over the phone.

Their Facebook posts came hours after Law Minister Anisul Huq told media that following the offer of the protesters, the government agreed to hold discussions with them.

He also announced taking an initiative to hold the early hearing of the quota-related case pending with the Supreme Court and forming a one-member judicial committee to investigate the killing of six people on Tuesday.

Afterwards, the Cabinet Division issued a circular forming a one-member inquiry committee led by High Court Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman to investigate killings and other incidents.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Supreme Court, following an appeal of the attorney general, fixed Sunday for a hearing on the quota-related case.

Anisul claimed that they learnt that the protesting students wanted talks. "We have welcomed their proposal. The prime minster also welcomed it."

He said the prime minister assigned him and the education minister to talk to the students. "We will sit with them ...We are ready to sit with them anytime. We are ready to sit even today," he told reporters at the Jatiya Sangsad complex.

"We think there is no need to continue with the protest anymore ... I am requesting them to either call off the demonstrations or suspend it."

A life we will remember

FROM PAGE 1

The woman in the video, his aunt Nazia Khan uttered, "He was more than a son to me... He is dead now...."

The video spread through the social media platform like fire, with people seeking justice for the young boy gone too soon.

His teachers lauded him as a bright and polite student.

"He was quiet and reserved. Everybody, including his classmates and teachers, used to love him... Even if we ever scolded him for anything, he never said a single word," said DRMC Assistant Prof Md Nazrul Islam.

Nazrul, also a chemistry teacher of the college, said there were never any instances of him getting involved in any altercations with his classmate.

"Though he was not a regular student in my class due to an illness he had, I always found him to be gentle and humble whenever he attended."

Faiyaaz used to live with his grandmother in Mohammadpur's Japan Garden City before moving in with his father in Kakrail a few months ago, he said.

Munzareen Shahid, a teacher of 10-Minute School, shared a photo of herself and Faiyaaz on Facebook. Expressing disbelief at the loss of a beloved and bright student, she wrote, "He was my student ... He was not even 18! ... He has died!"

Mourning the loss of a bright student like Faiyaaz, current and former students of Dhaka Residential Model College blackened their Facebook profile pictures, protesting his killing.

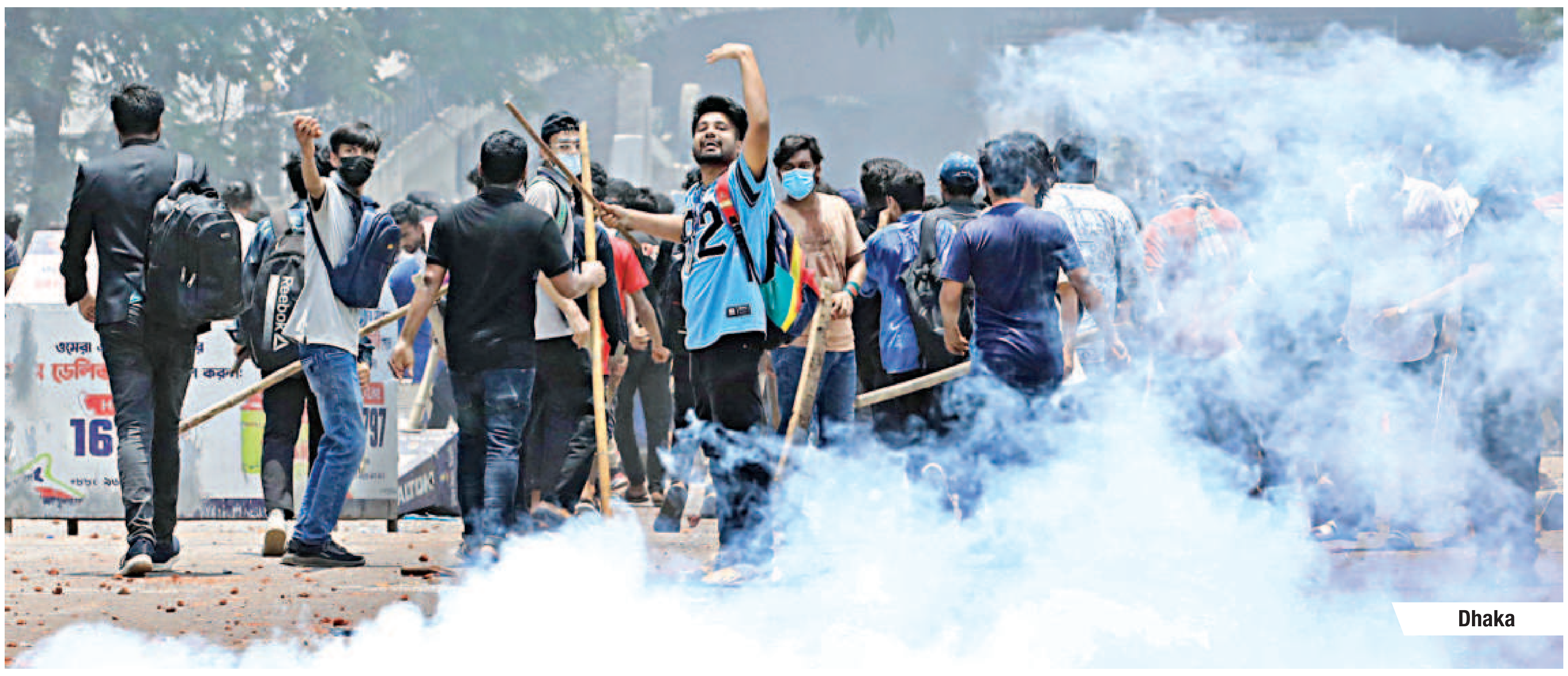
Using different hashtags, they demanded justice for the death of all the victims in the violence against quota reform protesters. They also demanded punishment to all those involved in the killings.

Some critisised the law enforcement's actions on the protesters, stating the attacks were carried out to quell the movement.

Sylhet

Chattogram

Cumilla


Dhaka

'Even doctors, nurses couldn't hold back tears'

MASHFIQ MIZAN

"Move aside! Get me a stretcher! He needs help!"

The air inside Dhaka hospitals was filled with cries for help and painful screams.

One after another, injured students flooded into Uttara Adhunik Hospital, their bodies pierced by shotgun pellets.

Visiting the hospital, this newspaper found emergency camps set up in front of the gate, with stretchers, trolleys, and wheelchairs. Friends carried their injured fellows into the hospital, with vans, and CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

Those with comparatively less severe injuries were treated in front of the camps, while those with serious injuries were taken inside. The hospital authorities took an "all hands on deck" approach as day-offs of all the doctors and staffers were cancelled.

The interns and medical students nearby chipped in.

The scene resembled hospitals inside a war zone.

At least nine students were killed as police fired shotgun pellets and lobbed tear shells at protesting students in Uttara's Azampur area, said hospital authorities.

Over 1,000 students, mostly between 16 and 28 years old, sought treatment at Uttara Adhunik Hospital, said sources. Many are in critical conditions, they added.

However, the hospital authorities did not confirm the number of registered deaths.

Inside, this correspondent found the hospital floors filled with blood stains. There were not enough beds to treat all the patients.

Many were receiving treatment in the floor. Some parents were seen crying beside their injured sons.

Even the doctors struggled to fight back tears.

"I haven't seen such a horrific situation in 12 years of my professional life," said a nurse, requesting anonymity.

"Hundreds of protesting students with shotgun pellet wounds have streamed in since this afternoon. There aren't enough beds to accommodate them all. Even the doctors and nurses are in tears," she added.

SCENES FROM HOSPITALS IN DHAKA

The situation was worse in Kuwait Moitree Hospital, as seen by our reporter there. Eight bodies were kept inside the facility, all of whom had shotgun pellet wounds, said Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of the hospital.

Meanwhile, at least 100 injured students were brought to Crescent Hospital in Uttara.

According to hospital source, one body was kept there.

Similar situations persisted in hospitals near Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi.

A 17-year-old named Farhan Faiyaaz died in City Hospital, Mohammadpur. At least 200-250 injured were brought to the facility, said Osman Goni, assistant manager of the hospital. He confirmed Faiyaaz's demise.

Meanwhile, around 100 were admitted to Ibn Sina Hospital in Dhanmondi.

Also, two died and several hundreds were injured as police and students of BRAC University, East West University and other institutions clashed with police in the Badda and Rampura areas.

As such, the hospitals near Rampura and Banasree were also filled to the brim with wounded students. Over 300 wounded were brought to Better Life Hospital in Rampura. In Farazi Hospital, Banasree, over 450 students were admitted.

Meanwhile at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, around 275 people, most of them injured by shotgun pellets, were brought to the hospital. The situation turned dire in the evening evening, as hundreds of injured people started entering DMCH in one ambulance after another.

Most of the injured came from Jatrabai, Azampur and Rampura areas. At one stage, there were shortage of trollies and stretchers. At least seven persons had to be taken to ophthalmology department with eye injuries, including shotgun pellet wounds.

Around 10 bodies were brought to the hospital. Meanwhile, one protester, who was injured on Wednesday, succumbed to his injuries yesterday, said DMCH sources.

Violence escalates across country

STAR REPORT

For the third day in a row, the country witnessed widespread student protests, which erupted like wildfire in retaliation to the earlier attacks on them by law enforcers and Chhatra League men during their protests against quota system.

The protesters yesterday enforced a "complete shutdown" of transport networks, businesses, and offices as part of their movement.

Like the capital, the protests took place in many other cities and district towns, where law enforcers, alongside activists of Awami League and its associate bodies, attacked the protesters.

As a result, clashes took place among them, in which, six people, including three students, were killed outside the capital.

Also, over 500 were injured in at least 19 districts, reported our district correspondents.

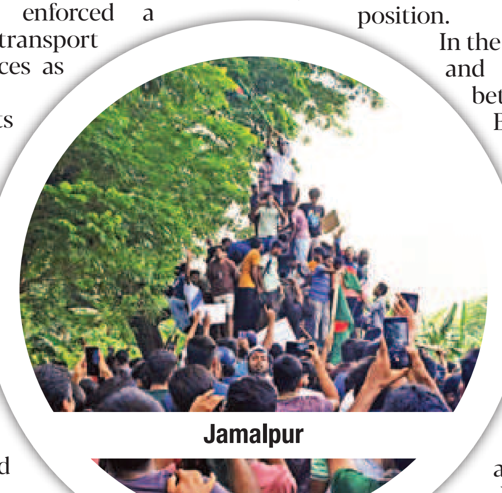
Shaikh Ashabul Yamin, a student of Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), was killed in Savar when protesters clashed with police and AL activists in the Savar Bazar bus stand area.

The victim's father Mohammad Mohiuddin confirmed the death.

Yusuf Ali, duty manager of Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar, told The Daily Star that Yamin, who had several rubber bullet injuries on his body, was brought to the hospital dead.

Five other injured were admitted to the hospital, he added.

Earlier, protesters blocked Pakiza bus stand on Dhaka-Aricha highway around 12:30pm and proceeded towards the Pakiza area, where leaders and activists of AL, its associate bodies, police, and BGB members took position.


Jamalpur

In the port city, two people were killed and 50 others injured in clashes between protesters and police in Bahaddarhat area.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Tuhin Shubhro Das, emergency medical officer at CMCH, said two people with bullet wounds were brought to the hospital in the evening. One, aged around 21, succumbed to his injuries around 6:30pm while another, aged around 23, died at 7:00pm.

Witnesses said several thousand protesters chased the police and took control of Bahaddarhat Intersection around 2:00pm. Police charged batons and fired tear shells to disperse them.

Protesters also clashed with BCL activists in phases.

Later, the protesters attacked police around 6:00pm. They also set the police box at Bahaddarhat Intersection on fire.

In Narsingdi, two students were killed during clash

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Stop 'barbaric attack' on students

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday urged the government to stop "barbaric attack" on students and accept their logical demands.

GM Quader, also opposition leader of the parliament, said police and BCL have been attacking general students with arms for the last few days, which is unacceptable in a civilised society.

GM Quader made the comment in a press statement.

He decried the "excessive use of force" by law enforcement agencies, and condemned the deaths of protesters in face of police action.

He said police killed Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur student Abu Sayed in cold blood by shooting him at a close range.

BNP's solidarity programmes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will arrange various programmes across the country today in support of the ongoing student movement for the reformation of quotas in government jobs.

The party's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir made the announcement at an urgent press briefing at BNP Chairperson's Office in Dhaka's Gulshan last night.

As part of their programmes, it will demonstrate in front of Jatiya Press Club followed by a rally, alongside bringing out similar processions in every city and district headquarters.

Stressing that people are united against this government, Fakhrul said they have extended support to the students' demands and suggested them to solve the problem through discussion.

However, the government itself has blocked the way for solution to the existing crisis, he added.

Take to streets to save country

Quader calls upon party men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

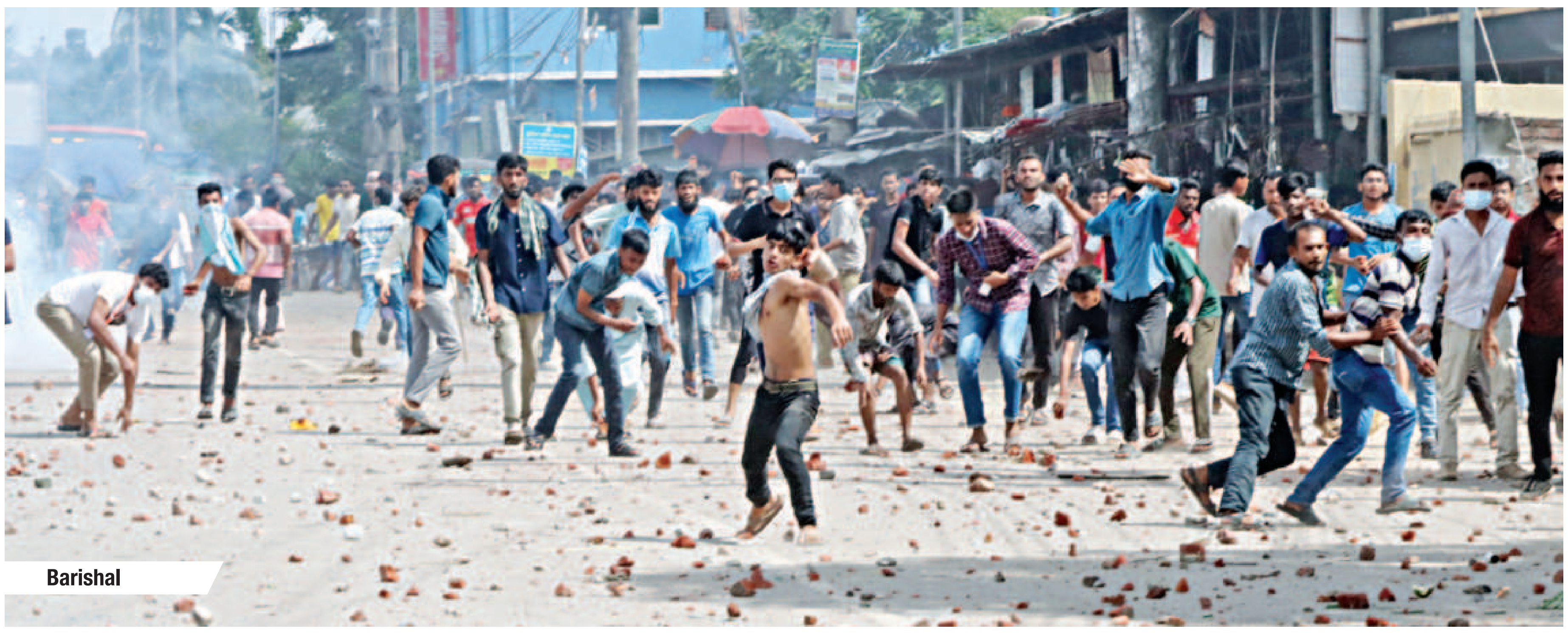
Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday asked party leaders and activists to take to streets and face the situation to save the country from plots of the evil forces.

He made the remarks while addressing a press conference at the party president' Dhanmondi office.

He alleged that BNP-Jamaat coalition is using the ongoing quota reform movement to get political benefits, saying the movement is no longer in the hands of the general students.

The armed cadres of BNP-Jamaat are operating criminal activities across the country aiming to topple the government, Quader said, adding, "Quota reform is no longer an issue for them."

He said the government is closely watching the situation while the law enforcers are working to ensure security of general students. Action will be taken against those who have created this situation through criminal activities, he warned.


Barishal

Chattogram

Dinajpur

Port City

PHOTO: STAR

Invest in marine resources

PM urges entrepreneurs

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged local and foreign entrepreneurs to invest in extracting marine resources, as Bangladesh is determined to strengthen its ocean economy amid the growing demand for seafood in the world.

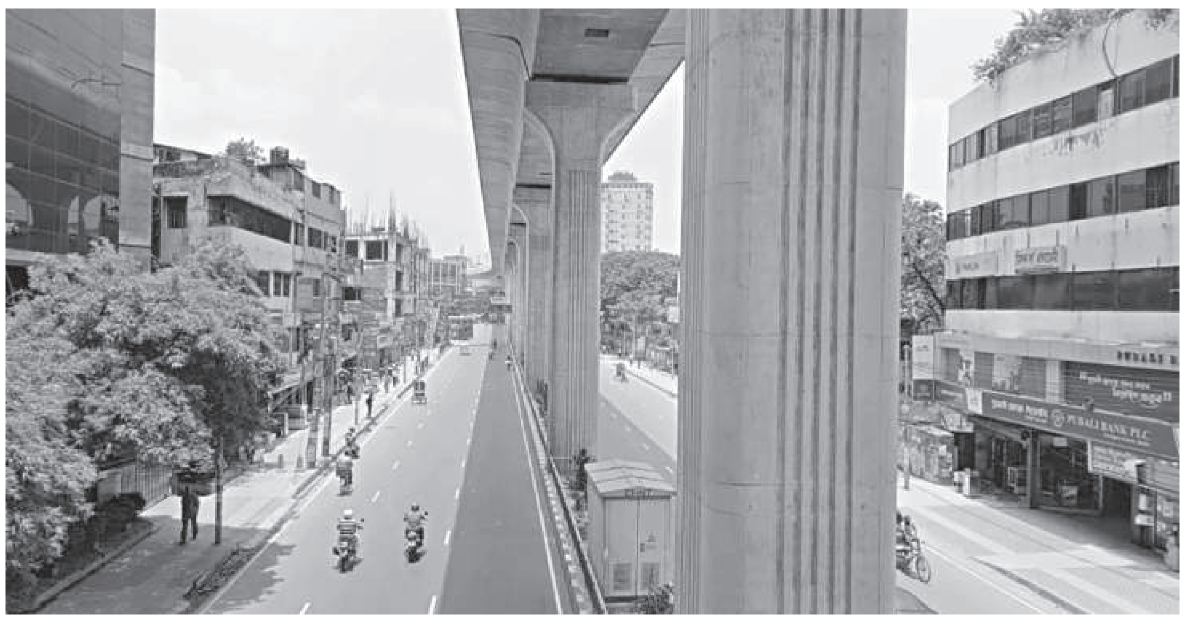
"I would like to call upon all local and foreign investors to invest in Bangladesh and use these [marine] resources in a broader way," the premier said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Bangladesh International Aquaculture and Seafood Show-2004 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital.

Bangladesh exports a wide variety of marine fish, Hasina said, adding, "I strongly feel the need to increase seawater fish production."

She said Bangladesh has a huge potential to make its blue economy more prosperous.

"I think we need to pay more attention to how we can extract and use our deep-sea resources. We want to take our country forward using marine resources because the demand for seafood is increasing all over the world," said the prime minister.

The PM said the investors will get all kinds of support from Bangladesh Investment Development Authority as Bangladesh offers many facilities for them.



Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Parts of Dhaka deserted in 'complete shutdown'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parts of Dhaka wore an almost deserted look yesterday with city streets remaining empty, as fear gripped people following students' enforcement of a "complete shutdown" across the country.

Protesting students on Wednesday night announced a "complete shutdown", in protest of the law enforcers' action against them, alongside the one-point demand of quota reform and the additional demand of "crime-free" campuses.

While visiting different areas of Dhaka, it was seen that the number of public vehicles on the roads were thin. The usual scenario of traffic jams on the city roads was not seen yesterday. The number of people using different public vehicles was low compared to other days as well.

Few private vehicles were seen on the roads. Even on the metro rail, the presence of commuters was low although it was a working day.

However, during the enforcement of the "complete shutdown", clashes broke out between protesters and police in different areas of the city, including Shanir Akhra, Jatrabari, Mirpur-10, Science Lab, and Badda.

Amid violent clashes on campuses between quota protesters on one side and police, Chhatra League and Jubo League on the other, the University Grants Commission on July 16 declared that all public and private universities will remain closed until further notice.

At the same time, all affiliated medical, textile, engineering and other colleges will also remain closed, it announced.

A road in Moghbazar.

The commission also directed the university authorities to vacate the residential halls considering the safety of the students.

On the same day, all secondary, higher secondary, and polytechnic institutes and colleges under the National University were declared closed until further notice.

At least 35 people were killed and thousands were injured till yesterday as clashes took place during nationwide protests demanding the abolition of quotas in government jobs.

Student's protest programme gained momentum as thousands of students from private universities and colleges have also joined the movement, which had previously been dominated by public university students.

The widespread demonstrations began yesterday morning following violent attacks on quota protesters at public universities across the country on July 15.

Violence escalates

FROM PAGE 3

between protestors and police at Bhelanagar area.

Deceased were Imon Ahmed, 21, who returned from Malaysia and Tahmid Tamim, 15, a class nine student. The clash left at least 100 more injured.

Mizanur Rahman, residential medical officer of Narsingdi District Hospital and Mahmudul Kabir, RMO of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, confirmed the deaths.

In Madaripur, Dipta Dey, a student of Madaripur Government College, drowned in Shakuni Lake in the district town after being chased by police and BCL activists during a clash.

The clash left around 50 more injured.

The district's Additional Superintendent of Police Md. Moniruzzaman confirmed the death.

"The protesters gathered at the Shakuni Lake area. They hurled brickbats at the police and attacked with sticks, and in response, police charged batons, fired rubber bullet, and lobbed tear shells to disperse them," he claimed.

Later, police recovered a body from the lake, he said, adding, "However, we don't know how he died. We will know details of the death after investigation."

In the evening, protesters set fire to a police outpost and attacked the offices of the superintendent of police and deputy commissioner.

In Bogura, at least 53, including 10 police men, were injured in Bogura yesterday during the clash between law enforcers and protestors at town's Satmatha and court area.

A total of 43 injured students, including 12 with rubber bullet injuries, were taking treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College, according to the hospital's deputy director, Abdul Wadud.

In a separate clash with police at the Bogura District Court area around 1:45pm, at least 10 police personnel were injured. They are receiving treatment at Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogura, said the hospital's resident doctor.

At least 10 protesting students and two police personnel were injured as law enforcers fired shotguns and rubber bullets at protesters outside Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet.

Students started demonstrating from 10:00am blocking the Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway. As the police asked them to leave at around 1:15pm, the protestors started throwing stones and brick chunks at police.

Police then baton-charged the students and lobbed sound grenades, shotgun fire, and rubber bullets. Intermittent chase and counter chase between police and protestors at Madina Market, Akhalia and Kumargaon areas continued till 7:30pm

In Natore, at least six individuals, including five police personnel, were injured when protesters clased with police and Chhatra League activists.

In Manikganj, around 100 people were injured in sporadic clashes between the protesters and ruling AL men at Shaheed Rafiq Chattar, Seota, and Khalpar area.

In Rangpur, at least 50 people, including six police, were injured in a clash between students and police at Tajhat area near Begum Rokeya University.

The clash took place when several thousands tried to march towards Tajhat Police Station and police resisted them at around 2:30pm.

In Dinajpur, at least 50 people were injured in several clashes between protesters and AL men in the district town.

The protesters attacked two offices of AL in Dinajpur and burnt 15 motorcycles in front of it. Police charged sound granades to disperse them.

Save the Children **Date: July 19, 2024**

Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

Invitation for Tender

Save the Children International (SCI) is now inviting tenders from interested, experienced, and bona fide suppliers for supplying Healthcare Commodities (Pharmaceutical items) at Save the Children in Bangladesh.

For details please see the IFT schedule, which are available at http://procurement.scibd.info/ under tender notification. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

Description, Submission Time & Date:

SL	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Pre-Tender Meeting Schedule and Place	Last date of Tender Submission
1	Tender for Healthcare commodities (Pharmaceuticals Items)	ITTIFT/SCI/BDCO/FY-24/(Manual)/0002	12:00PM on 24/07/2024 Join Team Meeting https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YmVjYmQwMzltNDcyNC00OGIwLWFlMDUtZDBhNTg2ZmM2Y2Zk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2237ef3d19-1651-4452-b761-dc2414bf0416%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22e9377c57-b005-4e84-bf32-5e7a4e8d61fd%22%7d	By August 11, 2024, at 03.00 PM

Special Instruction:

a) All activities in connection with the said procurement of Goods/Services will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies.

b) If it is not possible to receive & open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received and opened on the following working date at the same time and same place.

Director of Supply Chain

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation
7-9 Kawran Bazar,
Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Memo No. 24.03.0000.103.06(5).110.22-201 Date: 16 July, 2024

Invitation for Bid (IFB) Notice (Re-Tender) International Competitive Bidding (ICB)

For Development of Dost Textile Mills Site at Feni, Bangladesh through Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC), under the Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, intends to establish textile mills and/or textile related linked industries and support facilities at Feni, Bangladesh at the existing site of Dost Textile Mills Ltd. through PPP mode.

BTMC invites interested bidders and/or bidding consortiums to participate in the selection of a Private Partner through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) process for the "Development of Dost Textile Mills Ltd. (and/or Textile Related Linked Industries and Support Facilities) at Feni, Bangladesh through Public Private Partnership" as per the terms and conditions set out in the PPP Contract.

Interested bidders may submit their Bids in response to this IFB notice. Details of the Project, Bid submission process and other requirements have been delineated in the IFB document.

Interested bidders have to purchase the IFB with a non-refundable amount of Bangladeshi Taka Fifty Thousand (BDT 50,000) or equivalent amount in other currency in favour of 'Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation' through Pay Order/Bank Draft and send the scanned copy of money receipt to the designated e-mail ID: btmc-tm4@pppo.gov.bd to register online in order to access all available project related documents and to participate in the bidding process. A pre-bid meeting will be organized at the BTMC conference room, Date & Time for the said meeting will be duly notified to registered bidders through on-line process.

Bids must be submitted on or before 03 September, 2024 Time - 12.00 hours BST at the following address:

Project Director
Development of Dost Textile Mills Site
(and/or Textile Related Linked Industries and Support Facilities)
at Feni, through PPP
Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation
7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Authority reserves the right to accept, reject and/or re-invite the bids without assigning any reason. whatsoever.

Brigadier General Md. Ziaul Hoque
Chairman
Tel: + 8802 55014347(Office)
E-mail: btmcho@gmail.com

Flood turned them into boatmen

Haor residents in peril amid lack of work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

Shimul Ahmed, a saw-mill worker from Hakaluki Haor area under Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, has been having a hard time to earn bread for his family since the flood hit the different upazilas of the district.

"As the floodwaters rose, our saw-mill became submerged and had to be shut down. I lived without work for several days. There was no money to manage food for my family of six. Our house also got submerged," he said.

Shimul did what many in his community have done -- he rented a boat and transformed himself into a boatman, ferrying people to safety from flood-affected areas.

Jasim Uddin, a mason from Bhagmatpur village in Kadipur union, has also done the same.

"Once the flood recedes, I will return to my work as a mason," he said.

Suleman Ahmed, another local resident, and a dozen others, shared the same.

"Due to flood, people have been confined to their homes for days, amid a crisis of food and drinking water, without any earnings. So many like us have started to venture out and look for alternative ways to earn some money," Suleman said.

The Nawabganj-Kulaura road in Kadipur union under Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar has been completely submerged for a month so far, and boats are now the only means of commute.

Similar situation exists across the flood-affected areas in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts.

Md Harun Mia, a former member of Kadipur Union Parishad, said this year's flood has been the worst in recent memory.

He expressed disappointment over the inadequate government response and lack of support from charitable sources.

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০১৯৪৭-১৩৩০০১

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Contact: 01726-261023

ইনভেস্টমেন্ট কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ৮, রাজউক এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
সেক্রেটারিজ ডিভিশন

শেয়ারহোল্ডারদের জন্য নোটিশ

[অবন্টিত/অ-দাবীকৃত নগদ লভ্যাংশ/বোনাস শেয়ার বিএসইসির ক্যাপিটাল মার্কেট স্ট্যাবিলাইজেশন ফান্ড বা পুঁজিবাজার স্থিতিশীলকরণ তহবিলে স্থানান্তর]

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ সিকিউরিটিজ অ্যান্ড এক্সচেঞ্জ কমিশন (বিএসইসি) এর ১৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২১ তারিখের নির্দেশনা নং বিএসইসি/সিএমআরসিডি/২০২১-৩৮৬/০৩ এবং বাংলাদেশ সিকিউরিটিজ অ্যান্ড এক্সচেঞ্জ কমিশন (ক্যাপিটাল মার্কেট স্ট্যাবিলাইজেশন ফান্ড) বিধি, ২০২১, অনুসারে নগদ লভ্যাংশ এবং বোনাস শেয়ার যদি লভ্যাংশ ঘোষণা/অনুমোদনের দিন/রেকর্ড ডেট এর তারিখ থেকে ৩(তিন) বছরের অধিক সময় অবন্টিত/অ-দাবীকৃত থাকে, তাহলে উক্ত নগদ লভ্যাংশ এবং বোনাস শেয়ার ক্যাপিটাল মার্কেট স্টাবিলাইজেশন ফান্ড বা পুঁজিবাজার স্থিতিশীলকরণ তহবিলে স্থানান্তর করতে হবে।

বিএসইসি এর নির্দেশনা পরিপালনার্থে সম্মানিত শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণকে ১৮ আগস্ট, ২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থবছরের অবন্টিত/অ-দাবীকৃত নগদ লভ্যাংশ এবং বোনাস শেয়ার গ্রহণ করার জন্য উপযুক্ত প্রমাণকসহ সরাসরি অথবা আইসিবি সেক্রেটারিজ ডিপার্টমেন্টের ই-মেইল agm_secretary@icb.gov.bd ঠিকানায় আবেদন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। ক্যাপিটাল মার্কেট স্ট্যাবিলাইজেশন ফান্ডে স্থানান্তরযোগ্য নগদ ও বোনাস লভ্যাংশের তালিকা কর্পোরেশনের ওয়েবসাইট www.icb.gov.bd এ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে।

এ বিষয়ে আরও জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, যদি ১৮ আগস্ট, ২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে কোন বৈধ দাবি না পাওয়া যায়, তাহলে বিএসইসির নির্দেশনা ও বিধি অনুসারে, ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থবছরের অবন্টিত/অ-দাবীকৃত নগদ লভ্যাংশ এবং বোনাস শেয়ার ক্যাপিটাল মার্কেট স্ট্যাবিলাইজেশন ফান্ডে স্থানান্তর করার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হবে।

এতদ্‌সংশ্লিষ্ট যেকোনো প্রয়োজনে ০১৭৯৯-৯৯৭১০৪ নম্বরে অথবা agm_secretary@icb.gov.bd ই-মেইল এর মাধ্যমে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

(রুখসানা ইয়াসমিন)
বোর্ড সচিব/উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফোন নং-০২২২৩৩৫৩৩১৯

তারিখ: ১৮ জুলাই, ২০২৪।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জেল সুপারের কার্যালয়
জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার
jailsuperjamalpur@gmail.com

পত্র নং-৫৮.০৪.৩৯০০.০৯৭.০১.০০৮.২৪-১৯৯২ তারিখঃ ১৬ জুলাই ২০২৪

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	জেল সুপার, জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার।
২	এজেন্সী/ সংস্থা	কারা অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।
৩	দরপত্রের নাম	জামালপুর জেলা কারাগারের ০১-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ৩০-০৬-২০২৫খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত সময়ের বিভিন্ন প্রকার বিবিধ দ্রব্য সরবরাহের জন্য শুধু কারা ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের ১ম বারের দরপত্র।
৪	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	Miscellaneous-2024/1
৫	দরপত্রদাতাদের ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতা	দরপত্র সিডিউলে সংযুক্ত PG-2 এর শর্তানুযায়ী।
৬	বাজেট ফান্ড প্রাপ্তির উৎস	জাতীয় রাজস্ব তহবিল।
৭	দরপত্র আহ্বান	সীমিত দরপত্র (LTM) পদ্ধতি।
৮	দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	১। জেল সুপারের কার্যালয়, জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার। (২) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, জামালপুর (৩) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, জামালপুর।
৯	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৩০-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ২:৩০টা পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার স্থান	(১) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, জামালপুর (২) সদর থানা, জামালপুর (৩) প্রধান ফটক, জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার।
১১	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	জেল সুপারের কার্যালয়, জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার।
১২	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	প্রতিসেট ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র
১৩	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখিত।
১৪	কার্যাদেশের সময়সীমা	০১-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ হতে ৩০-০৬-২০২৫খ্রিঃ।
১৫	দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে	ক) দরপত্র বায়নার মূলকপি ও ফটোকপি, খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদের কপি, গ) অনলাইন ভ্যাট নিবন্ধনের (১৩ ডিজিট) কপি, ঘ) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (সরবরাহকারী) এর কপি, ঙ) আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতা (লিকুইড এ্যাসেট) সনদের কপি ও স্বচ্ছলতার স্বপক্ষে হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্টের কপি/ব্যাংক লেটার অব কমিটমেন্টের কপি, চ) কারা বিভাগে/অন্য কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানে ০৩ বছরের মালামাল সরবরাহের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের কপি, ছ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি, ৫) কারা বিভাগে হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত তালিকাভুক্তি বহির কপি। **(সকল ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক নামযুক্ত সীলমোহর দ্বারা সত্যায়িত)**
১৬	প্রি-টেন্ডার সভার তারিখ ও সময়	২৫-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৭	দরপত্র দাখিলের সময়	৩১-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ৯:০০টা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৮	দরপত্র বাক্স উন্মুক্তকরণের সময়	৩১-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৯	মূল্যায়ন কমিটির সভা অনুষ্ঠানের সময়	০৫-০৮-২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা।
২০	দরপত্র সিডিউলের অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলী জানার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট কারা কর্তৃপক্ষের সংগে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।	
২১	কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে আংশিক বা সকল দরপত্র প্রক্রিয়া বাতিল/গ্রহণের অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
২২	কোন দরদাতা ভুয়া কাগজপত্র দাখিল করলে তার জামানত বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।	

১৬/০৭/২৪
মাজহারুল ইসলাম
জেল সুপার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
জামালপুর জেলা কারাগার

GD-61

Every morning, Balai Barui of Khulna's Dumuria upazila sets out with his bicycle to sell fish fries to owners of nearby fish enclosures. He collects fries of various varieties, including rui and katla, and sells those for Tk 80 to Tk 250 per kg. He sells around 30 to 40 kg per day. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

CHANDURA-AKHAURA ROAD

Pothole woes worsen in Bijaynagar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

The 22km-long Chandura-Akhaura regional road in Brahmanbaria's Bijaynagar upazila is in a dire condition, riddled with hundreds of water-filled potholes.

This hazardous state has made the road a hotspot for frequent accidents.

Locals rely on this road to access key institutions, including the Bijaynagar Police Station, Upazila Parishad Complex, Akhaura Land Port, Dhaka-Sylhet Highway, Amtoli Bazar, Daudpur Government High School, Bijoynagar Upazila Health Complex, Awlia Bazar, Champaknagar, and Singerbil Bazar.

The road serves as the primary communication route for over 300,000 people from 10 unions of the upazila, according to LGED sources.

The road is essential not only for Bijaynagar and Akhaura residents but also for people from Madhabpur upazila in Habiganj, who use it for export-import activities via the land port.

Additionally, trucks carrying stones from Sylhet division's districts frequently use this route.

Shahjahan Miah, a resident of Champaknagar village, said, "During the monsoon, almost the entire road is filled with stagnant water. Easy bikes, CNG-run auto-rickshaws, and motorcycles often get stuck in these potholes."

Commuters say a ten-minute journey can take over half an hour due to the road's condition.

Rimon Bhuiyan, a shopkeeper at Singerbil Bazar, often has to walk part of the way as potholes impede vehicular movement.

CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Shohag Mia said, "Our vehicles are often damaged, and there is always risk of accidents."

LGED's Bijaynagar upazila engineer, Mohammad Ashiqur Rahman Bhuiyan, said, "This road has a carrying capacity of 10 tonnes, but trucks carrying 20-30 tonnes of goods ply it daily. As a result, even after repeated renovations, the pitch casting of the road is easily removed."

He said the damaged parts of the road will be repaired soon.

Man to die for killing nephew, niece in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

A Brahmanbaria court yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his nephew and niece in Banchharampur upazila in 2020.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Abdul Hannan also fined Badol Miah, 34, from Khudadaudpur in Homna upazila of Cumilla, Tk 50,000, court sources said.

The victims -- Shifa Akhter, 14, and her younger brother Mehedi Hasan Kamrul, 10 -- were children of Kamal Hossain from Sahebnagar in Banchharampur.

Badol is Kamal's brother-in-law, and the incident happened when Badol stayed at Kamal's house for two months during the pandemic.

According to the case filed by Kamal, Badol borrowed Tk 13 lakh from him to open a shop. Later, they locked into argument as Badol did not pay him back. At one point, Kamal slapped Badol, which made him furious.

On August 24, 2020, he knifed Shifa and Mehedi to death in the house to take revenge on Kamal, added the case statement.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 19

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-10	12-30	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT	4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Flood damages crops worth Tk 106cr

Say officials, local markets hit by vegetable supply crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmonirhat*

The ongoing flood in Kurigram has so far damaged crops worth Tk 105 crore across 7,960 hectares of land in the district.

Crops worth Tk 1 crore have also been damaged by flood across 40 hectares of land in Lalmonirhat.

Officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the districts confirmed the matter.

Different vegetables and leafy greens including spinach were damaged on 2,700 hectares while Aman paddy seedbeds and jute were damaged on 5,300 hectares of agricultural lands in the shoal areas of the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar and Dharla rivers in the districts.

Khandkar Abu Bakkar Siddique, a farmer of Sardob village of Holokhana union in Kurigram Sadar, said he had planted chili on 50 decimals of the land at a cost of Tk 1 lakh.

"The chili field was completely damaged due to flood water. I could not harvest even 5kg of chili," he said.

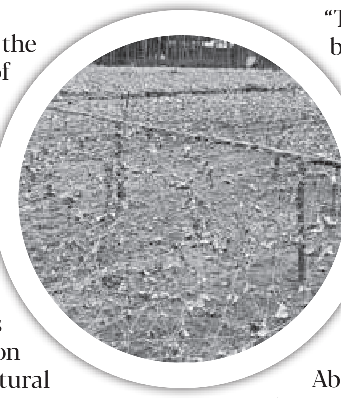
Nabir Hossain, a farmer of Hatia village in Ulipur upazila of Kurigram, said his eight bighas of jute and three bighas of various vegetables were submerged for about two weeks.

"The flood water receded but my around 5 bighas of jute and three bighas of vegetables were damaged," he lamented.

Due to the damages, local markets in the two districts are going through a supply crisis of vegetables, said traders.

Confirming the matter, Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram, said hundreds of affected famers are working on re-cultivating vegetables on their croplands as floodwaters receded.

"Huge damage to the crops has been sustained in the flood. We are preparing a list of affected farmers for government's incentives," he added.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in the
Chittagong Hill Tracts (CRLIWM-CHT) Sector Project
Rangamati.

Invitation for Expression of Interest-Firm (International)

Memo No Four-7/CRLIWM-CHT/2024-119 Date: 15/07/2024

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs			
2.	Agency	Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council			
3.	Name of Procuring Entity	Project Director, Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed Management in The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CRLIWM-CHT) Sector Project			
4.	Title of Service	Recruitment of Project Implementation Support Consultants			
5.	Procuring Entity District	Rangamati			
6.	Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm			
7.	EOI Ref. No.	Package No. CRLIWM/SD-03 (ADB Package No. CHT/Firm/PISC/SD-01)			
8.	Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	18 July 2024			
KEY INFORMATION					
9.	Procurement Sub-Method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS), International			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10.	Budget and Source of funds	Development Budget			
11.	Development Partner (if applicable)	GoB+ADB (LOAN-4333 BAN)			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
12.	Project/Programme Code (if applicable)	N/A			
13.	Project/Programme Name (if applicable	N/A			
14.	EOI Closing Date and time	29 August 2024, 22:00 Hours (BST)			
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT					
16.	Brief Description of the Assignment	Consulting services will provide technical advice and supervision for project implementation in accordance with the project administration manual (PAM). For details visit **https://cms.adb.org/**			
17.	**Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required:** The consulting services to be provided by the Project Implementation Support Consultant (PISC) firm will support CHTRC and LGED to deliver the intended project outcomes. The purpose of the consulting services is to provide full support to: (i) Project PMO and DPMO on all aspects of project implementation including the design of subprojects; (ii) LGED-PMU and LGED-PIU with implementation of Output 5 of the project; (iii) capacity building and strengthening of concerned institutions; (iv) monitoring and quality control of project implementation including institutional aspects and civil works; (v) support the PMO and LGED-PMU with routine reporting on project progress. The firm will provide inputs of international consultants (36 person-months), national key experts (337 person-months), non-key staff (675 person-months) and support staff (828 person-months). The consulting team will be led by an international firm and comprised of international and national experts. The PISC will be engaged in accordance with ADB's Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers: Goods, Works, Non-consulting and Consulting Services (2017, as amended from time to time).				
18.	Other Details (if applicable)	Only online submission through **https://cms.adb.org/** is allowed.			
19.	Association with foreign firms is	Yes			
	Ref. No.	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date (Month/Year)	Indicative Completion Date (Month/Year)
	CRLIWM/SD-03	Sigle	Rangamati	March/2025	June/2030
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
21.	Name of the Official Inviting EOI	Paban Kumar Chakma			
22.	Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Project Director, CRLIWM-CHT Sector Project			
23.	Address of the Official Inviting EOI	CHT Regional Council, Rangamati, Bangladesh			
24.	Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	+8801556511231	pd.crliwmcht@gmail.com		
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or rejects all EOI's					

25/07/24
(Paban Kumar Chakma)
Project Director
Climate Resilient Livelihoods Improvement and Watershed
Management in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Sector Project,
Rangamati.
Phone:01556511231
Email: pd.crliwmcht@gmail.com

GD-60

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Rangpur

Invitation for e-Tender (IFT) (OTM)

Tender Notice No. e-GP-01/XEN/EED/Rang/VE-3250-Fur/2024-25/672 Date: 16 July 2024

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The tenderer who have registered in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is eligible to participate in this Tender.

SL. No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Last date & time of selling documents	Tender closing & opening date and time
1.	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Annondolock Biddapith High School, Sadar, Rangpur.	1000429	30-Jul-2024 16:00	31-Jul-2024 14:00
2.	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Badarganj Model B.L High School, Badarganj, Rangpur.	1000430	30-Jul-2024 16:00	31-Jul-2024 14:00

a) Tender publication date on live: 16.07.2024
b) This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17:00 on 30.07.2024.

16-07-24
Abul Kalam Md. Akhtaruzzaman
Executive Engineer

GD-62

Biden tests positive for Covid, fueling health worries

AFP, *Las Vegas*

US President Joe Biden tested positive for Covid with mild symptoms Wednesday, shortly after conceding he would consider dropping his reelection bid if doctors diagnosed him with a serious medical condition.

The 81-year-old Democrat gave reporters the thumbs up and said "I feel good" as he cut short a trip to Las Vegas and flew to his beach home in Delaware to go into isolation, which will take him off the campaign trail for days.

Biden thanked well-wishers on X, adding that "I will be isolating as I recover, and during this time I will continue to work to get the job done for the American people."

The infection comes at a critical moment for Biden's campaign, with the president seeking to show he is up to the job after a disastrous debate performance against rival Donald Trump sparked concerns about his health and calls from some Democrats for him to step aside.

It is also the latest development in a tumultuous few days in an already frenetic White House race that saw Trump survive an assassination attempt at a campaign rally.

Biden was forced to cancel a speech to a union representing Latino workers who will be crucial for his election bid, having attended a campaign event earlier in the day and given a radio interview.

His spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden was vaccinated and boosted, was now taking the Covid medication Paxlovid and "continues to carry out the full duties of the office while in isolation."

Farmers in Mymensingh's Phulbaria upazila are seen producing red sugar, locally known as Lal Chini, using year-old traditional method.

PHOTO: STAR

TRADITIONAL LAL CHINI

Fair price delights Mymensingh farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Farmers involved in producing red sugar, locally known as Lal Chini, in Mymensingh's Phulbaria upazila are delighted due to a good production and fair price of the item this year.

Lal Chini is a cash crop for hundreds of farmers, mostly small and marginal, in different areas of Phulbaria including Radhakanai, Polashtali, Bidhyananda, Koierchala, Bakta, Kushmail, Kaladah, Enayetpur, Rangamatia, Sontoshpur and Chowdhar village.

Production of Lal Chini is a 200-year-old tradition in Phulbaria and the area is famous for the item, said locals.

Many farmers, who once diverted to other crops cultivation like pineapple, banana, lemon and turmeric due to low price of Lal Chini in the previous years, are now gradually returning to sugarcane cultivation as they are getting a good price of their produce, said 90-year-old Muntaz Ali Fakir of Polashtali Chalapara village.

Muntaz's grandson Enamul Haque, an expatriate in Maldives, recently returned home and started expanding the cultivation area.

Enamul said he made a profit of around Tk 20,000 from his 20 decimals of land this year and he would go for as expanded cultivation next year.

As both the production and prices are quite good this year, each maund of Lal Chini is selling for Tk 6,000 to Tk 8,000 according to its quality, he said.

Farmer Dulal Mia of the locality, who had a reasonable profit from Lal Chini this year, said he will go for more sugarcane cultivation next year as the profit is much inspiring this year.

Cultivation of Lal Chini is comparatively cheap than the other crops as it requires little watering, less qualtity of fertilizers and insecticides, the farmer said.

Another farmer Adam Ali said they would get more profit if farmers could sell their products directly to the government agencies.

Farmers said sugarcane leaves and bagasse are also sold locally, which adds additional financial support to the farmers family.

Phulbaria Sub-Assistant Plant Protection Officer Md Abu Raihan said sugarcane was cultivated on a total of 650 hectares of land in the upazila this year and they have a target to produce around 5,200 tonnes of Lal Chini worth around Tk 100 crore.

Mymensingh Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Dr Nasrin Akhter Banu said Lal Chini is produced only in Phulbaria and it has good potential to grow as an industry.

China for peace

FROM PAGE 12

foreign ministry.

He told reporters that they do not comment on the internal affairs of any country.

"It is unfortunate that there is violence and loss of life. However, we believe that the government of Bangladesh and people have the capacity and wisdom to solve their own problems," Wen said.

On the recent visit of the prime minister to China, he said, "After internal coordination, we discussed and are going to provide a package of grants, interest free-loan, preferential loan, and commercial loan. In total, it is $2 billion."

The details of the package need to be finalised at the working level, he said, adding, "This demonstrates our support to Bangladesh. I believe this package will boost our bilateral cooperation and development."

He told Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud that Chinese special envoy on Asian affairs Wang Yingfan will be visiting Bangladesh soon and discuss the Rohingya crisis and the ways of solving it.

The ambassador said China agrees that there was no other solution except safe repatriation of the Rohingyas to their homeland.

"It is a big problem for Bangladesh," he said, noting that conflict broke out in Myanmar, and it is intensifying in Rakhine too.

Bangladesh is hosting nearly 1.3 million Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.

Wen shed light on Hasina's recent visit to China and discussed bilateral issues, including determining the focal point of Bangladesh in terms of comprehensive economic cooperation with China, celebrating 50 years of China's diplomatic relations with Bangladesh, and advancing comprehensive strategic cooperation.

Foreign Minister Hasan through the ambassador invited his Chinese counterpart to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time and urged China to build another road-tunnel in Chattogram.

30 establishments torched

FROM PAGE 12

The agitating students also set fire to a police outpost near the Madaripur launch terminal and the district Awami League office, according to police sources.

In Dhaka, protesters torched at least three police outposts in Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi-27 and Mirpur.

Towhidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (Uttara division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said demonstrators set fire to two vans, including one of the police, in Uttara.

A vehicle of Border Guard Bangladesh was set on fire in Hatijheel around 6:00pm.

The Banani toll plaza of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway was set on fire around 9:00pm.

On Wednesday evening, demonstrators torched the toll plaza of the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in Jatrabari.

Sources in the Fire Service and Civil Defence yesterday said they received information of at least 33 violence-related fire incidents across the country from July 17 to midnight last night. Twenty-three of those took place in the Dhaka city corporation area.

Over the last two days, one fire was reported in Narayanganj, two fire incidents were reported in Gaibandha, two in Rangpur city, and one each in Kushtia, Sirajganj, Barishal, Natore and Madaripur districts, the release said.

It added that six buses, two microbuses, 20 motorcycles, two offices of political parties, a toll plaza, a police station, a police box, a police car, and two government offices were damaged.

In another release, the fire service said that at least five vehicles of their department were damaged and four staffers were hurt till 8:30pm yesterday.

Talha Bin Zasim, media officer of the fire service, said the four came under an attack by a group of people when they were going to discharge their duties.

Internet service blocked across the country

FROM PAGE 12

Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said internet communication is disrupted throughout the country due to fire in a Mohakhali building that houses data centres supplying a large volume of internet traffic.

According to the ISPAB, no fire was set in any building with the data centres. There was a fire in an adjacent building and some overhead cables of data centres located in the vicinity were damaged.

The damage would affect at best 20 percent of internet supply, according to industry insiders who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Meanwhile, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for telecom and ICT, said mobile internet services will be resumed as soon as the environment and the law-and-order situation stabilise.

"A vested quarter is trying to derail the law-and-order situation by spreading rumours on social media — that is why we have disconnected the mobile internet services without any prior declaration," he said at the inauguration of 20 e-learning courses of an ICT Division project in the capital yesterday.

Contacted, Grameenphone, the country's leading mobile operator, said in a statement: "Considering the ongoing situation in the country, the government has temporarily stopped mobile internet services. The honourable state minister has already given his statement in the media. We are dependent on the authorities to restart the mobile internet services. We are in constant communication with the authorities in this regard."

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi, said the carrier has received threatening messages from its subscribers to resume mobile internet services or else its headquarters would be attacked.

New Gaza strikes after Netanyahu warning

AFP, *Gaza Strip*

Palestinians yesterday mourned relatives killed in overnight Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, where Israel's prime minister has vowed to intensify the pressure on militants even as demands grow for him to reach a deal that would free hostages.

AFPTV images showed mourners at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah city, where several white-shrouded corpses lay on the ground. One man cradled the covered body of a child.

Rescuers confirmed several people had been killed in separate Israeli strikes in central Gaza.

At the hospital, Ahmed Abu Muheisen said one strike had targeted his cousin's family in the Al-Zuwaida area.

"His children and his wife were martyred and so was he," Muheisen said.

"Enough, enough already!" said another mourner, Eid Abu Rakab.

In Israel too, there are similar calls.

Anti-government demonstrators, sometimes marching by the tens of thousands, and separate rallies by families and other supporters of hostages held by Hamas, have stepped up their actions demanding the government reach a deal to free the captives.

"We feel this is a critical moment," Osnat Sharabi Matalon, two of whose brothers were taken hostage, said at a protest on Wednesday in Tel Aviv.

She said they demand a deal before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travels to the United States, where he is scheduled to address Congress on July 24.

During the more than nine months of war, Netanyahu has consistently vowed to eradicate Hamas and bring home all the hostages.

On Tuesday he said "we are hurting" Hamas and this is "exactly the time to increase the pressure even more."

He told parliament: "We have got them by the throat."

Far-right members of his governing coalition, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, oppose a truce deal. On Thursday Ben Gvir said Netanyahu must not make a "surrender" accord with Hamas.

Israel's military offensive has killed at least 38,848 people, mostly civilians, according to data from the health ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

The latest toll issued Thursday included 54 deaths in the past 24 hours, it said.

All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to "breaking point" due to an influx of people wounded by Israeli bombardments, the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Thursday.

SC to hear pleas against HC verdict

FROM PAGE 12

in Dhaka's Bailey Road area, as the chamber judge of the Appellate Division is on service round the clock.

Earlier in the day, Amin Uddin told The Daily Star that he would move an application before the Appellate Division on Sunday for the early hearing on the government's leave to appeal petition against the HC judgement.

"Considering the importance of the issue, the apex court may hold the hearing on the leave to appeal petition on Sunday or Monday," he said.

On July 16, the government filed the petition with the SC seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict.

In the petition, the government said it is a policy decision of the government whether to keep the provision of quotas in public service, and the court cannot interfere in this.

On that day, the attorney general told reporters that the Appellate Division is scheduled to hear the leave to appeal petition on August 7.

However, Law Minister Anisul Huq told a press briefing yesterday that the prime minister asked him to take an initiative to hold an early hearing of the quota-related case at the SC.

The minister said he already instructed the attorney general to take an initiative in this regard and the AG would appeal to the SC on Sunday.

Meanwhile, two Dhaka University students yesterday filed a similar leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division challenging the June 5HC verdict.

Al Sadi Bhuiyan, a student of anthropology and also the president of Dhaka University Journalists Association, and Ahnaf Sayeed Khan, a student of Urdu, submitted the petition through senior lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 declared illegal the circular that cancelled the quota system in government jobs.

The circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, said that in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class 1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class 2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

The HC in the full text of its judgement, released on July 14, also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for freedom fighters' children, districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups and others, if any, and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible, preferably within three months, from the date of receipt of its order.

The court, however, said the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs, if necessary, and can fill the vacant posts from the general merit list if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

Protesting the HC judgment, students staged demonstrations at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University. They took to the streets on July 1, demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 circular.

Students intensified their protests across the country since July 4 as the Appellate Division did not stay the HC verdict following a government petition.

The protesters are holding demonstrations, demanding reforms of the quota system through the formulation of a law.

Amid such a situation, the government and two Dhaka University students moved two petitions before the Appellate Division seeking stay

Journo killed

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Alauddin Arif, special correspondent of Bangla daily Pratidiner Bangladesh, also suffered injuries from shotgun pellets while MM Sikandar, senior reporter of Green TV, was wounded in the capital's Rampura, Mohiuddin said.

Jannatur Mohona, staff reporter of Desh TV, and its cameraperson Abdul Khaleq were injured near Karnaphuli Garden City in the capital's Shantinagar, he added.

Senior Reporter of DBC News Farhana Yasmin Juthi, Special Correspondent of The Business Standard Qutubuddin Muhammad Jashim, and Staff Reporter of Banglavision Forrukh Babu were also injured, according to a press release of the DRU.

HSC, equivalent

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Earlier, all public and private universities had already been declared closed due to the situation surrounding the quota movement.

Additionally, all secondary and higher secondary level educational institutions (schools, colleges, madrasas, and technical institutions) under the Ministry of Education, polytechnic institutes, and all primary schools in city corporation areas have been declared closed until further notice.

Clashes have been taking place in different parts of the country for several days regarding the protests demanding reform of the quota system in government jobs.

Australia, India

FROM PAGE 12

statement yesterday.

The Indian High Commission also advised its citizens in Bangladesh to avoid travel and minimise their movement outside their living premises.

An advisory issued by the mission asked Indian nationals to reach out to the High Commission and Assistant High Commissions in Chattogram, Sylhet, Rajshahi, and Khulna in case of any urgency or need for assistance.

The US embassy said reports indicate several deaths and hundreds injured across Bangladesh. The situation is extremely volatile. Protests are likely to affect local transportation services and make getting in and out of Dhaka difficult.

"US citizens should practice vigilance and reconsider their travel plans, especially to areas around public universities. You should avoid demonstrations and exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings.

"Review personal security plans; remain aware of your surroundings, including local events; and monitor local news stations for updates," it said.

The US embassy in Dhaka was also closed to the general public yesterday. Mission personnel have been advised to limit their movements to the diplomatic enclave.

Eerie silence reigns

FROM PAGE 12

visited the vice chancellor's residence separately.

In the afternoon, police and students from different schools and colleges chased and counter-chased each other in Azimpur and Nilkhet areas.

At Jahangirnagar University, the situation was calm all day long. A large number of law enforcers were deployed on the campus, reports our Savar correspondent.

Around 6:00pm, some 300 students, mostly from areas close to the campus, gathered in front of the main entrance to the university. They chanted slogans protesting police action on protesters across the county.

Students of Rajshahi University blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway for about two hours from 2:30pm yesterday. Several hundred students from the Binodpur area staged the demonstration near the main entrance to RU.

'US ARMS IN GERMANY'

Russia threatens to deploy nuke missiles

REUTERS

Russia does not rule out new deployments of nuclear missiles in response to the planned US stationing of long-range conventional weapons in Germany, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying yesterday.

Interfax news agency cited Ryabkov as saying that the defence of Russia's Kaliningrad region, which is wedged between Nato members Poland and Lithuania, was a particular focus.

"I am not ruling out any options," he told reporters in Moscow when asked about US weapons deployment plan.

The United States said last week it would start deployment in Germany from 2026 of weapons that will include SM-6, Tomahawk and new hypersonic missiles in order to demonstrate its commitment to Nato and European defence.

Mahathir, 99, in hospital

AFP, *Kuala Lumpur*

Malaysia's nearly 100-year-old former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been hospitalised for "continuous coughing", his aide told AFP yesterday.

"Mahathir is expected to be treated for the next few days," Sufi Yusoff said, adding he had been admitted on Monday.

A two-time former PM Mahathir turned 99 last week. He has suffered several heart problems in recent years and underwent bypass surgeries.

Biden working towards what's best for US

Says key senator amid speculations that he may step aside from the presidential race

REUTERS, *Delaware*

US President Joe Biden is working towards a decision on whether to stay in the presidential race that is good for the country, Senator John Hickenlooper told Reuters, noting sadness among Democrats about the president while stopping short of saying he should step aside.

Hickenlooper, who ran for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination that Biden won, declined to add his voice to the growing number of lawmakers explicitly calling on Biden to leave the race. But he said there was mounting evidence it would be good for the country if that were the decision Biden made.

"Joe Biden has always put the country first. He's done what's best for America...I think he'll keep doing so," Hickenlooper said in a telephone interview late Wednesday. "He's working towards that."

Asked about Biden potentially stepping aside, Hickenlooper said: "That's his decision to make, but certainly there's more and more indications that that would be in the best interests of the country, I think."

Biden, 81, is facing calls from influential members of his party to leave the Democratic ticket after his shaky debate performance against former President Donald Trump, now the Republican nominee, raised concerns about his age and ability to prevail in the November election.

Hickenlooper said there is a sense of anguish among Democrats who hold Biden, who served in the Senate for 36 years, in high esteem, even if they believe he should not be running for re-election.

"I don't think a lot of people realize how beloved Joe Biden is and what sorrow and anguish people feel that he might not be the candidate. Even people who feel that he should not be the candidate feel a great sense of loss," Hickenlooper said.

"He's been one of the greatest presidents, perhaps the greatest president of my lifetime."

But Hickenlooper said feedback from his constituents in Colorado - not donors, he said, and not insiders - showed overwhelmingly that average Democratic voters wanted Biden to step aside.

Biden is convalescing from Covid 19 at his house in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. On Saturday he met one-one-one with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who reportedly urged him to exit the race.

Biden has been largely defiant in the face of such calls. The White House said late Wednesday the president told Schumer he was the party's nominee and he planned to win the election.

Hickenlooper said if Biden had wavered in his determination to stay in the race, that would have opened the floodgates for more calls to step aside.

"That doesn't mean he couldn't still in the end decide to stay in," said Hickenlooper, who was a brewpub owner in Denver before launching a career in politics, adding Biden would not waste time in making his decision.

"Everyone's got their own rate of fermentation."

Trump to rally unified Republicans in convention finale

AFP, *Milwaukee*

Donald Trump was set to get the red carpet treatment yesterday as he accepts the Republican nomination to run for US president in a hotly-anticipated speech capping a historic party convention dominated by the weekend attempt on his life.

The 78-year-old ex-president can expect a hero's welcome on the final day of the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, as he addresses a nation still reeling from the assassination bid by a lone gunman at a rally in Pennsylvania.

Saturday's attack -- which killed one bystander and left Trump with a bloodied ear -- has loomed large at the convention, with Republicans lining up to applaud the former president for his bravery.

As some Republicans sought to blame Democrats' anti-Trump rhetoric for the attack, the billionaire said he had torn up a more aggressive version of his keynote address in favor of one he hopes will "unite our country."

Trump's keynote address will be followed on television by millions, closing the convention by ushering in "a new golden age for America," according to the campaign.

It brings down the curtain on four days of speeches from elected officials, entertainers, industry figures and everyday Americans who mixed with some 50,000 Republicans who had traveled from all corners of the nation.

Two dead as passenger train derails in India

REUTERS, *Lucknow*

At least two people were killed and 20 injured after several coaches of a passenger train jumped the tracks in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh yesterday, authorities said.

TV visuals showed coaches of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express, which connects India's northern states to the eastern state of Assam, on their sides along the tracks, with passengers sitting outside with their luggage.

The derailment occurred in Gonda district, more than 100 km from state capital Lucknow.

A team of doctors was at the site treating the injured before they were moved to a hospital, the state's relief commissioner said in a statement.

The incident occurred around 2:30pm and initial reports said around five coaches had derailed, railways spokesman Pankaj Singh told the ANI news agency. "Our first priority is to complete relief and rescue work there as quickly as possible."

At least 15 people died and dozens were injured last month when a freight train smashed into the rear of a stationary passenger train in the eastern state of West Bengal.

China shopping mall fire kills 16

AFP, *Beijing*

A fire that tore through a shopping centre in southwestern China has killed 16 people, state media reported Thursday.

Rescue operations concluded at around 3:00 am on Thursday (1900 GMT Wednesday), according to the local fire and rescue services cited by state news agency Xinhua.

Video broadcast by state media CCTV and shared on social media Wednesday night showed thick black smoke billowing out of the 14-storey tower in Zigong, Sichuan province.

The blaze started in the early evening in a shopping centre at the foot of the building, the channel said. Around 30 people were rescued from the complex, with the fire extinguished by rescuers around 8:20 pm on Wednesday, CCTV said.

Later footage provided by a drone operator to AFP showed firetrucks and other first responders blocking off the road late at night, continuing to spray down the charred building.

As of 3:00am, the death toll stood at 16 with no individuals left trapped inside, said Xinhua.

People cool off in a water fountain during hot weather in New York City. New York City is in the middle of the third heat wave of the season, with temperatures that could feel like up to or over 100 degrees. PHOTO: **AFP**

Russia gives cautious reaction to Zelensky's summit offer

AFP, *Moscow*

The Kremlin has given a cautious reaction to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's apparent invitation to a future peace summit, saying that Russia first needs to understand what Kyiv means before attending talks.

Zelensky said on Monday that Russia "should" be represented at a second summit on the Ukraine conflict, a change of tone from last month when Kyiv excluded Moscow from a high-level peace conference in Switzerland.

"The first peace summit was not a peace summit at all. So perhaps it is necessary to first understand what he means," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the Zvezda television channel, responding to Zelensky's comments.

Leaders and top officials from more than 90 countries gathered at the Swiss mountainside resort of Burgenstock in June for the first summit, which Russia derided as a waste of time.

Both Russia and Ukraine are worlds apart on the terms of a possible peace settlement to end the more than two year conflict.

Moscow insists it must keep all the territory it now occupies -- some 20 percent of the country -- while Kyiv demands all Russian soldiers retreat from Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, including the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow annexed in 2014.

/- 'Not worried' -/Washington said Monday that it backed Ukraine's decision to invite Russia to a second summit, but expressed doubt about whether Moscow was ready for talks.

"When they want to invite Russia to that summit, of course, that is something we support," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told journalists.

"We've always supported diplomacy when Ukraine is ready, but it has never been clear that the Kremlin is ready for actual diplomacy," he said.

Ahead of last month's summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was open for negotiations and would announce a ceasefire immediately if Kyiv effectively surrendered territory that Moscow claims as its own.

Zelensky slammed Putin's demands as a territorial "ultimatum" reminiscent of those issued by Adolf Hitler, and Ukraine's Western backers including the United States reacted with scorn.

But there is growing apprehension in Kyiv about the long-term trajectory of the conflict, given Russia's recent battlefield gains and the potential for a Donald Trump victory in November's US elections.

Zelensky said on Monday he was "not worried" about the prospect of Trump winning and that he was still counting on support from the United States, Ukraine's biggest financial and military backer.

But the Republican Party candidate has suggested he would end the conflict very quickly if he won back the presidency, a promise Kyiv fears would mean being forced to negotiate with Moscow from a weakened position.

Rwanda's Kagame re-elected with 99.18 percent of votes

AFP, *Kigali*

Rwanda's all-powerful President Paul Kagame has been re-elected to a fourth term in office with 99.18 percent of the vote, according to full provisional results published Thursday.

The outcome of Monday's poll was never in doubt, with Kagame ruling the small African nation with an iron fist as de facto leader then president for three decades.

Garnering 8.82 million votes, the 66-year-old -- who will extend his rule by another five years -- won by an even greater margin than in the last presidential poll seven years ago, when he secured 98.79 percent.

Democratic Green Party leader Frank Habineza won just 0.5 percent in Monday's vote while independent candidate Philippe Mpayimana received 0.32 percent, according to figures from the National Electoral Commission.

The two men, who had also challenged Kagame in 2017, were the only two candidates approved to run this year after several opposition figures were barred.

Kagame is credited with rebuilding a shattered nation after the 1994 genocide, but is also accused of ruling in a climate of fear at home, and fomenting instability in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo.

He has won every presidential election he has contested with more than 93 percent of the ballot.

In 2015, Kagame oversaw controversial constitutional amendments that shortened presidential terms from seven to five years but reset the clock for the Rwandan leader, allowing him to potentially rule until 2034.

With 65 percent of the population aged under 30, Kagame is the only leader most Rwandans have ever known.

Over nine million Rwandans -- including two million first-time voters -- were registered to cast their ballot, with the presidential race being held simultaneously as legislative elections for the first time.

Definitive results are due to be released by July 27.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Jamalpur

Memo No. 37.07.3900.003.63.030.24-5948 **Date: 18/07/2024**

e-Tender Notice No: 2024-2025/11

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following works under EED Jamalpur as mentioned below:

Tender ID	Name of works	Publication Date/time	Closing date & Opening Date
993325	Construction of 02 Storied Auditorium Building with 02 Storied Foundation In/c. Sanitary, Water Supply, Electrification, Sound System, Stage Lighting, Multimedia Projector, Generator, Air Conditioning, Acoustic work & Deep Tube Well works at Govt. Jaheda Safir Mohila College, Sadar, Jamalpur.	18.07.2024 at 15.00	20.08.2024 at 12.00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e- GP system portal and No offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason what so ever.

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(Md. Anwer Hossain)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Jamalpur.

GD-63

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A sad day for the nation

What took the government so long to see reason in quota reforms?

No words are enough to adequately describe our shock and pain at the heavy casualties that occurred on Thursday, as a "complete shutdown" announced by the anti-quota protesters degenerated into a complete breakdown of law and order across the country. As of writing this editorial, at least 19 people, mostly students, were killed while many hundreds were injured during violent clashes between the protesters and members of security forces and Awami League-affiliated groups. The overall death toll in the ongoing quota movement, counting the six that died on Tuesday, now stands at 25. The severity of the protests—which continued well into Thursday night—can be understood from the fact that more than 2,500 were injured nationwide, a number of them suffering from shotgun wounds.

So much loss and suffering for a cause that any other country with a reasonable socio-economic ambition would have addressed proactively for its own benefit. This shows the growing disconnect between the students' aspirations and that of the ruling establishment. Could Thursday's tragedy have been avoided? The way protesting students were treated until then—frequently disregarded, disparaged, and finally driven off their campuses and dormitories—did indeed create the chance for any face-to-face confrontation with the security forces to turn violent. And it did. But the authorities must bear the responsibility for the escalation as it seems to have lost any ability to engage with protesters on the streets without resorting to force. Video footages from various thoroughfares and intersections showed scenes for which an apt description ethereal. There were indiscriminate beatings and shootings. Many public properties, offices, and vehicles were vandalised or set on fire. It was like a nightmare through and through.

This is why the government's offer on Thursday afternoon to sit with the students to discuss quota reforms was seen by many as more of an olive branch offering rather than a substantive approach. And they have their reasons. For instance, what took the government so long to make this approach? Why did it use so much force if it was "principally" in favour of quota reforms? Why did it continue to do so even after making the offer? Most importantly, who will take responsibility for all the deaths and sufferings that has ensued over the past four days? Clearly, the government could have avoided all the bloodbath and resultant crisis of faith by handling the situation a lot better, and more peacefully.

Right now, the priority is to raise confidence among the students about the government's sincerity. And words alone will not do that. To really build their confidence, the students will need concrete assurances that there will be no legal persecutions against them, that those responsible for the violence and instigation of violence will be brought to book, and that there will be proper reforms in the government job quota system. The students are right to worry, seeing how past attempts have failed to resolve the quota issue, particularly during the 2018 movement. Without a genuine effort on the government's part—but also on the part of the students to reciprocate, considering public interest—there is no guarantee that this issue will be resolved for good. We do not want to see any more violence and loss of lives.

Courts cannot be absent of witnesses

Authorities must address the fear to testify

It's concerning that our authorities are struggling to bring witnesses to court, calling into question the entire legal system. According to a police report, witnesses are unwilling to testify in criminal cases, due to fear of violence, lack of trust in the legal system, and absence of state protection among other issues. As a result, credibility of cases is being challenged, which often leads to them getting dismissed. This leaves perpetrators unpunished, and in turn, encourages them to carry out more crimes. Suffice to say, the state must address this dysfunction if it's concerned about the lack of law and order.

As per the report, 43 percent of witnesses surveyed don't want to testify in cases centring crimes like robbery and rape, while 24 percent are scared to do so. Furthermore, 28 percent said they were threatened by the accused's side. If this is the scenario, we cannot expect individuals to put their lives on the line to testify. Ensuring this safety falls on the shoulders of law enforcers and the legal system. But when 79 percent of witnesses have no faith in the criminal justice system and 51 percent complain about the lack of state protection, it's clear that the authorities concerned are failing to perform their duties.

The consequences of this failure are far-reaching. As reported, 50 percent of robbery cases have failed to ensure justice as witnesses refused to testify, while lack of proper testimonies has led to 46 percent of cases filed by the narcotics department getting dismissed. Negligence is pervasive as well, as officers reportedly make individuals witnesses without their consent. This is unacceptable and points to a sheer lack of accountability.

There are a host of options for authorities to improve this situation, as stated in the police report itself. Enacting and implementing witness protection laws is of paramount importance, as it's the first measure to ensure their safety. Taking testimonies virtually, providing transport costs, and ensuring swift trial proceedings are some of the other recommendations, which need to be implemented on an urgent basis. Above everything, the state must remember just how important it is to ensure a functioning justice system so that law and order prevails.

Govt has completely failed to understand the youth

Anu Muhammad
is a former professor of economics of Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

What is happening in Bangladesh right now is truly unfathomable. Anger, passion and sadness, mixed up with other emotions among the youth of the country, have led to a kind of movement the likes of which we haven't seen in decades. But what are the reasons behind their grievances? The present government has completely failed to understand them. And that failure is leading the government to make one mistake after another.

The anger that has taken hold among the youth, I believe, has been born of three main reasons. The first is the way the economy is operating and the developmental model that this government has adopted and is widely publicising—the youth cannot see any future for themselves in these models. Young people do not see any hope of getting (respectable) jobs that they deserve, according to their abilities. We are seeing jobless growth happen.

The second problem is that whatever employment opportunities exist are mostly in the public sector—be it at government schools, colleges, universities, hospitals or other essential institutions. Thousands of positions in these institutions are left vacant, but the government is not filling them up. Why? Because privatisation is central to its development model. The state of other important government offices is also critical because of the government's neoliberal economic policies.

The third issue is that young people don't believe they will get access to whatever little employment opportunities do exist. That's because all opportunities nowadays have to be bought; they are not granted according to merit. In order to get a job anywhere, you either have to spend money or have connections with the ruling party—in other words, "ruling-party-affiliated quota" has turned into the most dangerous quota. And even outside of that, there are a whole host of other corrupt practices that are taking place.

So, all our young people, whether they are in university, college or even in school, can see a dark future for themselves. Many young people are desperately trying to leave the country. And in the process, sometimes they are betrayed by fraudsters; that is how some end up dying at sea, while others are exploited by criminal brokers and syndicates.

They see the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) as the promise of a decent and secure job. But even there, they face 56 percent of quotas, which are limiting their chances, along with question leaks and other forms of corruption.

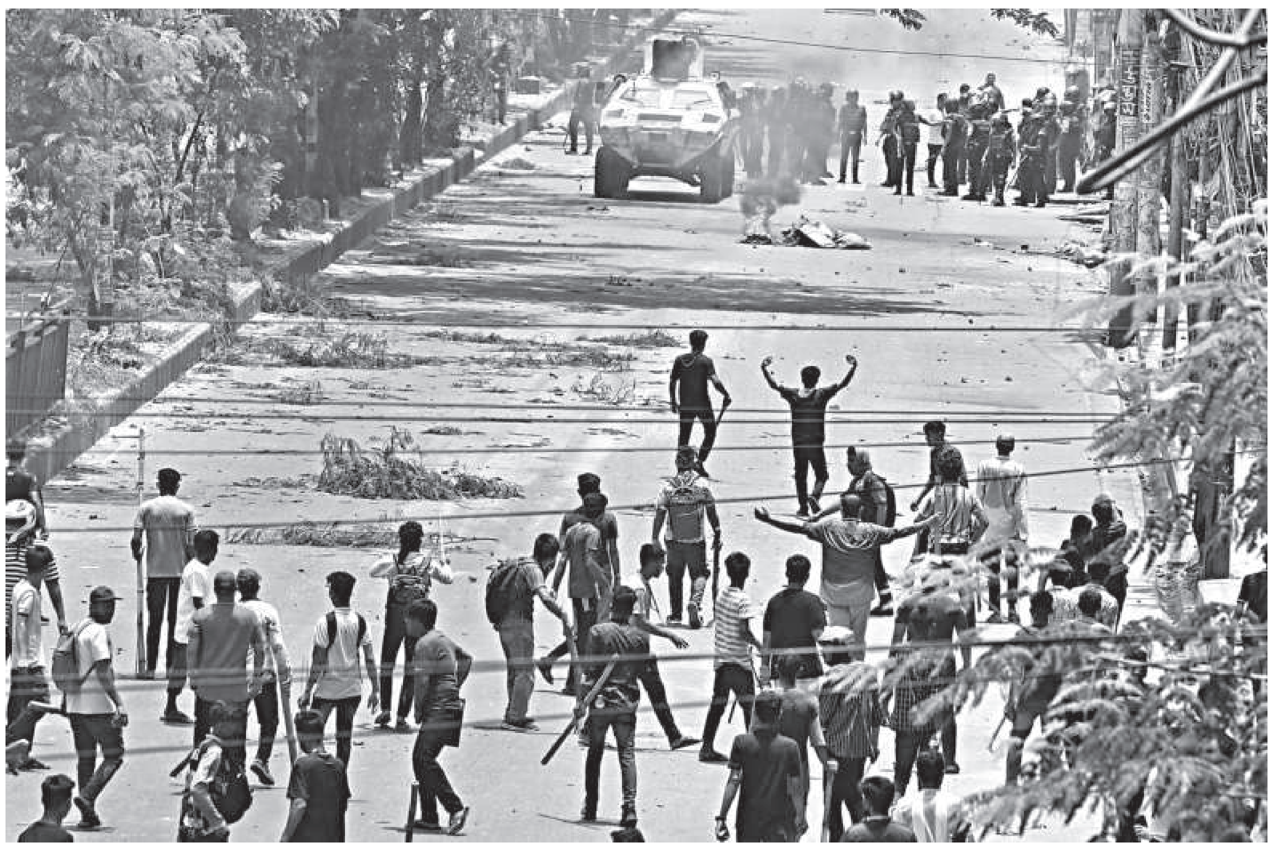

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Young people aren't seeing any way for them to fix the larger economic problems. The only possibility they see is if they can get some reforms made to the quota system. That is what led to the 2018 quota reform movement.

The prime minister's role following the movement then was short-sighted. After getting angry at the protesters, she decided to completely abolish all quotas. That was not the demand of the protesters—they had wanted the system to be reformed. It is only natural that the complete abolishment of quotas wouldn't stand a chance legally, because there are disadvantaged groups in the country who need the quota, and who have a right to it—even the constitution says that.

The government has been saying it can't do anything since it is a matter of the court. But even the court has said that the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs if it feels it is necessary. These factors have also influenced the young people and their movement.

Another aspect contributing to the young people's anger is the government's autocratic behaviour—that it can do whatever it wants. That is why young people across the country are in an agitated state right now. If you look at their lives closely, you will see most of them and their families are somehow struggling financially or in other ways. That, too, is influencing their decisions and their actions. Amid their ongoing struggles—either being unable to finance the treatment of their family members or something else—they have been constantly facing torture, intimidation, and/or insults from those affiliated with the ruling party.

To find some relief, they were looking up to the prime minister to take some steps to reform the quota system. Unfortunately, she decided to take the matter completely in another direction. A demeaning comment aimed at them is what triggered them and made them feel even more hopeless. After that, instead of talking to the protesters, the ruling party unleashed its student wing on them. The Awami League general secretary himself was straightforward in saying that BCL would see to the protesters. That is when we saw BCL members—many of whom look older than 30 or even 40 years old—launch a vicious attack on students with rods, sticks and even guns. In places where the BCL couldn't completely run over the students, they hired people and brought them in on trucks and buses to attack the students.

After that, we saw police and BGB being brought in. Why was BGB brought in? BGB troops are supposed to protect the borders.

All these government decisions have increased anger among the students. The way Abu Sayed was killed, as he stood unarmed, with his arms stretched out, when the police shot him, was totally unnecessary. Sayed belonged to a poor family. The people in his village collected money to try and collectively pay for his education. Many people went through so much struggle for him to come this far. And all he wanted was to go even further, using his abilities, which is what he was protesting for.

All the protesters are asking for is a chance to participate in a fair competition. They are not asking for any handouts or any unwarranted favours. For the police to open fire at them for that, and for the ministers to verbally attack them, are unacceptable.

The government refused to understand the anger and feelings that all this incited among the student protesters. And so, they decided to close all the schools and universities. But without addressing their main demand, is it possible for the government to simply shut down all educational institutions and use violence to stop the movement? What does Bangladesh's history tell us?

Bangladesh's history tells us that people in this country have endured a lot of oppression, but they also put up resistance despite all of that. Even BCL leaders were thrown out of campuses by the protesters after the latter were attacked by the ruling party's student wing.

By unleashing such terror upon the students, all the government is doing is displaying its weakness. Even the prime minister has now said that the court will hopefully give a ruling that is satisfying to the protesters. But what about all the unnecessary deaths? Who will take responsibility for them? Hundreds of students have been injured, their families have been hurt, and their education has been hampered. Who will take responsibility for that?

Instead of causing more injury using repressive means, the government needs to listen to the main concerns of the protesters, and take action against those who have attacked and injured them.

Dying for a systemic change

Saad Hammadi
is the policy and advocacy manager at the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Follow him on X: @saadhammadi

SAAD HAMMADI

There is a serious governance failure in dealing with the student demands for merit-based recruitment system in Bangladesh's government jobs. Those of us following South Asia know how quickly public protests get hijacked by political quarters and flare into violence and vandalism. The state has a responsibility to handle the situation with calm and composure, by engaging with the students and not turning against them with political rhetoric that could amount to advocacy of hatred and subsequent hate crime.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what we have seen happening this week. Many parts of the country have been burning and at least 13 people were killed in the clashes. Abu Sayeed, a 25-year-old student at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, stretched his arms wide open, standing alone facing the police a few steps away, a gesture that I interpret as nothing but his bravery to confront unlawful actions. Instead of showing restraint, the police fired rubber pellets at him. He fell on the ground shortly and succumbed to death. This incident is shocking and painful. The deaths and violence against students demanding merit-based recruitment in Bangladesh's public service cast a lawless response to peaceful protests.

This could all have been avoided. The existing quota-based recruitment system favouring descendants of freedom fighters has long faced criticism from students. Quotas in job recruitments elsewhere in the world are designed to uphold equity for the marginalised communities. Currently, a whopping 56 percent of the government jobs are reserved for various quotas. The reserved seats in the government jobs include 30 percent for descendants of freedom fighters, 10 percent for women, 10 percent for people in underdeveloped districts, 5 percent for indigenous communities and one percent for persons with disabilities.

Bangladesh has a bloodied past and a hard-fought freedom struggle behind its independence and sovereignty. It's a pride that every Bangladeshi celebrates. The love for a country cannot be proven by a piece of paper. It is an experience that must be cherished by the people.

The recruitment system in Bangladesh's government services stands as a golden opportunity for many meritorious graduates of the country. It is a matter of job security, a prestige and identity. The government needs to instill the value proposition in these jobs to make them demanding and lucrative. These value propositions must ensure that not only are these jobs hard earned, but they are also a space where the best of the best graduates stand a chance based on their merit, not by some gift of ancestral struggle for liberation of Bangladesh. It is one of those opportunities that the government can use to prevent hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshis from moving to other countries for better opportunities.

An urgent resolution is required in the recruitment process to make the quality of jobs rewarding and accountable, one that is rooted in the principles of equity and equality. This is a policy-oriented issue and must be dealt with full transparency and accountability to meet public interest.

Abu Sayed's death cannot be the price students must pay to ask for a systemic change in the recruitment process. There must be independent, thorough and impartial investigation into his killing.

The state must do better to act responsibly than letting a situation get carried away into violence and then responding to it with brute force in the pretext of containing that violence. This is a tactic of the authorities that wish to escape from their responsibility to address a situation with rigour. Calling student protesters "razakars"—traitors of the country—will do anything but instill love for the country under the given circumstances.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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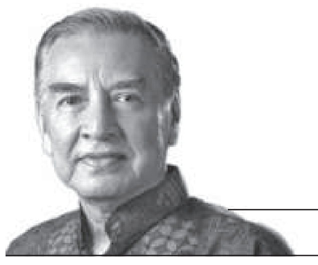
Advertisement: 01711623910
advertisement@thedailystar.net
GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
bangla.thedailystar.net/

Why was Abu Sayed shot dead in cold blood?



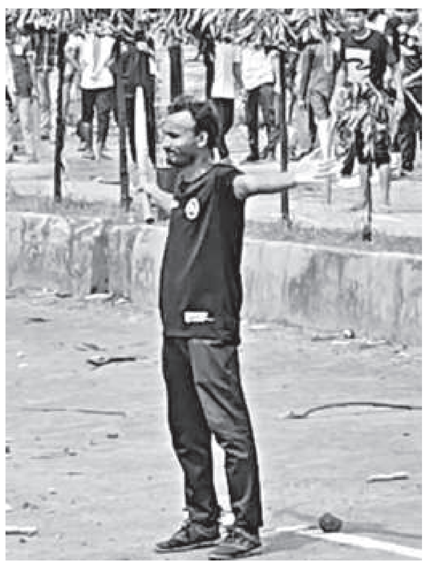
Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

Why was Abu Sayed of Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University shot down by police? He was standing alone, totally unarmed with arms stretched out, holding no weapons but a stick. Nor was he engaged in any violent activities. When he was shot, he posed no threat to police and was standing quite a distance away, which an eye-estimate suggests could be about 50-60 feet. Yet police shot him in cold blood.

Earlier, we saw the home minister, an otherwise soft-spoken person, explain several times how the police were exercising restraint. He claimed repeatedly that police had been instructed not to indulge in any violence and also not to engage the demonstrators in a way that may lead to violence. Yet police shot an unarmed student who stood all by himself showing that he posed no danger.

Sayed was one of the nine children of very poor parents. He was the youngest and the brightest of nine brothers and sisters. When he got admitted to Begum Rokeya University, the first one ever from his family, his siblings were so elated that they all contributed to his studies, even by saving from their own educational expenses. His very old and ill father said they all hoped that Abu Sayed would change the fate of the family after joining the government service, which was his life's sole aim. This made him interested in the quota reforms, and hence he joined the protests. His story clearly shows that his desire was only to reform the quota system so that his chances of success would increase. There was no other agenda as is now being alleged.



As reported in this paper, at 12:37pm on Monday, the day before his murder, Sayed shared a photo card of martyred Professor Shamsuzzoha, a young Rajshahi University teacher who was shot dead while trying to protect student protesters in 1969. He wrote, "Sir, we desperately need you right now ... Your legacy is our inspiration. We are enlightened by your ideals". Prof Shamsuzzoha became one of the heroes of student movement inspiring us in the lead-up to our Liberation War. As someone dedicated to our freedom and progress, he also served as a source of inspiration in the following five decades of our independence.

Sayed was riddled with shotgun pellets causing his death. A post-mortem has been done but result has not yet been made public. Meanwhile, he has been buried.

We are heartened by the PM's promise of a judicial probe. But that will likely take time. We request a separate and immediate enquiry into Sayed's killing and exemplary actions against the guilty. We are no stranger to killings in demonstrations. But such a singular killing that looked very much like a targeted one is something completely new. That is why it needs immediate investigation.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can justify this action except the arrogance and assured impunity that police have known to be enjoying over the years. Meanwhile, an apology from the police and the home ministry to the family may go a long way to assuage the feeling of outrage that presently exists.

Students hold a symbolic gayebi janaza on July 17, 2024, in the Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

Universities and the govt have failed the students

Dr Samina Luthfa
is associate professor at the Department of Sociology in Dhaka University.

SAMINA LUTHFA

The violence occurring in various campuses in and outside of Dhaka over the last few days is making us anxious and worried about the safety of our students and that of regular citizens. If the universities had fulfilled their responsibility of ensuring safety of their own students, the situation would not have become so concerning. The government's liability is also not to be ignored. We can guess that it is due to the government's direction that the UGC shut down the university campuses.

The campus shutdown was enacted the day after the student body of the ruling party was removed from the residential halls. At the very least, the university authorities had the responsibility of ensuring passage of students following the shutdown of campuses. Not only did they fail to ensure this, but they also enabled the BGB, police, and different ruling party bodies such as Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jubo League to violently attack the students. This has resulted in at least 13 deaths—and we are afraid the count will only go up. The responsibility for this bloodshed cannot be avoided by either the government or the university authorities.

On Wednesday, some of us from the University Teachers Network Against Repression tried to rescue the persecuted students. We attempted to organise a rally. There, we witnessed a large deployment of BGB and RAB members on Dhaka University (DU) campus. Instead of ensuring a safe passage for the students to leave Dhaka University, Rokeya University, Jahangirnagar University, Shahjalal Science and Technology University and so on, the students were attacked and forced out of their own campuses. The university authorities and teachers had no consideration of how these students would suddenly return home at the middle of the night or what their mode of transport would be.

Today, we have seen students from schools, colleges, and universities come under atrocious attacks by the police and BCL in many places in Dhaka, including Badda, Dhanmondi, and Mirpur. Brac University attempted to protect its students on its campus, but when injured students tried to seek medical help, they were stopped by law enforcement agencies.

The government needs to move away from this aggressive approach. They need to understand that fulfilling the students' demands was not impossible. The students made logical demands that did not deserve this violent retribution. The universities must be reopened so the students can safely return. Those responsible for the killings and attacks need to be tracked down and brought to justice. None of these deaths can go unanswered. University authorities who have failed their students should resign. These are our demands as conscientious teachers.

WHAT HAPPENED ON WEDNESDAY

An account from JU

A FEMALE STUDENT OF DU

We started the quota reform protest long before the attacks. On July 15, the students who had gone out at 3pm to attend a rally were attacked with sticks by BCL. It also included attackers from outside, i.e. non-JU students led by the JU Chhatra League. As a result, many students were in the hospital. Another portion who were still protesting remained near the VC's residence seeking safety. Cocktails were used and the recordings of the attacks are still available on the Facebook feeds of several students.

The students had felt the VC's residence may have been a safe space, yet they were attacked. When the police arrived, there was some relief, but they soon realised that the police had come to protect the VC, not the general students. At that point, the police used tear shells and other weapons in their arsenal. The attack lasted till 4am, all the way till dawn. Many students had to be admitted to Enam Medical College Hospital, with one student in critical condition.

On the morning of the 16th, when the news spread, thousands of students arrived at campus during the day, and I was one of them. All day, we kept up a blockade and adjourned it at the end. We held a syndicate meeting and made a decision that we will not vacate the halls upon hearing the statement from UGC. After all, the UGC cannot make a decision about an autonomous institute.

On July 17, our demands were two-fold: quota reform and the refusal to vacate halls. On that day, around 200-300 police officers entered the campus. The teachers told us that we ought to return to the halls for our safety. Still, we did not wish to leave, because it was unacceptable for the police to be present on our campus as the police cannot enter an autonomous institution in the manner that they did. The situation became dire, and it was worsened by us not being able to receive any news.

Throughout the country, rumours were spread and there were attempts at fear-mongering. Many students were having lunch at the time when, around 5:15pm, the police attacked us.

During the attack, our group had to disperse. We had to flee to whichever road was empty. Many of us were stuck for hours while tear shells were being thrown. It remains a question: for whose protection did the police fire shots? If we assume it was to protect the students, why were the shots fired in their direction? This shooting went on till evening. When our proctor was called by the department teachers, he claimed that he himself was struck. The police can never enter a campus without the permission of the proctor.

The proctor's statement that we should run to whichever place is safe was not sensible because there was no safe passage for us. The police saw us running to the girl's halls. In the main gate of JU, about a 100 police officers had arrived. Many journalists showed them their press cards so as not to be shot at by the police. The footage of police coming toward us, however, is yet to be broadcast.

After evening, we returned to our halls only for us to hear that we would be forcefully removed from our halls. Around 10pm, we started receiving all kinds of news. I believe it was a BCL tactic to make us leave. Many female students in particular felt unsafe at this time. Yet, many of them were adamant about not leaving the halls. We received frantic calls from our families to leave urgently as they had heard horrifying reports, but we had to assure them those were rumours. Soon, electricity was gone and mobile data ceased to work. I was unable to make a single phone call. We remained awake throughout the night as we had lost faith in the idea that we would not be attacked. I wonder if this is how the nights must have felt during those nine months of the Liberation War.

In the morning, the halls had become empty. Under severe stress, we had to leave the campus in the morning, despite our unwillingness. Right after, the police raided each room, with the proctor and hall provost accompanying them. Why did the administration allow the police to inspect halls in this manner? These were clear attempts to break the student's will, and they succeeded. Though some students are still in campuses, the numbers have reduced to such a great extent that it is not possible to carry out a procession.

An account from DU

Mustahid Riad
is student of the University of Dhaka.

MUSTAHID RIAD

On Wednesday, police were checking everyone's IDs before letting them inside the campus. They had created a human barricade near the metro station at TSC and were not allowing anyone to pass through. Everyone was asked to take a detour and enter the area through Payra Chattor. I did so and reached Bacchu Bhai's tea shop, when I saw the car of a police official enter the area. All the journalists rushed to the car that stopped near the Raju Memorial Sculpture. When the police official got out, the journalists harangued him about the presence of police and BGB on campus. He did not answer them; instead, he pushed them and continued walking towards the police barricade near the TSC station. At that moment, a sound grenade went off. There was smoke everywhere. I felt very afraid.

Inside the campus, too, police members created human barricades—one right in front of the Raju Sculpture and the other at the three-way intersection in front of Ruqayyah Hall. At the VC Chattor, we saw many protesters. Some of them had sticks with them and some came from the halls. When the gathering reached around 1,000, we prepared for the symbolic *gayebi janaza* (funeral prayers in absentia). At that time, there were many members of police standing in front of the vice chancellor's house, Ruqayyah Hall and Fuller Road, and a police water tank was positioned a few metres away from the Arts Building gate. After the prayer, we decided to bring out a procession from the VC Chattor to Raju Memorial Sculpture with the symbolic coffins, voicing our quota reform demands, questioning the presence of police and BGB on campus and demanding punishment for the students' killings. We pushed through the police barricade and reached the water tank. Some students shouted at the police angrily and provoked them to shoot, questioning their presence on campus. As we continued the procession, the water tank suddenly moved back and we heard a sound grenade go off. Right then, the clash started.

There was smoke everywhere, and I heard gunshots. The police standing near the VC gate were firing rubber bullets and throwing sound grenades and tear gas shells towards us. The procession got dispersed and there was a lot of chaos. I felt a burning sensation in my eyes from the impact of the tear shells. I could not see properly but managed to climb the wall in Hakim Chattor and enter the Central Mosque; I started running through the mausoleum of Kazi Nazrul Islam to reach the National Museum. I was able to leave the campus with a few others by showing our IDs to the police. But a friend, who called me when I reached the TSC metro station, said he had to take shelter inside a hall. He said the police had launched an attack on students who fled towards the Mall Chattor.

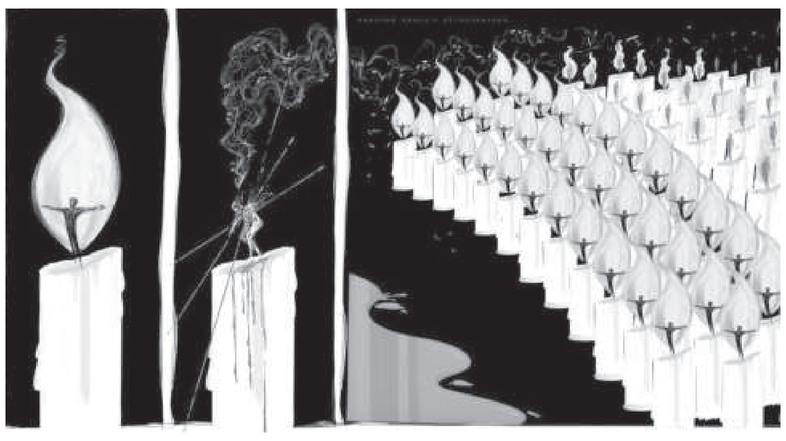


ILLUSTRATION: **MORSHED MISHU**

LAW AND SOCIETY

On quota reform movement and judicial decision-making

SHARMISTA BANIK

Whether pressure of any social movement can influence judicial decision-making is a complex question and touches on fundamental aspects of constitutional law, judicial independence, and separation of power. The question becomes all the more complicated when the decision-making lies with the highest judicial authority of the state (i.e., the Supreme Court).

While public protests do not have the constitutional authority to directly overturn judicial decisions, they reflect a shift in public opinion that the court cannot entirely ignore. The Supreme Court, while not directly accountable to public opinion, does not operate in a vacuum but within a broader societal context.

While the Constitution does not provide a direct mechanism for public protests to overturn court verdicts, it does recognise fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. These rights allow citizens to voice their opinions and potentially influence the broader legal, judicial, and political landscape.

In the landmark case of *Brown* v *Board of Education* (1954), the US Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. While the decision was based on constitutional interpretation, it was influenced by the broader civil rights movement and changing social attitudes towards racial equality. Even conservative courts can be influenced by advocacy and public conscience. During Nixon's Presidency, despite conservative appointments, the court made several progressive decisions. This included ruling against sex discrimination and deciding *Roe* v*Wade* (1973), which legalised abortion. These decisions were influenced by growing public support for gender equality and reproductive rights.

The South African Constitutional Court's decision in *Minister of Health* v *Treatment Action Campaign* (2002) demonstrates how a combination of litigation and public mobilisation can influence judicial outcomes. The court's ruling, while based on constitutional interpretation, was undoubtedly informed by the broader social movement advocating for HIV/AIDS treatment access. In India, the Indian Supreme Court's decision in the *Vishaka and others* v *State of Rajasthan* (1997), was influenced by women's rights movements and led to guidelines on sexual harassment in the workplace. This judgment was an outcome of both street protests outraged by the decision of the previous *Bhanwari Devi* case and sustained public advocacy.

The concept of 'popular constitutionalism' argues that the people, and not just the courts, play a role in constitutional interpretation. While this does not suggest that court decisions can be overturned by public opinion, it acknowledges that sustained public engagement with constitutional issues can shape the context in which future cases are decided.

The current debate in Bangladesh over the reformation of quota system brings these issues into sharp focus. The staying of the 2018 government circular and lack of adequate initiatives by government to reform the quota system has sparked widespread protests from general students. It has brought into focus the tension among judicial independence and public sentiment and freedom of expression.

While public protests do not have the constitutional authority to directly overturn judicial decisions, they reflect a shift in public opinion that the court cannot entirely ignore. The Supreme Court, while not directly accountable to public opinion, does not operate in a vacuum but within a broader societal context. The effectiveness of the judiciary in a democratic system is partially derived from public trust and acceptance of its decisions. While Supreme Court judgments are designed to be final and independent of public pressure, among others, the ongoing quota debate in Bangladesh illustrates the complex interplay between judicial decisions, constitutional interpretation, and evolving societal values, highlighting the need for a delicate balance to be struck between upholding legal principles and responding to legitimate public concerns within a dynamic democracy.

The writer is student of law, University of Dhaka.

RIGHTS WATCH

Right to information and Bangladesh

TAWSIF MOTTAKI CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh experienced a wave of enthusiasm in the wake of the enactment of the Right to Information Act in 2009. Initially, public perceived the law to be a potent instrument that would enable them to keep an eye on government activities, reveal wrongdoings, and hold public officials accountable. However, as time went on, the initial zeal faded, and the Act came to use for only a handful of people.

In theory, the 2009 Act empowers citizens to scrutinise government work, question decisions, and demand transparency. The preamble to the Act holds the right to information to be an inalienable part of Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Speech under Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh. Section 4 of the Act states that every citizen has a right to information from the authority, and the authority must provide so upon demand. Section 8 allows citizens to request information from responsible officers in writing, electronically, or via email. As per section 9, the responsible officer must provide the requested information within 20 working days and if multiple information-provider units or authorities are involved, within 30 working days. Section 9(3) further provides that if the officer is unable to provide the information, they must inform the requester of the reason of such inability within 10 working days of receiving the application.

Ideally, informed citizens should utilise this opportunity to its maximum potential. However, the reality is far from ideal in Bangladesh. Fear of retaliation, lack of awareness about the law's intricacies, and lack of trust hinder citizens from exercising their rights under the Act. This underutilisation reflects a broader trend of information apathy, where the power to challenge corruption and promote good governance through the RTI is acknowledged in theory but overlooked in practice.

Neighboring countries are experiencing a rise in the enforcement of this right in favor of the mass people. The Indian Supreme Court unanimously ruled on 15 February 2024 to overturn the now-infamous Electoral Bonds Scheme of 2018 and ordered the disclosure of a vast amount of sensitive information that had been withheld from the citizens. Bangladesh can gain valuable insights from India's experience with the RTI Act on its immense potential.

In theory, the 2009 Act empowers citizens to scrutinise government work, question decisions, and demand transparency. The preamble to the Act holds the right to information to be an inalienable part of Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Speech under Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka has also witnessed how successful the law can be in holding the government accountable and battling corruption. Sri Lanka's efforts to combat corruption have benefited immensely from their RTI legislation. The International Monetary Fund's Governance Diagnostic Assessment (GDA) recognised the RTI as having a significant impact on improving governance. Special attention was given to the RIT Commission of Sri Lanka for their uncompromising compliance with the law.

However, the same success has not been mirrored in Bangladesh due to several factors. Firstly, the nature of RTI requests in Bangladesh is predominantly personal, lacking the public interest-driven inquiries. Secondly, there is a notable absence of collective civil society action to challenge and safeguard the RTI law's implementation. And lastly, there is an immense lack of cooperation on part of the officials in providing information in our country.

The way forward is evident as Bangladesh grapples with the underutilisation of the RTI. NGOs and our civil society must lead the change in advancing RTI into the forefront of governance. Bangladesh stands at a pivotal moment, where RTI's potential as a weapon against corruption and good governance must be fully realised through collective effort and commitment.

The writer is student of law, University of Chittagong.

GENDER AND LAW

Obstetric violence and women's human rights in Bangladesh

ARIFUR RAHMAN

Safe motherhood entails a serious consideration of ensuring safe maternal and reproductive healthcare services. Yet, women in our country often face the challenge of trading off their health safety for childbirth. Last year a case was filed against a private hospital and its concerned doctor on the grounds of alleged botched Cesarean sections (C-sections) and fraud following the death of 25-year-old Mahbuba Akter Akhi. C-sections which practitioners are advised to follow in exceptional childbirth scenarios have become a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. Such procedures have become so pervasive over the years that normal delivery procedures are nowadays almost an exception—practitioners follow C-sections even when such procedures are not required. The rate of unnecessary C-sections in Bangladesh rose to 51% between 2016 and 2018 as reported by Save the Children. When we perceive these unnecessary C-sections simply as a medical procedure, we ignore the abuse, coercion, and trauma women experience during childbirth. In fact, women often lose any sense of control over their body and reproductive health when seeking healthcare support during childbirth. Although any birthing body including trans and non-binary persons could be subject to obstetric violence, this essay focuses only on (cis) women. Obstetric violence is an ever-evolving concept but generally refers to the mistreatment of women including but not limited to negligence, abuse, or coercion in obstetric and gynecological care. An example of obstetric violence includes the performance of C-sections without the voluntary and informed consent of the patient. However, obstetric violence is not merely another case of medical negligence and abuse, rather an example of gender-based violence, exemplifying its dynamic nature and the various forms it takes. It is part of the broader structural violence that women face in everyday life.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in its statement 'The prevention and elimination of disrespect and abuse during facility-based childbirth' provides an array of examples of obstetric violence such as 'outright physical abuse, profound humiliation and verbal abuse, coercive or unconsented medical procedures (including sterilisation), lack of confidentiality, failure to get fully informed consent, refusal to give pain medication, gross violations of privacy, refusal of admission to health facilities', among others. While women in Bangladesh often go through various forms of obstetric violence, it has yet to be recognised as a form of human rights concern. In fact, Bangladesh has not even recognised obstetric violence as a legal issue.

In *N.A.E* v *Spain* (2022), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee, while dealing with obstetric violence experienced by a Spanish woman (the author) found that subjecting the author to unnecessary vaginal examinations, use of oxytocin without adequate justification, and performing episiotomy without consent resulted in the violation of human rights of the author under the CEDAW such as equality and non-discrimination in healthcare under Article 12, and right not to be subject to gender stereotypes under Article 5, among others. The committee further highlighted how gender stereotypes and prejudices lead to gender-based violence if medical practitioners abstain from providing women with explanations for the medical treatment they receive and deny women to express their opinions in reproductive health services.

The principle of equality and non-discrimination is a salient feature of the Constitution of Bangladesh reflecting the country's commitment to foster an inclusive and just society. Obstetric violence, however, comes in direct conflict with such constitutional values and principles because it is, I argue, a form of gender-based discrimination that occurs as a result of differential treatment of women supported by harmful gender stereotypes and cultural norms about their reproductive choices and health. Such stereotypes typically include regarding women's primary role in the society as a mother or a caregiver and, hence, the expectation that 'women should continue their pregnancies regardless of the circumstances, their needs and wishes' (*Mellet* v *Ireland*).

To undermine the opinion of a patient in obstetric care and avoid the need to help her make an informed decision also reflects the long-held discriminatory notion that women lack any agency when it comes to making any decision about their reproductive health and choices. It only reproduces stereotypes and prejudices by reinforcing the traditional gendered notion that women should be submissive and obedient and that they are without any capacity of forming opinion. While gender stereotypes and prejudices contribute to the normalisation and validation of gender-based violence during childbirth, such stereotypes about women's sexual and reproductive health eventually allow healthcare providers to take full control of women's bodies.

Obstetric violence has serious consequences for women's human rights. Therefore, instead of sweeping it under the carpet, Bangladesh needs to take obstetric violence seriously because doing so supports its commitment to international human rights treaties and its Constitutional goal of securing (gender) equality and non-discrimination.

The writer is fellow at the United Nations Development Headquarters, New York and a graduate of NYU Law.

Star
SPORT
DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 19, 2024, SRABAN 4, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 5
England vs West Indies
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00 pm

Women's Asia Cup begins today

- This will be the ninth edition of the Women's Asia Cup. The first four editions were played in the 50-over format, while the next four were T20 tournaments. The ongoing edition will also be played in the 20-over format.
- India won seven out of the eight editions of the tournament so far. Bangladesh won the title in the only edition in which India failed to secure it. The women in red and green beat India in a last-ball thriller in the final of the 2018 edition in Malaysia.
- Sri Lanka is set to host the tournament for a third time. They played hosts in 2004 and 2008. All 15 matches of this edition, including the two semis and the final, will be held in one venue - Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Dambulla.
- No team has featured more times in Women's Asia than India and Sri Lanka, appearing in all eight previous editions. Meanwhile, the UAE is set to feature in only their second Asia Cup.
- No batter has scored more runs than India's Mithali Raj in the 20-over editions of the tournament (402 runs in 10 matches). With the ball, Pakistan's Nida Dar leads with 26 scalps in 18 matches. Bangladesh's Rumana Ahmed is close to Dar with 23 wickets in 16 matches.

SPORTS REPORTER

Seven-time winners India will once again be the favourites to lift the Women's Asia Cup as the tournament's ninth edition gets underway today, with a marquee fixture between India and Pakistan following the tournament opener in Dambulla, Sri Lanka.

India, the most dominant side in the tournament's history, won seven out of the eight previous editions, only losing out to Bangladesh in the 2018 final in Malaysia.

This edition will be played in the 20-over format, for a fifth time in the tournament's history. The defending champions India come into the tournament on the back of a series cleansweep against Bangladesh in a five-match T20I series followed by a 1-1 draw against South Africa in the same format.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh will be looking to take inspiration from their triumphant campaign in 2018 as the Tigresses have not had the confidence of positive results in the build-up to the tournament.

The Nigar Sultana Joty-led side suffered back-to-back series defeats against Australia and India at home and their last win in this format came in December 2023 when they beat South Africa by 13 runs in Benoni.

Since that victory, Bangladesh lost nine consecutive T20Is and will have to produce their best once again to qualify for a top four spot.

Joty's troops failed to progress beyond the group-stage in the last edition of the tournament in 2022 when Bangladesh hosted the event which is why the skipper has made progression to the final four her initial target.

Bangladesh, who were pitted in Group B along with Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand, will begin their campaign against the hosts on Saturday.

BANGLADESH FIXTURES

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
July 20, 07:30 pm

Bangladesh vs Thailand
July 22, 07:30 pm

Bangladesh vs Malaysia
July 24, 02:30 pm

*All timings are as per Bangladesh time.

GROUP A
India, Pakistan, UAE, Nepal

GROUP B
Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP: ROLL OF HONOUR

2004 India (ODI)
2005-06 India (ODI)
2006 India (ODI)
2008 India (ODI)
2012 India (T20I)
2016 India (T20I)
2018 Bangladesh (T20I)
2022 India (T20I)

England's Ollie Pope raises his bat after hitting his sixth Test century, putting the hosts in a commanding position -- 259-4 at tea -- in the second Test against the West Indies at the Trent Bridge yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sabina and Co to play Bhutan on July 24, 27

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team are set to depart for Bhutan on July 22 to play two FIFA friendlies against the hosts.

Coach Peter Butler announced a 22-member squad for the matches on July 24 and 27. While experienced players like Tahura Khatun, Surma Jannat, Shaheda Akter Ripa, and Shamsunnahar Ripa were excluded, new players like Halima Akhter, Bonna Akhter, Mst Sagorika, and Mst Sultana made the cut.

Captain Sabina Khutun emphasised that these matches will be beneficial for the SAFF Championship.

Coach Butler believes this will be a good opportunity for the new players.

This will be my last term: Kazi Salahuddin

Kazi Salahuddin, who has been at the helm of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for 16 years, is planning to contest for a fifth consecutive term as president in the next BFF elections, set to take place on October 26. The 70-year-old footballer-turned-organiser spoke with ***The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman*** *about his thoughts on running for president once again. Here are the excerpts:*

The Daily Star (DS): Are you going to contest in the next BFF elections for the president's post?
Kazi Salahuddin (KS): I think so.

DS: You have been at the helm for four successive terms. Why are you thinking of contesting again?
KS: This will be my last election. I want to finish the work on the vision I had for the national team, then someone else will take over.

DS: You underwent an open-heart surgery last year and there are concerns whether your health will allow you to continue as BFF president for another term...
KS: I was also concerned about my health, but that's not the real obstacle right now. Actually, the problem is that my family don't want me to continue in BFF. But I think my job here is not yet done, no matter who says what. Everyone has no choice but to accept that the national team has been playing well and the league [Bangladesh Premier League] has been taking place regularly. No one can deny that whether they like me or not. Our women's team is the best in the sub-continent. I think one more term should be enough, then someone else can take over.

DS: You had told the media before the previous election that it would be your last term...
KS: But this time it really will be my last term, considering my health, family and everything.

DS: The national football team has been playing well in the recent past but are still languishing in the bottom half in the world rankings. How do you see it?
KS: If you play 10 matches against similarly ranked sides, you will win more games and your ranking will gradually improve. But we usually play against teams which are ranked 30 to 50 places higher than us. Money is another factor. I need Tk 70 lakh to play one international match. We can't manage the money every time, so, we play fewer matches. Once India used to be close to us in the rankings but they are now a higher-ranked side because they play many international matches.

DS: What did you do to strengthen the financial condition of the BFF in your four terms?
KS: When I first came in power, I used to bring Tk 7 to 8 crore from sponsors for every tournament. But different groups went against me during my second and third terms and the media too was not friendly towards me. There were many rumours including corruption which were not true. This had a bad impact on the BFF's image, thus I lost interest and felt embarrassed to approach the sponsors and kept myself away from the private sponsors.

DS: But FIFA suspended BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, CFO Abu Hasan, general manager Minzanur Rahman on financial grounds. What do you have to say about that?
KS: No one read the FIFA report thoroughly, they just read the part that said that financial reasons were behind the suspensions. That has made the situation really difficult for us. The report stated none of the goods were purchased at a higher cost and they were bought at market price. But there were some flaws in the system. It has become really challenging to recover the BFF's image in this ground. There has been a complete overhaul of the BFF finance division. We have a new general secretary, new CFO and new procurement officers. It's a sad thing for us but now everything is being checked and rechecked multiple times.

DS: How do you evaluate your four consecutive terms as the BFF president?
KS: The first thing I had said in 2008, at a time when the football league was not taking place regularly, is that under me there will always be football on the ground. And in the last 16 years, I have kept my word. No one had to think whether or not the league would be held. That was the first thing I accomplished as the BFF president. Then I made sure that Bangladesh takes part in maximum number of tournaments. I also ensured good training grounds, proper jerseys, equipments, match condition for the national football team, which was not there during my playing career. I have ensured providing the best training facilities in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Korea and Japan and kept the team in five-star hotels. But during our playing careers, we used to be accommodated at the Physical Education College in Mohammadpur and then stayed in BKSP. But the players are now training in Dhaka, availing five-star hotel facilities. These are the things I ensured.

SHORT CORNER

Shoriful cuts LPL stint short due to sickness

Bangladesh pacer Shoriful Islam returned home from Sri Lanka on Thursday due to illness and won't be taking part in the knockout phase of the ongoing Lanka Premier League (LPL). "I've been sick for a few days. That's why I decided to return home," Shoriful told The Daily Star over the phone after returning to Bangladesh.

FIFA says opening probe into Argentina players' racist chants

FIFA said on Wednesday it was opening an investigation into racist chants by Argentina players after they won the Copa America. "FIFA is aware of a video circulating on social media and the incident is being looked into," a spokesperson for world football's governing body said.

Gibraltar fury at Spain team's 'offensive' Euro victory chants

During Spain's celebrations, which saw the Madrid turned into a sea of red and yellow, several players grabbed the microphone to sing, with captain Alvaro Morata belting out "Gibraltar es espanol" -- "Gibraltar is Spanish" -- in a chant also picked up by Rodri, who plays for English club Manchester City.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Sagor chosen as Bangladesh's flagbearer

SPORTS REPORTER

Archer Sagor Islam will proudly carry the Bangladesh flag during the march past at the 33rd Olympic Games, set to be held in the French capital from July 26 to August 11.

A 13-member contingent from Bangladesh will participate in the world's largest sports event. Among the five athletes, only archer Sagor qualified for the Olympics directly, making him the third Bangladeshi to do so after golfer Siddiqur Rahman and archer Ruman Sana.

Naturally, the spotlight is on the 18-year-old archer, who will kick off his campaign with the ranking round on July 25.

"I want to thank the Bangladesh Olympic Association [BOA] for giving me the opportunity to carry the national flag, which is a great honor for me," said Sagor at the official press conference at the BOA yesterday.

"I have been training at Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi, where the competition stage has been designed to replicate that of the Paris Olympics. The environment, complete with background noise, has been simulated to give me the feel of competing in Paris," Sagor added.

"I will be giving my best rather than focusing on advancing to the quarterfinals or winning medals. I believe that if I can control myself, I can achieve something better."

In addition to Sagor, sprinter Imranur Rahman, shooter Robiul Islam, and swimmers Samiul Islam Rafi and Sonia Khatun will be making their Olympic debut.

"It is a matter of great pride for us to participate in the Olympics with a direct entry from archery, and we hope Sagor Islam will perform well," said chef de mission Enthekhabul Hamid Apu.

"The shooter has also prepared well, but there is always a significant difference in preparation between athletes who qualify directly and those who enter with a wild card."

PRESS MEET
BANGLADESH OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION

Since the 1986 edition, Bangladesh has participated in every Olympic event with a small contingent. However, their results have often failed to impress despite being the ninth most populated country, leading to negative reviews from the global media.

"Bangladesh needs a six-to-eight-year long-term plan if we want to achieve good results in the Olympics. The BOA cannot do it alone. We also need support from the Bangladesh Youth and Sports Ministry, and the sports minister is considering prioritizing disciplines with good prospects. We aim to set targets for the 2028 Olympic Games," Mamun stated.

BOA Secretary General Syed Shahed Reza was also present at the event.

Paris Olympics to set sail with unique ceremony

- The ceremony is due to start at 11:30 pm on July 26 (Bangladesh time) and last about four hours, reaching a climax when the sun sets on the Seine.
- The show will be attended by over 100 heads of state and government, and over 300,000 spectators will watch from the river's banks. Organizers said there will be some 80 giant screens along the way.
- The Paris 2024 committee stated there would be about 10,500 athletes, and some 222,000 people will receive free invites, while 104,000 will have to buy tickets.
- Approximately 45,000 police officers will be dispatched to ensure the ceremony's security, including special intervention forces. Snipers will be deployed on top of buildings along the route, and an anti-drone system will be in place.

REUTERS, *Paris*

Paris will begin its Olympics extravaganza with an unprecedented opening ceremony on the river Seine on July 26th.

Unlike previous Olympics, the Paris 2024 opening ceremony will not take place in a stadium. Instead, dozens of boats will carry thousands of athletes and performers on a 6km route along the Seine, where Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo swam on Wednesday to convince doubters that its waters will be clean enough to hold Olympic swimming events.

Departing from the Austerlitz Bridge, the parade will sail by Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral and arrive near the Eiffel Tower, after passing under bridges and gateways, including the Pont des Arts and Pont Neuf, and near many of the French capital's landmarks.

Organizers have said they will take advantage of the historic monuments, the riverbanks, the sky, and the water, stating that "there won't be a single riverbank or bridge that won't be filled with music, dance, or performance."

The show will have twelve parts, some of which will play on clichés about France. Athletes and artists will take part in the parade together.

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Journo killed while covering quota protests

2 from Star among 11 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist was killed and at least 11 others were injured yesterday while covering the students' "complete shutdown" programme demanding reforms to quotas in government jobs.

Mehedi Hasan

Mehedi Hasan, staff reporter of Dhaka Times, an online news portal, was injured during a clash between police and protesters in the capital's Jatrabari. The 28-year-old was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Among the injured are Abir Shafiq Shameen of The Daily Star's multimedia department and Dwoha Chowdhury, Sylhet correspondent of the newspaper.

Abir, a senior assistant producer, was hit by shotgun pellets in the capital's Mirpur-10 while Dwoha was hit by brick chunks at the main entrance to Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said Mohiuddin, general secretary of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

Nadira Sharmeen, senior reporter of Ekattar TV, and its cameraperson Syed Rashidul Hasan were hit by shotgun pellets in the capital's Jatrabari.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

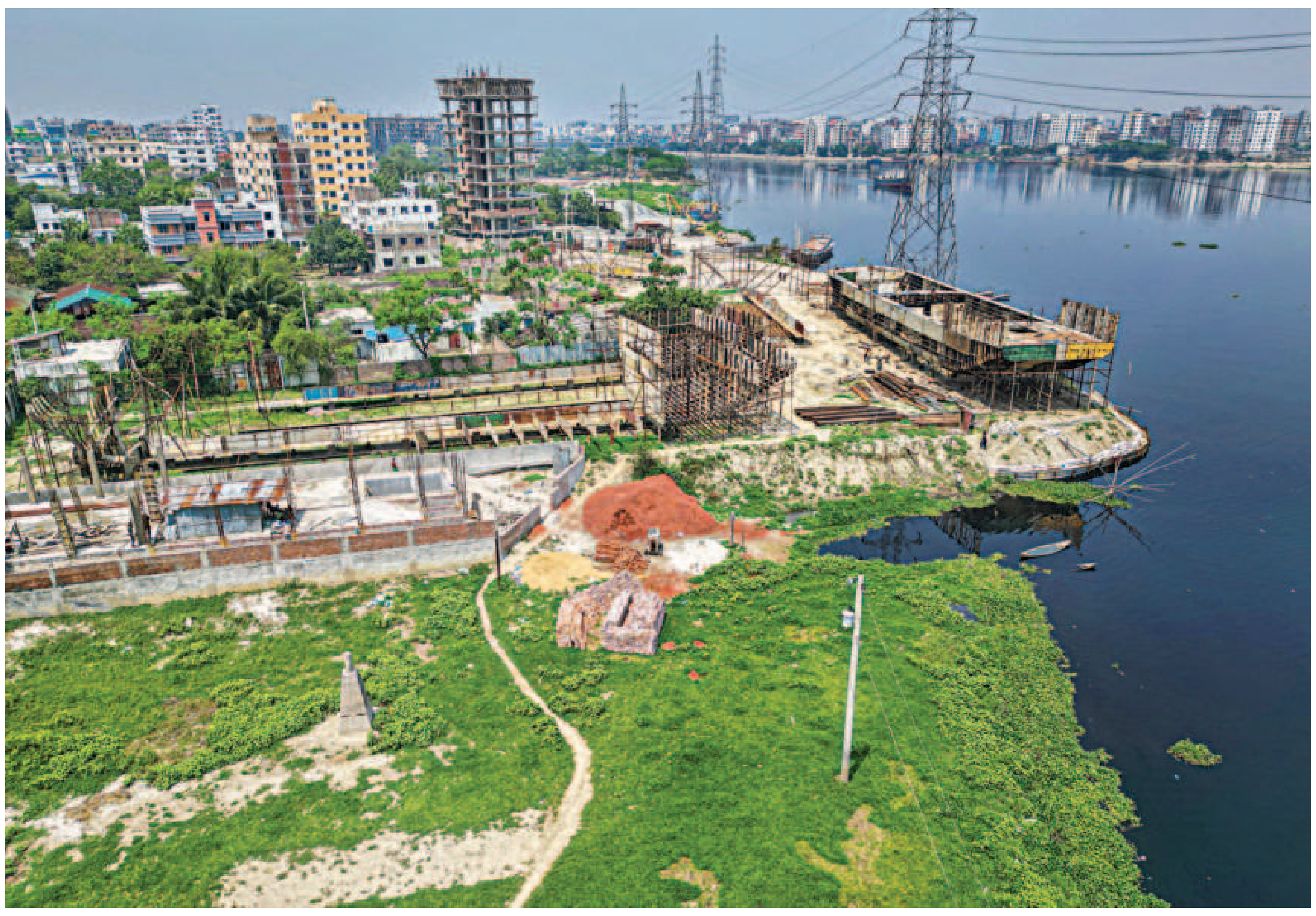
PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Illegal structures have been set up encroaching on the Buriganga at Jhauchar Ghat of Keraniganj. The authorities had installed boundary pillars along the river to save it from encroachment, but that has proved futile. The photo was taken recently.

30 establishments torched in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesters have set fire to at least 30 establishments, including the main building of Bangladesh Television, along with police and BGB vehicles over the last two days.

Arson attacks were also carried out on government and political party offices, police stations and outposts, and toll plazas.

Witnesses said a large number of students broke open the main gate of the BTV station in the capital's Rampura around 2:45pm yesterday and set ablaze a part of the building.

The fire later spread to the main building, leading to suspension of BTV transmission, Mahafuza Aktar, general manager of BTV, told The Daily Star.

"We had to leave the building around 7:30pm."

Khaleda Yeasmin, duty officer of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said two fire engines went to the BTV station but were barred by the protesters from entering.

Demonstrators set fire to the office of the Department of Disaster Management in the capital's Mohakhali around 3:30pm. The blaze damaged the cables of some data centres housed in an adjacent building.

LATEST FROM RANGPUR

The DB office and Tajahat Police Station in Rangpur city were set on fire around 1:45am. Firefighters, with the BGB providing security, doused the blaze, said police and fire service sources.

Emdadul Haque, president of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh, said the centres lost at least 30 percent of their total bandwidth because of the damaged cables.

In the evening, the Setu Bhaban was set on fire, damaging at least 10 vehicles parked in front of the building, said an official of the Bridges Division. Demonstrators also vandalised the ground floor of the building.

In Madaripur, protestors set ablaze a police outpost and vandalised the offices of the superintendent of police and deputy commissioner.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Internet service blocked across the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is under complete internet blackout after the transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers (ISPs) and carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data service.

The government had this done yesterday through the international terrestrial cable (ITC) companies, which import bandwidth from India across the border, The Daily Star has learnt with people involved with the proceedings.

ITCs provide over half (3,500gbps) of the total bandwidth import around 5,800gbps.

From 9:00pm, internet supply from the two submarine cables was mostly down, leaving the country with virtually no internet.

"We aren't getting any bandwidth from the ITCs and only a little from the submarine cables," said Emdadul Haque, president of the Internet Service Providers' Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB).

It's not enough to ensure internet for the users, he added.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Exports dropped in last three years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's exports have been declining over the past three years, according to the central bank data.

The disclosure was made in the monetary policy statement for the first half of fiscal 2024-25, which was unveiled yesterday.

For instance, in fiscal 2023-24, exports are likely to be around $42 billion, which is $10 billion less than the figure reported by the Export Promotion Bureau, as the receipts, according to the BB, were down 4.28 percent year-on-year in the first 11 months of the year.

As per EPB statistics, exports stood at $51.54 billion during that period, up 2.01 percent from a year earlier.

Similarly, the EPB has shown an export growth of 6.67 percent for fiscal 2022-23 and 34.38 percent for fiscal 2021-22.

The BB receipts indicate otherwise.

The central bank data shows receipts from garment shipments dropped 5.2 percent between July last year and May this year.

The central bank data shows receipts from garment shipments dropped 5.2 percent between July last year and May this year.

Following the export data mismatch, the EPB has decided not to publish the monthly export data until further instructions from the commerce ministry, said a senior official of the commerce ministry wing.

If the EPB can set up its own data centre, it will release the data monthly, he said.

The EPB will assess the export dynamics based on the data from the customs department of the National Board of Revenue and the BB, the official added.

"The export data which the BB has been publishing is correct as the EPB data was inflated," said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

Over the last few years, Hatem has been saying that the export data was inflated as the real data of issuance of Utilisation Declaration (UD) certification does not match with the EPB export data.

The BKMEA and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association issue the UD certification to its members.

Eerie silence reigns over campuses

Hotbeds of quota demo shift elsewhere after students vacate halls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the public universities across the country were calm yesterday after the authorities vacated the halls following clashes between law enforcers, Chhatra League men, and students over the quota reform protests.

Dhaka University was almost empty yesterday. Police and BGB personnel took control of the campus on Tuesday evening after sporadic clashes between law enforcers, Chhatra League men, and demonstrators for over two hours from 4:00pm.

At least 15 students were injured during the clashes as police fired rubber bullets, tear gas and sound grenades at the protesters.

Since early yesterday, law enforcers were seen patrolling campus streets and guarding the entries to the campus. Some teachers and officials

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

The mother of a 20-year-old Palestinian of Gazan origin is being comforted by others as she mourns her son after he was killed during an Israeli army raid in al-Bireh north of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

QUOTA IN GOVT JOBS

SC to hear pleas against HC verdict on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will Sunday hear two leave to appeal petitions that challenged the High Court decision to reinstate quotas in government jobs.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, yesterday evening fixed the date for the full bench, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, to hear the matter first that day.

The chamber judge passed the order after Attorney General AM Amin Uddin appealed for an early hearing of the petitions considering those as an important and urgent matter.

Justice Enayetur conducted the judicial functions and passed the order at his official residence

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

HSC, equivalent exams for July 21, 23, 25 postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HSC and equivalent examinations of all education boards scheduled for July 21, 23, and 25 have been postponed.

The schedule for the postponed examinations will be notified later.

The development was communicated through a notification signed by Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of the Bangladesh Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and chairman of the Dhaka Education Board.

Other examinations will be held as per the previously announced schedule from July 28, the notification said.

The HSC and equivalent examinations scheduled for yesterday were also postponed earlier.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

China for peace and stability in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China wants restoration of peace and stability in Bangladesh, said Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen yesterday.

"We wish that peace and stability will be restored very soon. This is aspiration of all in Bangladesh. It is important for China too. We want to have more cooperation. We wish to see Bangladesh move forward," he said.

The diplomat made the comments in response to media questions on the ongoing countrywide demonstrations by the students seeking reforms to the quota system in government jobs.

Wen yesterday met Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud at the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Australia, India, US missions issue travel alerts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign missions of Australia, India, and the US have asked their nationals in Bangladesh to remain on alert while travelling amid the ongoing student demonstrations.

They issued travel alerts as the demonstrations have spread across Dhaka and elsewhere in the country over the last few days.

"Traffic delays and public transport disruptions are likely. Avoid large gatherings, including protests, demonstrations, and rallies. These can turn violent without warning. Be aware of your surroundings, monitor local media, and follow the advice of local authorities," said the Australian High Commission in a

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REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 177 | SRABAN 5, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 13, 1446 HIJRI | 12 PAGES: TK 15.00

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Govt imposes nationwide CURFEW

Armed forces deployed to help civil admin; 'shoot-at-sight ordered'; PM cancels Spain tour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government early today imposed a nationwide curfew and deployed armed forces to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and properties.

The Public Security Division under the home ministry issued a gazette notification to this end last night.

The curfew will remain in effect till 10:00am Sunday with a two-hour break from noon to 2:00pm Saturday, according to private TV channels.

Emergency services and media will remain out of its purview.

According to the home ministry notification, a countrywide curfew has been declared from today under section 24 (1) of the Special Powers Act, 1974.

During the curfew, district magistrates and police commissioners of the metropolitan areas will take necessary measures to deploy armed forces in aid to the civil administration under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

They will enforce the curfew and take steps for deployment of the armed forces as per their requirement under their respective jurisdictions.

> **The curfew will remain in effect till 10:00am Sunday with a two-hour break from noon to 2:00pm Saturday, according to private TV channels.**

The move came after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held meetings with top Awami League leaders, ministers and leaders of the AL-led 14-party alliance at the Gono Bhaban last night.

At the meeting, the 14-party leaders requested the PM to take strict measures to tackle the ongoing crisis.

They also sought support from the countrymen in this regard.

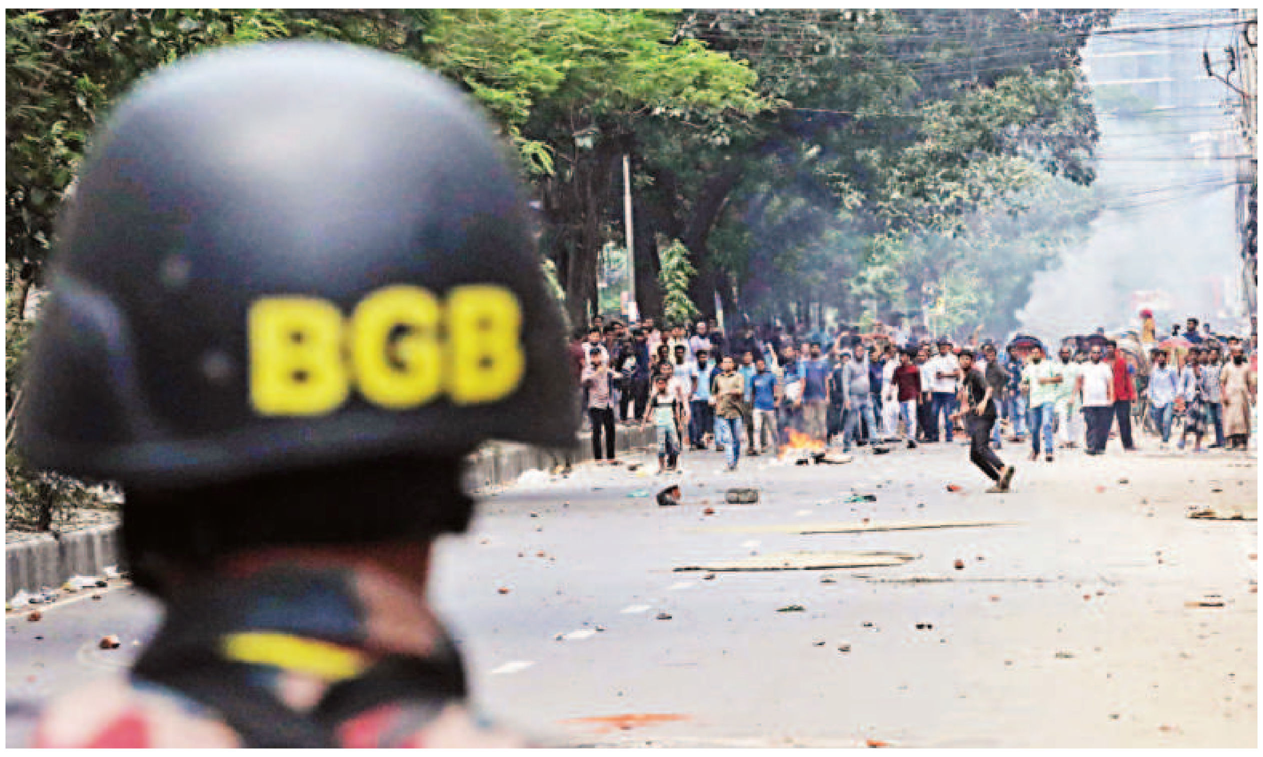
Briefing reporters after the meeting, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said, "It is indeed a curfew." A "shoot-at-sight" order has already been issued, he added.

At the meeting, the PM informed that she had cancelled her visit to Spain scheduled for July 21-23.

Sources at the meeting said 14-party leaders demanded a quick report of the judicial investigation launched into the killing of six quota reform protesters on Tuesday.

They also demanded punishment to those responsible for the killings and urged the state to take responsibilities of the victims' families.

At least 66 more lives lost



PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN, ANISUR RAHMAN

BGB men engage with protesters during a fierce clash in the capital's Purana Paltan area yesterday. *Right,* Some agitators dare the border guards to come at them.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

- At least 101 killed in last four days' violence
- Many non-students joined yesterday's protests
- Rab helicopters charged sound grenades, teargas shells from air
- Metro rail service suspended until further notice

By yesterday evening, many Dhaka streets were strewn with the remnants of thousands of rounds of teargas shells, sound grenades, rubber bullets, shotgun pellets, bullets and brick chunks. Those areas looked like battlefields too risky to enter.

By nightfall, at least 66 people were confirmed dead and hundreds more injured across the country, as the unprecedented scale of violence centring on the quota reform movement intensified. Fifty-five of the victims are from the capital.

The death toll may rise as The Daily Star could not reach many city hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment.

For a second day in a row, thousands of protesters, many of whom were non-students, clashed with law enforcers and ruling party activists in capital Dhaka and at least 16 other districts, said witnesses.

Including yesterday's victims, at least 101 people have lost their lives since Tuesday, when six people were killed in the clash. On Thursday, at least 29 more people were killed in fierce clashes between protesters and law enforcers, aided by ruling party activists.

Yesterday, agitators in Dhaka defied a government ban on gathering to take to the streets in droves, and clashed with police, Rab, BGB members, who were joined in by ruling Awami League activists.

Like on Thursday, protesters set fire to several government and private establishments and vandalised many vehicles, including some belonging to law enforcers.

Of the victims, 31 were either declared dead or brought dead at the DMCH, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost, at 1:11am today.

Prof Shafiur Rahman, director of Suhrawardy Hospital, said more than 10 bodies were already at the hospital at 10:55pm. However, it is difficult to give a concrete number as bodies were coming one after another.

Five people were either declared dead or brought dead yesterday afternoon at Uttara Adhunik Hospital, according to an emergency department official. He also sought anonymity.

Four bodies were kept at Mitford Hospital's emergency unit around 10:00pm, said morgue sources.

Three were brought dead at Farazy Hospital in Banasree, said Rubel Hossain, its deputy general manager.

One person was brought dead at the Crescent Hospital in Uttara, said Tofazzal, general manager of the hospital. One died at Kuwait-Maitree Hospital, said its superintendent Mizanur Rahman.

In addition, doctors at Better Life Hospital in Rampura and Advance Hospital in Banasree said they each received five bodies and referred seven of them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The Daily Star could not immediately verify if any of these 10 bodies were later taken to the DMCH or any other government hospital.

Outside Dhaka, four were killed in Rangpur, three in Narsingdi, one each in Savar, Sylhet, Bogura, and Mymensingh, according to hospital authorities.

In the capital, Rampura, Badda, Malibagh, Jatrabari, Mohakhali, Mouchak, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

A policeman in action in the capital's Bijoy Nagar area, *left.* Activists of Islami Sashantantra locked in a clash with law enforcers in the Baitul Mukarram north gate area, *centre.* Cars parked inside and outside the Department of Disaster Management building in Mohakhali were left completely charred after an arson attack there, *right*.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN, RASHED SHUMON, PRABIR DAS

A brutal day at DMCH

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday relapsed into a zone of fears and uncertainties, with hundreds of people arriving with patients wounded in violent clashes that rocked the capital and beyond.

A large number of patients in the need of urgent help stretched services at the hospital's emergency department. It was a race against time for doctors and nurses. The injured people were transported there -- either by their relatives or volunteers in autorickshaws, ambulances or even trucks.

Outside the emergency department, a desperate crowd waited for donated blood to save life, while some chanted slogans against what they said was "mindless shooting" that killed or injured many with no ties to student protests.

Some patients who were brought dead or declared dead on arrival were left on the tiled floor. Several bodies were delivered with police or hospital authorities failing to conduct autopsies.

At least 35 patients were transferred to the burn unit of the hospital as the emergency department had no space left to accommodate them.

Members of Ansar chased many relatives who were shouting slogans against the shooting by law-enforcement agencies. The parking space was crammed with ambulances, cars and other vehicles.

The rush of patients began to peak at 4:00pm and the hospital turned into a chaotic place with the presence of too many people.

There were shortages of trolleys and stretchers, and doctors were seen treating patients still lying on the laps of their relatives -- almost lifeless.

One of the unlikely patients at the emergency department was 3.5-year-old Abdul Ahad, son of Sumi Begum.

"My son was standing in the veranda of the eight-floor building in the afternoon. Suddenly, a bullet hit him in the forehead," Sumi, a resident of Kazla in Jatrabari, told this correspondent at the hospital as the evening wore on.

Ahad is now under life support at the emergency department and his mother cannot stop crying.

"What is the crime of my son? Who shot my son? If they are a trained force, how can this bullet hit my son? I want an answer from the government," Sumi said.

Hafizur Rahman, one of the volunteers, used a truck to transport some bullet-injured patients from Narayanganj to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Will consider talks if nine demands met

Demonstrators say curfew enforced to quell protest; vow to continue 'complete shutdown'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agitating students have made a nine-point demand and said they would consider sitting with the government after those are met.

They said they would continue with their "complete shutdown" programme.

The students, demonstrating for reforms to the quota system in government jobs, said they would make the final decision on talks after consulting all students.

The protest will continue until the demands are met, Abdul Kader, a coordinator of Baishamyabirodhi Chhatra Andolan (student movement against discrimination), said in a statement at 9:30pm yesterday.

One of the assistant coordinators of Baishamyabirodhi Chhatra Andolan, Abdullah Salehin Ayan, in a text message said the government enforced a curfew in the face of resistance by students and citizens of the country and to suppress their movement.

He urged the army to stand by them.

One of the demands is that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apologises in public and take responsibility for the deaths of students.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Road

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Dozens of govt establishments set ablaze

Metro Rail stations, Matsya Bhaban among them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many government establishments across the country came under attack yesterday like the day before amid the ongoing violence.

Government offices in Dhaka and several other districts were set ablaze and vanalised. Metro rail stations, BRTA offices, and Matsya Bhaban were also attacked.

Several offices of the ruling Awami League and some houses of its leaders were ransacked.

In Dhaka, demonstrators vandalised the Mirpur-10 and Kazipara metro rail stations last evening.

"Metro rail was not in service today [yesterday] and the gates were shut, but the criminals broke open the gates of the two stations and vandalised the first floor of each of those," said an official of metro rail authority.

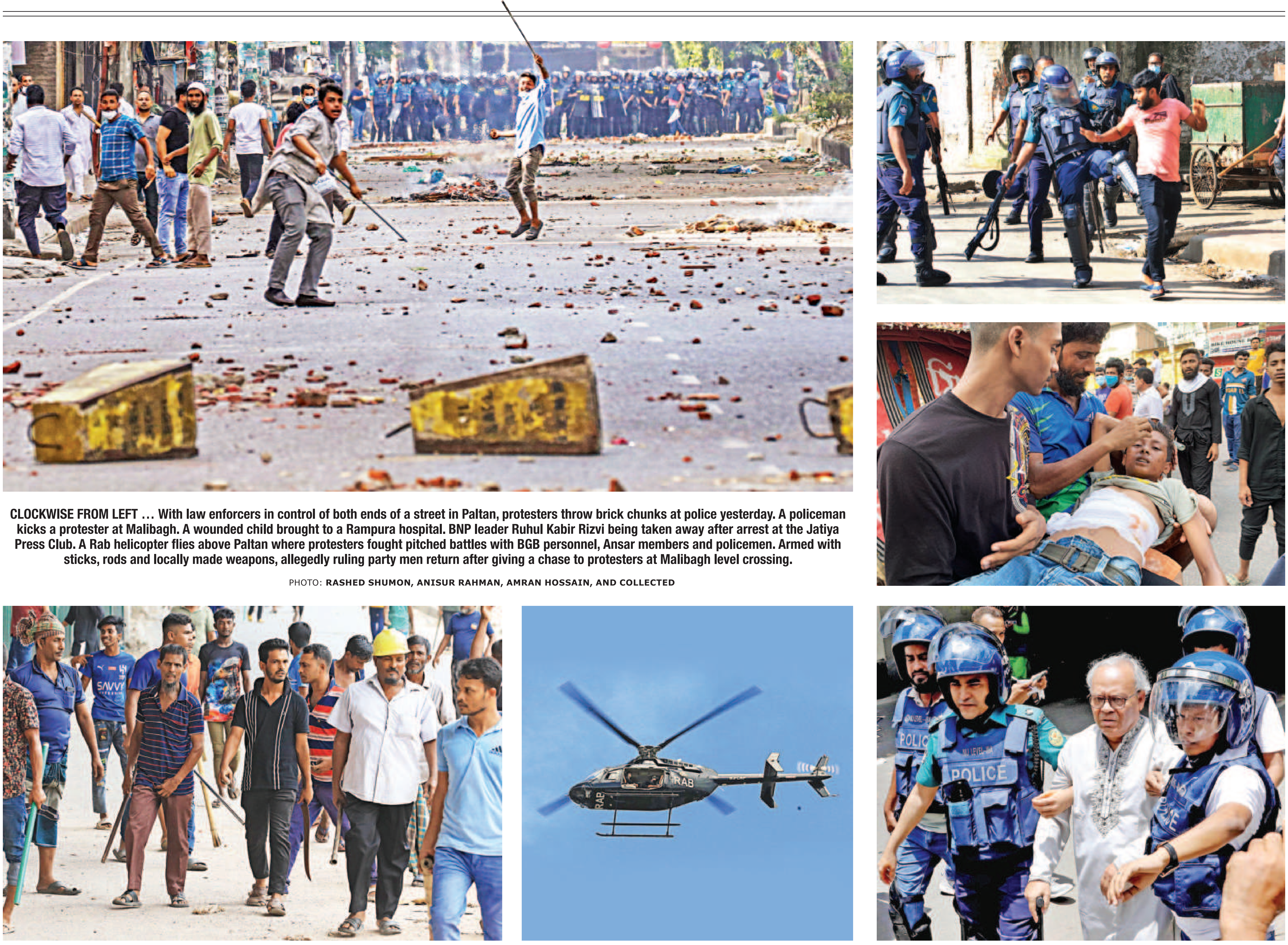
Meanwhile, the metro railway authority yesterday said operation of metro rail will remain suspended from today for an indefinite period due to the ongoing situation.

Arsonists set ablaze the office of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in Mirpur-10.

Demonstrators vandalised the BRTA headquarters and Setu Bhaban at Chairmanbari in the capital's Banani.

"Around 50 vehicles weretorched at Setu Bhaban yesterday [Thursday]. The first floor of the Setu Bhaban was vandalised and set on fire today [yesterday]. Three floors of the BRTA head office were also set ablaze," said an official of the road transport and bridges ministry.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT … With law enforcers in control of both ends of a street in Paltan, protesters throw brick chunks at police yesterday. A policeman kicks a protester at Malibagh. A wounded child brought to a Rampura hospital. BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi being taken away after arrest at the Jatiya Press Club. A Rab helicopter flies above Paltan where protesters fought pitched battles with BGB personnel, Ansar members and policemen. Armed with sticks, rods and locally made weapons, allegedly ruling party men return after giving a chase to protesters at Malibagh level crossing.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON, ANISUR RAHMAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN, AND COLLECTED**

At least 66 more lives lost

FROM PAGE 1

Uttara, Pragati Sarani, Kazipara and Mirpur saw some of the most violent clashes as student and non-student protesters fought pitched battles with the law enforcers.

The law enforcers fired live rounds, lobbed teargas shells and blasted sound grenades at the agitators who retaliated with brickbats, creating panic among the residents of different areas.

In an unprecedented scene in independent Bangladesh, law enforcers charged sound grenades and teargas shells on the demonstrators from the air, as Rab helicopters patrolled the Dhaka sky at low height, including in Mirpur 10 and 6, Mohammadpur, and Rampura bridge.

Panicked, many city residents stayed indoors and did not dare venture out. A Rab helicopter was also seen carrying water to extinguish a fire in Mohakhali area.

Fierce clashes were also reported from Narayanganj, Sylhet, Bogura, Brahmanbaria, Tangail, Barishal and Chattogram.

Dhaka was isolated from the rest of the country as road and rail communications were snapped.

The authorities suspended metro rail operation for an indefinite period from today. Rail communications also remained suspended yesterday, and will remain halted until further notice.

Hardly any long-distance bus left Dhaka.

Different government establishments, including metro stations at Kazipra and Mirpur, and BRTA office in Mirpur 13, were vandalised while a Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) office in Banasree and several police boxes in the capital were set afire.

Besides, at least six establishments of Dhaka North City Corporation in Uttara, Mohakhali, Rampura and Mohammadpur were set ablaze.

Police foiled BNP's rally supporting the student movement, and arrested Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, party joint secretary, near the National Press club.

Earlier in the morning, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) imposed ban on any kind rally in the capital.

However, around 2:00pm it said political parties will be allowed to hold rally at in front of their central offices. This paved the way for Awami League to hold a rally in front of its party office in Bangabandhu Avenue against the ongoing "anarchy".

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader from the rally said the quota movement does not belong to students anymore, it has turned into a movement of the BNP-Jamaat.

"We have endured enough; our backs are up against the wall... We have to wage a united resistance against these BNP-Jamaat goons," he said.

Hasnat Abdullah, one of the main organisers, yesterday said their anti-discriminatory student movement has no relation and involvement with violence.

The demand for reformation of quota is universal. Anyone can extend their support to the demand of the protestors, said Hasnat, a Dhaka University student.

"But no one will be allowed to take advantage of our movement and use our banner to implement their ulterior political motive," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, BGB has been deployed across the country to maintain law and order, says a BGB text message. BGB also says 52 BGB members were injured while on duty during the ongoing nationwide "complete shutdown" called by the quota protesters.

Several BGB vehicles were vandalised.

RAMPURA-BADDA

Rampura and Badda areas saw the fiercest clash yesterday as protesters clashed with police and BGB from early morning to dusk.

Police and BGB fired bullets at the protesters, mostly on the upper part of the bodies, raising the casualties, said witnesses.

For the second day, the communication through Rampura Bridge was halted due to violence.

Almost all the alleys of the road were blocked by the protesters, including many teenagers. They put trees and electric polls to make the blockade.

Around 12:00pm, the main road from Mouchak to Bashundhara residential area was full with brick chunks.

Some protesters vandalised the CCTV cameras in front of houses and shops.

Around 3:30pm, the BGB shot bullets at the protesters near TV Centre area, killing a student on the spot while several others were declared dead at the hospital. Some others were critically injured by bullets.

Although the situation in Banasree calmed in the evening, hundreds of protestors gathered at Rampura bridge area as soon as Rab helicopters began charging sound grenades from the air.

MIRPUR

Roads and alleys of over two-kilometer areas between Kazipara and Mirpur 6 also saw violent clashes between protestors and police, aided by Awami league men.

Law enforcers fired heavily from shotguns and charged sound grenades and teargas canisters at demonstrators who hurled brickbats in retaliation, said witnesses.

At one point, the agitators ransacked and torched the offices of Dhaka North City Corporation and Bangladesh Road Transport Office, both in Mirpur. They also vandalised Metro Rail stations at Mirpur-10 and Kazipara, and Popular Diagnostic Centre in Mirpur.

Parts of the area were first engulfed in flames and then were covered by black smoke from smoldering structures, locals said.

Rab helicopters flew at low height in the area and lobbed sound grenades.

"One grenade fell near my house. I saw some flying pigeons falling to the ground," said a panicked resident of Mirpur-10 area.

Another Mirpur resident said she and her seven-year-old son were so panicked that they quickly took cover inside their room, and did not open the door until the heavy sound died down.

At least four people suffered bullet injuries, three of them critically, said another witness.

The clash broke out around 3:00pm when Police and BGB members along with ruling party activists carrying sticks, hockey sticks and sharp weapons charged the demonstrators, who blocked the Mirpur-10 intersection. Not all of them appeared to be students.

A clash soon followed, and running battles between the two sides – agitators on one side and law enforcers and the AL men on the other – continued still around 8:0pm.

MOHAMMADPUR

Violent clashes also erupted at Sangkar and Bheribandh of Mohammadpur and adjoining areas as protesters and law enforcers backed by AL activists fought a pitched battle.

The law enforcers fired shots and lobbed teargas shells and sound grenades indiscriminately during the clashes. The protesters, some of whom members of the public, retaliated with brick chunks, according to witnesses.

Residents reported seeing Rab helicopters charging sound grenades from low height.

The clash ensued around 3:45pm at Dhanmondi 27 intersection on Satmasjid road and continued till 8:00pm.

Violent clashes also erupted in Beribdha area in the afternoon and continued till evening.

Confirmation about any casualties or injuries were not immediately available.

Around 6:00pm, hundreds of protesters carrying sticks took position on Mohammadpur-Beribadh road and its adjacent alleys, halting traffic.

They chased away police, Chhatra League and Jubo League activists from there, throwing bricks at them.

DHANMONDI

Hundreds of agitators blocked Sat Masjid Road and Dhanmondi 27 roads, the main thoroughfare connecting Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur, after Jumma prayers.

At around 2:30pm, hundreds of students and youths started to gather at Sat Masjid Road. Armed with wooden and bamboo sticks, they set up makeshift barricades in Shankar, Dhanmondi 15 and Abahani Field intersections.

The protesters cut branches from roadside trees, gathered old furniture and tyres on different roads in the area and set them ablaze.

Russia downs 33 Ukrainian drones

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia downed 33 Ukrainian aerial drones overnight over Crimea and 10 naval drones that were heading for the peninsula, Moscow's defence ministry said.

"Air defence systems on duty destroyed and intercepted 33 aerial drones over... Crimea," the ministry said in a Telegram post, adding that forces "in the Black Sea destroyed 10 naval drones that were heading towards the Crimean peninsula".

Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said earlier on Thursday that loud noises heard in the Crimean city were linked to the Russian army retaliating "against an attempted attack by a surface drone".

Late last month, Moscow accused Ukraine of carrying out a deadly strike in Crimea using US missiles, killing at least four people, including two children, and injuring more than 150, according to the local authorities installed by Russia.

Two drones were also neutralised overnight in the Bryansk region of western Russia, according to the Russian defence ministry.

"There were no casualties or damage," local governor Alexander Bogomaz said on Telegram Thursday.

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russian territory this year, targeting both energy sites that it says supply the Russian army, as well as towns and villages just across the border and in Crimea.

Both sides have used drones extensively since the conflict began in February 2022.

Will consider talks

FROM PAGE 1

Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader must step down from the cabinet and their party for illegally using the law enforcers, they said.

Deputy inspectors general of police, commissioners of police, and superintendents of police of the areas where the students got killed must be fired.

Vice-chancellors and proctors of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University and Rajshahi University must resign, according to the demands.

Abdul Kader said policemen, who shot students, and the "goons" of Chhatra League and Jubo League, who carried out the attacks, have to be arrested and murder cases should be filed against them.

The family members of the students who have been killed and injured must be compensated, he said in the statement.

The statement also demanded a ban on student politics and said the student unions must be made effective in all educational institutions, including Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, and Rajshahi University.

All educational institutions and halls must be reopened immediately.

Those who are involved in the student movement must be given assurance that they will not be harassed.

Hasnat Abdullah, one of the main organisers of the quota reform protest, yesterday said the student movement against discrimination is not involved in setting fire and damaging vehicles.

The demand for reformation of quota is universal and anyone can extend their support to the protesters' demand, said Hasnat, also a Dhaka University student.

"But no one will be allowed to take advantage of our movement and use our banner to implement their ulterior political move," he said while talking to The Daily Star in the evening.

Hasnat said they disagreed with the government proposal of keeping 20 percent quota in public service.

He added that the demonstrators are demanding five percent quota for groups of people who have fallen behind. Through quality research, the government can only increase it by one or two percent.

He urged all protesting students to continue the demonstration avoiding any kind of violence.

Dozens of govt establishments

FROM PAGE 1

Arsonists also set fire to Mirpur Indoor Stadium, Matsya Bhaban in Ramna, Drug Administration Bhaban in Tejgaon, a toll plaza of Dhaka Elevated Expressway in Mohakhali, an office of the Police Bureau of Investigation in Banasree, Dhaka North City Corporation regional office-3 at Mohakhali, regional office-1 in Uttara, regional office-5 in Mohammadpur, Uttara Community Centre and Shuchona Community Centre in Mohammadpur, Rampura pump house, an old building of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in Mohakhali, Dhaka Wasa office at Hatirjheel and an Ansar camp in Badda.

Similar incidents of arson attacks and vandalism were reported in Narayanganj, Narasingdi, Tangail, Savar in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet.

In Narsingdi, demonstrators attacked the district jail and broke open its gates, leading to the escape of many prisoners, said police.

Criminals torched the Madhabdi municipality office and two police outposts in Narsingdi Sadar upazila. The district council office at Bhelanagar of Sadar upazila also came under an attack.

In Savar, protesters set ablaze a police box, four buses and a truck, and vandalised a hospital, a DB office and five AL offices.

In Chattogram, demonstrators set fire to two traffic police boxes in Kazir Dewri and New Market and an AL office in New Market area.

In Sylhet, protesters vandalised a SUV of Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, the vice-chancellor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, at MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday.

In Narayanganj, demonstrators vandalised the regional passport office on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road in Signboard area around 9:00pm on Thursday. Almost all the furniture and documents in the three-storey building, including about 8,000 passport booklets, were damaged in the fire.

Criminals also torched the district PBI office in Signboard area on Thursday night. Five vehicles parked at the office were burnt.

On Wednesday and Thursday, protesters set ablaze at least 30 establishments, including the main building of Bangladesh Television in the capital's Rampura, during clashes with BGB personnel and police in Dhaka and several other districts.

'Stop bloodshed, people are not your opponent'

Activists, teachers, guardians urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cultural activists, teachers and guardians at separate rallies yesterday urged the government to stop the bloodshed and not to consider people, including students, its opponent.

"We took to the street to stand by the students. We are calling upon the government to stop bloodshed... Do not consider people including the students as your [government's] opponent," said Prachyanat activist Toufiqul Islam Imon.

He said this while reading out a written statement at a protest gathering held in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Journo killed in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist was killed in Sylhet yesterday while covering the students' "complete shutdown" progamme demanding reforms of quota system in government jobs.

ATM Turab, bureau chief of Naya Diganta in Sylhet and staff reporter of Daily Jalalabad, succumbed to his injuries in the afternoon at a private hospital in Sylhet city.

He suffered shotgun pellet wounds during a clash between police and BNP members around 2:00pm in Bamdarbazar area.

Arif Mohammad Reza, duty doctor at the ICU of Ibn Sina Hospital, said be died of excessive bleeding due to pellet wounds.

People suffer for government's wrong decisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to the government's stubbornness and wrong decisions, people are suffering in the country, said Opposition Leader and Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday.

He demanded an immediate end to the countrywide anarchy and killings.

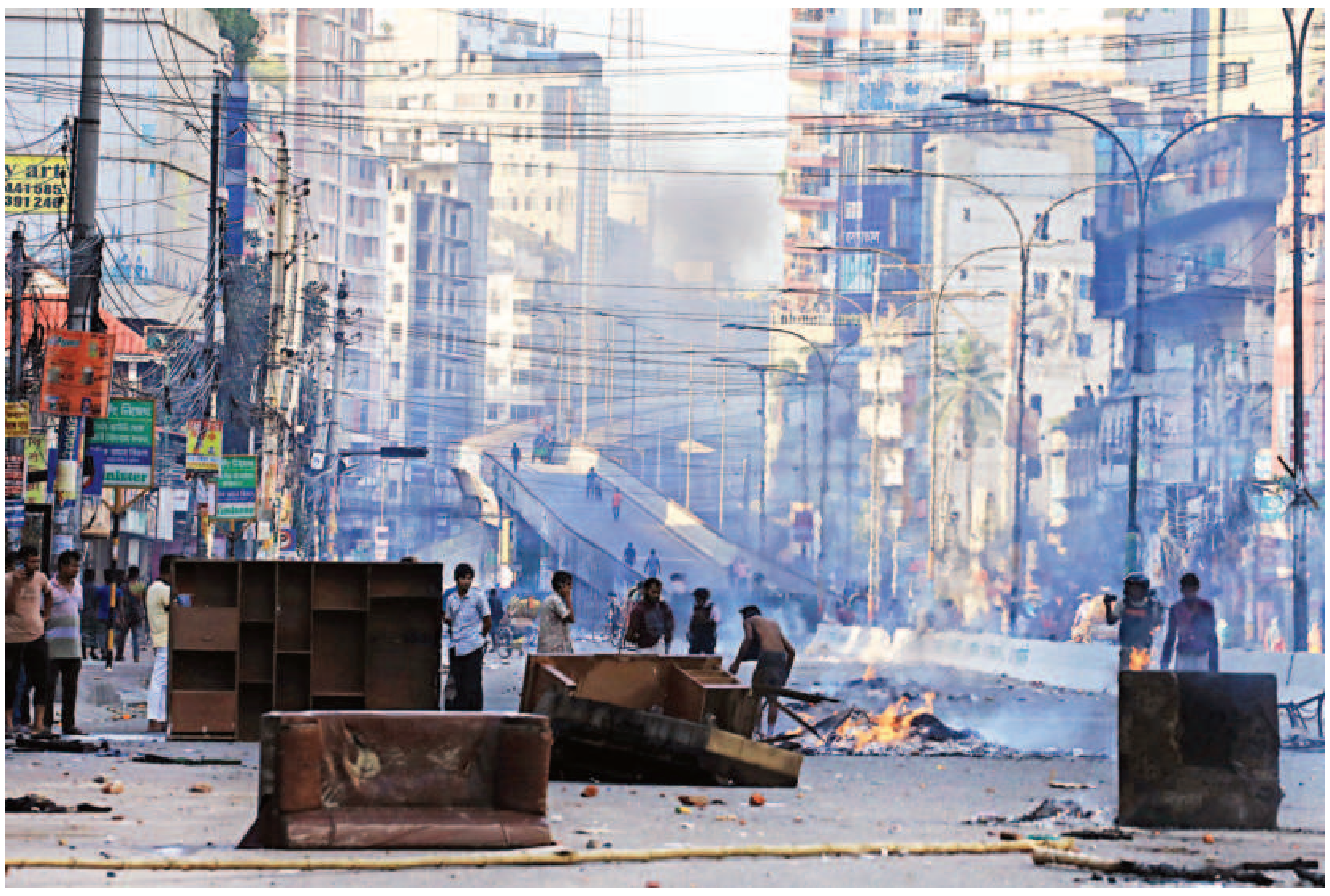
The JP chief said this in a statement sent to different media through text messages.

"It's very unfortunate that bullets are being fired on general people. It is the responsibility of the law enforcement agencies to ensure security of people's lives and properties," he said.

He also said people are the owner of the country and it is normal that the government will play a role to implement their will.

"It's not the task of the government to impose its own idea and will on people through gagging their voice and repression," GM Quader said.

Violence, fear shut down Dhaka



The Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover wore a deserted look yesterday amid the ongoing clashes between the protesters and law enforcement agencies. The photo was taken in Kakrail area in the afternoon.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN

The ongoing clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies, which ignited over the quota reform protests, brought Dhaka to a standstill yesterday.

Due to unavailability of public transport, essential services and shutdown of all sorts of businesses, people had to suffer immensely.

Moreover, countrywide internet shutdown since July 18 have added another layer of uncertainty and suffering to the ongoing crisis.

As violence escalated in most of the major roads in the city, shops, markets, and office establishments along these streets remained mostly closed for the last few days.

In many areas, residents could not even access essential services like hospitals and diagnostic centres. People from low income groups, daily wage earners and small business owners were the most affected.

Zahid Hasan, a driver of a city bus that runs from Mohammadpur to Sadarghat, said, "If I complete a full trip, I earn around Tk 300. In the last one week, I could only make three to four trips. I have to support a family of seven. Now I don't have any money to buy food for my children."

Unavailability of public transport has also affected commuters who are venturing out for essential activities.

Sharnali Saha, an employee of a healthcare organisation, said, "As I work for a healthcare organisation, I have to go to my office no matter what is happening on the streets. Without any transport, I have to walk for miles daily to reach my workplace. Even rickshaws cannot pass through blocked roads. Doctors and patients are also suffering while trying to reach healthcare centres."

"If this continues for a few more days, I shall not be able to attend my office anymore," she said.

The sufferings of patients and healthcare providers can be clearly seen in front of the gates of major hospitals like Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

As there is no public transport, and very few rickshaws and taxis are on the roads, patients have to walk a long way to get medical services.

Jahanara Begum, a cancer patient, was trying to visit a treatment centre in Shyamoli from the Mohammadpur area. Finding no transport in the morning, her son had to take her there in a wheelchair, walking all the way to the hospital.

Her son, Murshidul Hasan, said, "This has become unbearable. The government cannot disable the entire country for their failure to deal with a justified movement."

Terrified by the violence, very few people are coming out of their homes. As a result, the once busy streets, restaurants and market places all over the city lie mostly empty, even during Friday afternoon.

Md Arafat, a restaurant manager at Dhanmondi's Shimanto Square, said, "Our business has completely stopped. People are too afraid to come out of their homes. Who will go for shopping and dining out in this situation?"

"As we did not have any customers over the last few days, we had to throw away a large amount of food today. As a result, we suffered heavy losses," he added.

The shop owners of Dhaka's kitchen markets are also suffering due to a lack of customers and shortage of supplies.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Md Sobhan Mia, a businessman of Dhaka's Krishi Market, said, "Very few trucks could pass through Dhaka-Aricha highway for the last three days. Supplies of vegetables and spices could not be replenished. If situation goes on like this, prices of essential food items and other commodities will increase again in the coming days. People will suffer a lot."

"Why didn't they agree with the legitimate demands of the students? It could have ended all the problems easily. We don't know how they will solve it now," he added.

'Why did they kill my son?'

Mother mourns death of Palli Bidyut employee from pellet wounds in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a blank look, Hasi Akhter was sitting on the floor at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) emergency morgue yesterday.

She was mourning the loss of her only son. Tears have dried on her face from the relentless crying.

Rakib, 23, was killed during a clash between protesters and police yesterday.

Rakib was hit by shotgun pellets at Rampura in the morning. He was taken to DMCH immediately, where the doctors declared him dead around noon.

"How will I survive? He was the only earning member of our family. Rakib was not involved in politics. He was not even a student. Why did they kill him?" Hasi kept asking over and over.

She told The Daily Star that Rakib had been working at the Palli Bidyut office for the last seven years on a day-to-day basis. He became a permanent employee just seven months earlier.

In his wake, Rakib has left behind a widow. The two had gotten married just three years back.

Now, Rakib's mother, two sisters and wife have no one to provide for them.

Our daughters still await his return

Says wife of killed journo Hassan Mehedi

DIPAN NANDY

Even two days ago, Farzana Popy had been living a life full of love and happiness with her husband and two daughters.

But everything changed on Thursday. Her husband, journalist Hassan Mehedi, was killed on duty during a clash in the capital's Jatrabari.

With Mehedi's death, everything just shattered for Farzana and her little girls within a moment. Their two daughters -- three-year-old Nisha and six-month-old Meher -- aren't even old enough to understand the gravity of the situation.

"It's been only five years since we got married, going against our families. We were dreaming of a beautiful life surrounding our two girls; we were all so happy. But now everything is gone...," said Farzana with a broken voice, as she was waiting in front of the DMCH morgue yesterday, alongside her elder daughter Nisha, to take the body home.

"Nisha is still waiting for her father to return from work and play with her, as he used to do every night," said Farzana, a homemaker.

Meanwhile, Nisha was roaming around her mother and was constantly asking about her father's whereabouts.

"I have left my younger daughter at home, she must be really hungry by now," said Farzana, adding, "We will take Mehedi's body to his village home in Patuakhali's Baufal."

"Now I have no idea how I'll run the family," said Farzana.

Before working as a staff reporter at online news portal Dhaka Times, Mehedi worked at Kaler Kantha and Dainik Bangladesher Alo, she said.

Emam Hossain Emon, staff reporter of Dainik Bangladesher Alo who was present during the incident, said Mehedi was shot with shotgun pellets by an Armed Police Carrier (APC) near the ramp of Mayor Hanif Flyover while he was taking video footage.

Mehedi was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

COUNTRYWIDE VIOLENCE

Clashes rage on for the fourth day

STAR REPORT

The ongoing protests showed no signs of abetting yesterday as clashes continued across the country for the fourth day in different cities and districts, alongside the capital.

At least 10 people died and over several hundreds were injured in these clashes that took place between protesters, law enforcers, and ruling party members.

In Rangpur, four persons were killed during a clash between protesters and police in the City Bazar area in the evening.

The deceased were identified as Sazzad Hossain and Moslem Uddin. Both were hit by rubber bullets, said Ashikur Rahman of Rangpur Medical College Hospital. The other two victims are Murad Hossain, 25, and Makbul Hossain, 60.

Meanwhile, a private clinic in the city was torched. Md Moniruzzaman, commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, said the protesters attacked many police establishments.

In Narsingdi, two people were killed while in a clash between protesters and police and AL men. One of the deceased is Shaon, 20.

Witnesses said a section of protesters torched Madhabdi municipal office around 4:00pm. Then they locked into a clash with the municipal mayor's men and police, in which the two died.

Confirming the deaths, Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, RMO of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, said they were hit by bullets.

At least 45 people took treatment with bullet injuries at Narsingdi District Hospital.

Panchadhana police outpost also came under attack around 8:30pm, said SI Anwar Hossain of Madhabdi police.

In Savar, a protester was shot dead when they clashed with police and BGB in Radio Colony area around 4:00pm.

The deceased is Al Amin, 24, an honours student at Bangladesh Open University.

Amin, who was brought dead, suffered bullet injuries, said Ezazur Rahman, a doctor of Enam Medical College Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Attackers to blame for casualties

Says Arafat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Muhammad Ali Arafat yesterday warned that it won't even take half an hour to control the unruly mob if the government applies five percent of its capacity.

"But it may increase casualty, which is why the government is showing restraint," said Arafat while speaking at a press conference held at the Dhaka North City Corporation office.

"We cannot go for action if there are children at some places. The miscreants can do whatever they wish, but the government cannot," he said in response to a journalist's query.

"We also believe that students have no involvement in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Farzana Popy breaks down in tears as her relatives try to console her. Her husband, journalist Hassan Mehedi, was killed on duty during a clash in the capital's Jatrabari on Thursday. The photo was taken near the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue yesterday when she was waiting to take the body home.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Internet blackout disrupts Ctg port activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Export and import activities at the Chattogram Port have almost ground to a halt due to the countrywide internet blackout since 9:00pm on Thursday.

Assessment of import and export consignments could not be done as the software -- ASCUDA World programme --could not be run in the absence of internet, said Mohammad Fyzur Rahman, commissioner of Chattogram Customs House.

The internet blackout meant the customs and port authority could not do duty assessment for import containers and verification of export consignments, said Md Omar Faruk, secretary of the Chattogram Port Authority.

However, import consignments that had their duty assessment done and payment cleared before the internet blackout were given the exit note by the customs for delivery, he said.

But many of the importers did not take the goods fearing it could get caught up in violence.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 20

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAT	4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Horror engulfs Badda, Rampura

FROM PAGE 8

They even showed a bullet the medics recovered from the body of an injured.

Around 3:30pm, BGB shot at the demonstrators near the BTV area, leaving a student dead on the spot. Many others were critically injured at the time.

The deceased was identified as Samudra, a student of Rajdhani Ideal College. A bullet hit his arms and pierced through his chest, said hospital sources.

"When his body was lying at the hospital, his mother was calling him repeatedly on his phone," said a doctor.

Again at 4:00pm, The Daily Star correspondents saw BGB personnel fire at demonstrators in front of Better Life Hospital.

Footage from the scene shows, an unarmed teen getting shot in the chest. He fell to the ground and was bleeding profusely.

At Better Life Hospital, these correspondents saw two bodies. One of them was identified as Shawon, 18. He was a restaurant staffer.

Sources of its emergency department in the afternoon said they received five bodies since morning.

Near Boubazar of Rampura, a group of protesters was chanting "Naraya Takbir Allahu Akbar". They stopped when a middle-aged man came in and said not to use the slogan.

On the street, many from the group were seen telling demonstrators lies like the BGB personnel were speaking Hindi and that they were from India. This agitated the protesters more.

In Banasree, Rab helicopters were seen firing teargas and sound grenades at the agitators while BGB personnel were seen firing bullets near Farazi Hospital in the same area.

This correspondent saw two bodies in Advance Hospital, Bansaree. One of them was an unidentified child. The other body was of Maruf, a student of Kushtia Polytechnic Institute, who was in Dhaka for an internship.

Hospital sources said they received at least five bodies since the morning.

At least 250-300 injured took treatment at Farazi Hospital yesterday. Four vehicles of the Red Crescent also gave primary treatment at the spot.

Lives upended by internet shutdown

FROM PAGE 8

gas and electricity in my house. I won't be able to do anything about it until the internet is back up."

Safwana Islam, an 18-year-old college student from Mirpur, said that she was unable to top-up not only her own phone, but also for her elderly parents living in the village. "I don't even have enough cash and my local ATM is out-of-service."

Murtoza Zaman, chief executive officer at Unimart, a local supermarket chain, said, "Customers could not pay through their bank cards or their mobile financial services."

Contacted, Bangladesh Bank Executive Director Saiful Islam acknowledged that online banking services were disrupted due to the internet outage.

The information void, created amid the nationwide internet shutdown, is affecting people, both home and abroad, who are concerned about the countries current volatile situation.

Taswar Sharif Bihongo, a 23-year-old studying in Hong Kong's City University, had no way of knowing the current scenario of Bangladesh.

"I've been trying to get news updates online, but no Bangladeshi website was up to date. My fellow Bangladeshi students have been worried sick as well," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

Since Thursday, the country has been under a complete internet blackout after the transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers, while carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data services amid the ongoing violent clashes surrounding the quota reform protests.

Broadband and mobile network operators have told The Daily Star that this decision was made by the government in view of the current situation and that they were dependent on the authorities to restart the services.

The country's IT and digital commerce sectors faced the biggest blow, with IT firms that export their services fearing permanent damage to their reputation amongst international clients.

"We are facing staggering daily financial losses, but the long-term effect would be more devastating," said Russel Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS).

BASIS primarily estimated the financial losses at Tk 80 crore for IT firms in the 24 hours since the internet outage.

Shamsuddin Haider Dalim, head of corporate communication at bKash, said clients who use the internet-based bKash app have been impacted in absence of internet connection. "However, over half of our clients avail our service through dialing *247#."

State Minister of ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, meanwhile, urged the people to remain patient.

"This is an unprecedented situation, where we need to ensure both physical and digital protection for the people. We're doing our best to get the internet back up."

A dream

FROM PAGE 8

He said Asif had called his sister, who lives in Khilgaon, around 11:30am, saying he was at the protest and was in a safe distance from the violence.

"Then suddenly he said he was going to give some water to an injured student who had collapsed on the road. He cut the line and rushed to wounded student with a bottle of water, when police fired pellets at him from a close range. He died moments later.

"He was a brilliant student and dreamt of becoming a BCS [admin] cadre officer, but his life was cut short. His chest sustained around 200-300 pellets," Monuruzzaman said as he held back his tears.

Asif had gotten GPA-5 in both SSC and HSC exams from the science group.

The air in Askarpur village, in Satkhira's Debhata upazila, hung heavy as Asif's body reached his home around 1:30am yesterday in an ambulance.

Asif was buried at his family graveyard around 7:00am.

He had three elder sisters and a twin brother Rakib. For a large part of their lives, they had to grow up without their mother after her death.

Md Abu Hasan, a teacher of Nalta High School where Asif studied, fondly remembered his student.

"Whenever his father came to the school, he would request me to take special care of Hasan and his siblings, saying they were deprived of a mother's love...He was a polite young boy and never raised his voice to anyone."

"A pall of gloom has taken over our village... Asif was a polite boy. His death has shocked us all," Sirajul Islam, a resident of Askarpur said.

Hospitals in southern Gaza at 'breaking point'

AFP, *Geneva*

All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to "breaking point" due to an influx of people wounded by Israeli bombardments and doctors could soon be forced to make "difficult choices" on who gets treated, the Red Cross said Thursday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said its 60-bed field hospital in the city of Rafah took in 26 people requiring hospitalisation for shrapnel and other injuries after a strike on the Al-Mawasi camp for displaced people on Saturday.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run territory said at least 90 people were killed and 300 injured in the strike that Israel said targeted military commanders.

Last week also saw an influx of 850 people requiring outpatient care at the Red Cross hospital.

A brutal day

FROM PAGE 1

DMCH around 8:30pm.

"We went to different hospitals in Narayanganj but did not find any space. Finally, we came here," he said.

This correspondent saw the body of 24-year-old Shaon, who was taken to the DMCH from the New Market area.

His friend Sajeeb said Shaon used to work in the New Market area as a vendor. Shaon was not a protester, but he was hit by bullets.

"What is his crime? Why was he shot dead?" Sajeeb asked.

"They shot people without looking at who were in the demonstration or not. There were passersby and street vendors who were hit by bullets," Sajeeb told this correspondent.

According to the hospital administration, the patients who were brought to DMCH were mostly aged between 18 and 40. As of 7:00pm yesterday, at least 310 patients were brought to the emergency department.

Scores hurt

FROM PAGE 8

When the procession reached near the Press Club, police and BGB personnel, deployed there since morning, chased the activists and broke up the procession.

A few minutes later, demonstrators from different alleys of the Purana Paltan started pelting brick chunks at the police and BGB personnel, leading to clashes.

Meanwhile, Islami Andolan took out a procession from the Baitul Mukarram after Juma prayers. When the procession reached the Purana Paltan intersection, the party's leaders and activists hurled brick chunks at the law enforcers.

They got dispersed when police and BGB personnel chased the demonstrators.

The BNP men could not hold their rally as the clashes continued till 4:30pm.

Clashes rage on for the fourth day

FROM PAGE 3

Besides, around 100 people were injured in daylong clashes at Amin Bazar, Baliapur, CNB, and Savar Police Station areas.

The protesters also carried out an attack on the Detective Branch office in Savar Bazar Bus Stand area around 8:00pm. They also vandalised some DB vehicles.

Besides, they torched four buses, a truck, a police box, and a few shops, alongside vandalising a hospital and five AL party offices.

Some 25 injured people, including five with bullet wounds, were receiving treatment at Enam Medical College Hospital, while 20 received treatment at Savar Upazila Health Complex.

Dhaka's Additional Superintendent of Police Abdullahel Kafi said he does not know about the death. However, many policemen were injured.

Meanwhile, former Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Jahangir Alam and few of his supporters were injured in an attack by protesters in the capital's Uttara area in the afternoon.

A motorcade of Jahangir and his followers was heading towards Dhaka. They were intercepted by protesters at Housebuilding area, said witnesses.

Jahangir was receiving treatment at a private hospital in Uttara till filing of this report at 9:00pm, said one of his aides.

In port city, protesters locked in clashes with police at different areas after a "Gayebana Janaza" at Laldighi Maidan.

The protesters vandalised an AL office in New Market area, and two traffic police boxes in Kazir Dewri and New Market areas.

Protesters also attacked GTV's reporter Towhidur Rahman and injured him.

Meanwhile, BNP men gathered at Nasiman Bhaban area to attend their declared programme. Police fired sound grenades to disperse the BNP men and protesters at Kazir Dewri, where all the parties locked in a clash.

CMP Deputy Commissioner Mostafizur Rahman said, "Police went to action as protesters started hurling brickbats at them. Police held around 20 persons in this connection."

In Kishoreganj, over 50 people were injured in sporadic clashes between protesters and police in Bhairab upazila.

In Sylhet, a journalist, ATM Turab, bureau chief of Naya Diganta and also staff reporter of Daily Jalalabad, was shot dead.

He got injured with over a hundred shotgun pellets during a clash between police and BNP members around 2:00pm at Bandarbazar area. Arif Mohammad Reza, duty doctor at Ibn Sina Hospital, confirmed the death.

At least 25 people were injured as a clash broke out right after the Juma prayers while leaders and activists of BNP were preparing for a procession.

Meanwhile, hundreds of locals and students blocked Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway around 3:00pm.

In Bogura, a protester was shot dead in a clash between protesters and law enforcers in the town's Amtoli area. The deceased was identified as Saim Shuvo, 16.

Shuvo was brought dead to the hospital at 7:00pm with shotgun pellet injury marks on his body, said Md Saleh, doctor of Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

In Mymensingh, a 17-year-old boy named Sagor was killed in clashes between AL members and protesters.

He was declared dead when he was taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said Dr Zakiul Islam, deputy director of the hospital.

The clashes also left some 30 injured.

In Narayanganj, protesters set fire to the district PBI office in Signboard area, along with five vehicles parked at the office. They also set alight the fire service vehicles that went there to douse the blaze.

In the district's Jalkuri area, four persons were injured during a clash.

Several hundred people, led by AL MP Shamim Osman, brought out processions in Narayanganj, where many of Shamim's men allegedly brandished firearms, and iron rods.

Around 8:00pm, at least 26 buses of Shital Paribahan owned by Shamim Osman were burnt at Jalkuri.

Around 10:00pm, miscreants vandalised and set fire to a part of Nagar Bhaban building of Narayanganj City Corporation and torched two vehicles.

In Tangail's Kalihati upazila, protesters torched upazila AL's office, near Kalihati Bus stand, around 4:00pm. When police tried to disperse them, they threw brickbats at police, leading to clash where a few got injured, including OC Kamrul Faruk of Kalihati Police Station.

In Barishal, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between BNP and AL men at CNB Road area. The clash erupted when AL men attacked a BNP procession.

In Brahmanbaria, protesters blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway in front of Ashuganj toll plaza of Syed Nazrul Islam Bridge around 11:00am.

In Rajshahi, at least 12 were injured after leaders and activists of AL and its associate bodies foiled the scheduled rally of BNP.

Around 4:15pm, a group of AL, Jubo League and Chhatra League men started throwing brickbats targeting BNP rally at Bhubon Mohon Park.

In Munshiganj, chase and counter-chase took place between protesters and AL men at Sadar upazila. In Cox's Bazar, protesters blockaded the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Link Road for hours and staged demonstration.

Meanwhile, a youth, who suffered injuries from shotgun pellets on Thursday, died early yesterday on the way to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

প্লট ক্রয়
জলসিড়ি আবাসন ও ঝিলমিল প্রকল্পে প্লট কিনতে চাই।
যোগাযোগ: ০১৫৭৭-০৩৮৭৩৮
০১৯৪৭-১৩৩০০১

Consultancy Opportunities

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites applications from interested **consultant(s) to provide English-to-Bangla translation services for publications and communication materials including press releases and articles.** The Terms of Reference (ToR) can be downloaded from the ***United Nations Global Market Place (UNGM)*** at **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/239739**

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Wednesday, August 07, 2024, by 04:30 PM (BST time).**

Stop bloodshed, people are not

FROM PAGE 3

front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday morning.

With placards that read, "Stop killing", "Why are our sons bloodied on the streets", and "Free democracy", they gathered there at 11:00am and stayed till 11:40am.

Condemning the police action on protesters, Imon said, "The sudden decision to vacate all the public university halls left the students insecure and it is in no way acceptable. The public university authorities across the country failed to ensure the safety of the students as they gave permission to police to enter campuses and subsequently attack students."

"The government used its associate bodies -- Chhatra League and police -- to suppress the students' movement, resulting in violence. It could be solved through discussion," he added.

Imon also said the government has to bear the responsibilities of those killed across the country during the ongoing movement for quota reform.

Over 100 cultural activists took part in the protest event.

Among others, photographer Shahidul Alam; former Jahangirnagar University Prof Rehnuma Ahmed; artists Shatabdi Wadud, Sanjana Preety, Safa Kabir, Shohel Mondal, and Khairul Basar, were present at the gatherings.

Additionally, several theatre troops including Natyadal Bottala, Tarua, Theatre 52, Baatighar, along with several university teachers expressed solidarity with the event.

Meanwhile, in another protest rally, speakers said the government is responsible for the deaths of the students who joined the quota protests.

The rally was organised by a group of teachers and guardians in front the capital's National Museum yesterday.

Addressing the rally, Asif Nazrul, a professor of Dhaka University, said, "We should stand by our students. We should raise our voices strongly."

Tamanna Masud, a university teacher, said they want to be with the students as the government failed to protect them.

Attackers to blame

FROM PAGE 3

anarchy and looting. Because, they took to the streets demanding quota reformation," he added.

"What did they demand? The reinstatement of the 2018 gazette. We have applied to the apex court seeking that. We never had any differences with them."

Arafat said a third party is carrying out the anarchy. "None of them are students. They are hooligans of Jamaat and BNP. It's clear."

"It has been said the rubber bullets have been stocked out. But it would take five years for rubber bullets to run out even if the government fire a bullet every second," he said.

"Till yesterday [Thursday] some students were in the protest. We were worried about them for which we showed the highest level of patience. When the students will get separated from them, only the hooligans will remain on the streets. Then the government will take action against them as per the Universal Human Rights Convention like all other democratic and civilised countries," he added.

He said the attackers are only to blame for all the casualties.

Essential

FROM PAGE 8

Bishajit Saha, head of corporate affairs of City Group, one of the largest commodity importer and processor in Bangladesh, said they could deliver only 35 to 40 percent of their usual supply of goods on Thursday and Friday.

For now, they are not producing commodities as per demand fearing they would not be able to supply during the spat of violence, he added.

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SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Call for Expressions of Interest For contracting NGOs for
WFP's 2025-2026 Partnership cycle (from January 2025 to end 2025/26)
To implement the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Bangladesh
to Enhance Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites experienced local/national/international NGOs to submit an Expression of Interest for the implementation of "Humanitarian assistance programmes to enhance food security, nutrition and resilience."

About the Programme:
Under the Country Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026), WFP will support Bangladesh on its path to ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030 through four strategic outcomes (SO):

- ▶ **SO1:** Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises.
- ▶ **SO2:** The nutrition needs of women, children, and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- ▶ **SO3:** Vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- ▶ **SO4:** Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises.

WFP, through its partners, currently provides humanitarian assistance to approximately 1.2 million people in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), other UN agencies, and NGOs, WFP is also working in various sectors namely Food Security, Nutrition, Emergency response and Common Services. In the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities and the camps, WFP will continue to: i) provide humanitarian food assistance to the Rohingya population every month through E-vouchers; ii) build the resilience of refugees and local communities through skills development, livelihoods, market linkages, food assistance for assets and volunteer services; iii) support schools and learning centres with school feeding and capacity building for relevant national institutions; iv) implementation of an integrated package of malnutrition prevention and treatment interventions and nutrition services targeting children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women; v) implement safety-net programmes; vi) implement disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security of vulnerable population; vii) implement Food and Nutrition Security Programme in Urban areas; viii) provide lifesaving food assistance during Emergency Response to any disaster in any geographical location in Bangladesh (through the provision of a standby emergency roster).

Conditions for entry:
The organization must have:

- A fully filled-in profile in the UN partner Portal (UNPP)
- Legal status (valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau)
- Experience in the geographic area for which it applies
- Experience in implementing food, nutrition, education (specifically school feeding), cash-based transfers and/or market-based interventions
- Experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
- Experience in emergency preparedness and response
- Organization's strategic objectives that are aligned with WFP's strategic priorities; SO1 to SO4 mentioned above
- Adequate resource capacity (financial human resources and procurement)
- Relevant sector experience (Food, Nutrition, Logistics and Common Services)
- Strong project management experience
- Adequate financial capacity to conduct the required activities supported by an audited financial statement
- Strong relationships with local administration and relevant local and regional institutions

Application Process:
Interested parties are advised to monitor the UN Partner Portal (https://www.unpartnerportal.org/dashboard) for opportunities published for Bangladesh (Calls for Expressions of Interest – CFEI / Request for Proposal - RFP – under Partnership opportunities) during the period between July and September 2024. Please note, unlike previous years, that these partnership opportunities require a full proposal from the outset.

All interested local/national/international NGOs with a valid registration certificate from the NGO Affairs Bureau must ensure that their Organizational Profile on the Portal is fully updated with all the latest information and documents, and they must actively apply to the WFP partnership opportunity with a full proposal. Applications must be submitted through the UN partner portal within the timeframes given. A detailed guideline for creating an organizational profile in UN Partner Portal is available at https://supportcso.unpartnerportal.org/hc/en-us/sections/360000940774. Please note that there are no fees for applications and that applying is free of charge.

In case interested NGO's encounter any technical difficulties with UNPP, please contact bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org.

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Women's Asia Cup
Malaysia vs Thailand
Live from 2:30 pm
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Live from 7:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
England vs West Indies
Second Test, Day 3
Live from 4:00 pm

Tigresses seek momentum in Asia Cup opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team will take on hosts Sri Lanka in their 2024 T20 Asia Cup Group B opener in Dambulla today, hoping to bounce back after a poor run of form in recent series at home.

Bangladesh head coach Hashan Tillakaratne was optimistic when asked about his side's chances leading up to the tournament, where the 2018 champions are slated to face off with Thailand and Malaysia on July 22 and 24, respectively, in their following group fixtures.

"We are going there to win the tournament. We have the credentials to beat any side. We have to go and play our A game; and the preparation has been spot on," Tillakaratne told The Daily Star in a recent interview.

The Tigresses will be buoyed by the return of two experienced stars in pacer Jahanara Alam and all-rounder Rumana Ahmed. The duo made their way back to the side on the back of impressive performances in the recently concluded Women's Dhaka Premier League, with Jahanara ending the tournament as the highest wicket-taker.

PHOTO: **BCB**

"They are experienced and we know what they have done for Bangladesh. It's good to get them back; and selectors recognised their performances in the domestic league. It's a great eye-opener for others also when someone does really well and gets recognised. Experience counts a lot, especially in major tournaments," Tillakaratne remarked.

The completion in the side had increased but, according to the Sri Lankan coach, it also introduced a fear of failure among the players.

The coaching staff had tried to assure the players. "We have to give them courage, and even as we haven't played well in recent times, we have faith in them. The selectors have not closed the door on anyone," Tillakaratne said ahead of the team's departure for Sri Lanka, hinting that Asia Cup performances could open doors to the World Cup squad.

Skipper Nigar Sultana Joty had been carrying the burden of the side's bad batting patch in recent series. Before the team's departure, she had relayed the importance of the opening fixture against Sri Lanka which would be Tigresses' first international match in a while since the home series against India.

Bangladesh have also failed to win any of the matches in the last two home series against Australia and India.

"We could not make the semis in the last Asia Cup. So, naturally, our first objective is to play semifinals. That is why our first game is very important since we have not been playing well for a long time. We have seen some individual performances but not as a team. For our momentum, we want to get a good start in the game against Sri Lanka," Joty said about gaining momentum in a press conference.

Joty was hopeful regarding performances from the two veterans in the team.

"Experience is always useful. Both of them played the last two Asia Cup tournaments. Rumana apu returned after a long time along with Jahanara apu. Both of them played tremendously in the last domestic tournament. I think these two experienced stars would have a big effect on the team," Joty had said.

Bangladesh will be hoping to fix their creaky batting line-up and, after a disastrous run with the bat in recent times, they would be hoping Rumana can add solidity while the rest find more T20-esque approach.

Children from neighbouring areas take to open spaces in the capital's Panthakunja park to play football and cricket yesterday afternoon as widespread violence over quota protests engulfed other parts of the city. The area was relatively spared from the clashes which have induced increased tension among the masses across the country.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Bangladesh eye top-three finish in U-20 Volleyball Championship

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are eyeing a top three finish in the upcoming Asian Men's Under-20 Volleyball Championship, starting on July 23 in Indonesia, said assistant coach Shafiqul Islam Russel.

On the back of an impressive fifth-place finish in the previous edition in Bahrain in 2022, followed by months of solid preparation under the supervision of local coaches as well as national team coach Alipour Arozi, Bangladesh have their sights on surpassing their Bahrain show.

"Finishing fifth in Asian Under-20 Volleyball Championship was a big achievement for Bangladesh in their maiden appearance. So, we have set our goal to surpass our previous best," Russel told The Daily Star yesterday.

There is also an extra incentive to end up in the top three as those teams, by virtue of their position, will gain qualification for the FIVA Men's Under-20 World Championship in 2025.

The Bangladesh contingent is scheduled to leave for Indonesia in the early hours of Sunday.

For Bangladesh, drawn in a strong Group C along with reigning runners-up India, strong Japan and Kuwait, coming out of the group-stage seems to be tough task.

As part of their preparation leading up to the tournament, Bangladesh played against the likes of Nepal and Bhutan – winning the international tournament in BKSP two months ago – and played a total of 10 practice matches against senior sides.

Of the 12-member squad, 10 are from BKSP while five players - Titas Ahmed, Noman Hussain, Shamim Hossain, Al Sayem Rafat, Tatul Ahmed – have experience of playing the same championship two years ago. However, coach Russel remains concerned about the form of his best two players – Noman and Titas – who joined the camp two months late following their official commitments in Bangladesh Air Force.

"If experienced Noman and Titas can perform well and the new players can deliver their best, then we can expect to get out of the group-stage, beating either India or Japan," said Russel.

I have worked on my death bowling: Marufa

*Young pacer **Marufa Akter** maybe still young in international cricket, but she has already become the leader of Bangladesh's pace attack and the standard-bearer when it comes to fitness and work ethics, according to teammates and coaches. Before departing for Sri Lanka to play in her first Women's T20 Asia Cup, Marufa had a conversation with **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** where she spoke about her preparation and expectation in the regional meet. Here are the excerpts:*

The Daily Star (DS): This will be your first Asia Cup and your first tour to Sri Lanka. How excited are you?
Marufa Akter (MA): Last year, I couldn't go to Sri Lanka for a bilateral series due to my board exam. It feels great that I'm going this time. We have won the tournament before. So, our target will be the same; winning the tournament.

DS: You had a decent Women's Dhaka Premier League (WDPL) campaign for BKSP where you took 13 wickets and then were part of the national team's two-week-long residential camp in BKSP. How do rate your preparation for the Asia Cup?
MA: The preparation has been good. The most important thing for me is that I've remained fit. I had a decent Premier League this year. Then, we also had a good camp at the BKSP. We played quite a few practice matches and the camp ended well. So, overall, I can say that all of us are in a good shape.

DS: Bangladesh were outplayed in the home series against Australia and India. Your performances were also not up to the mark. What have you done in the months since then to overcome that bad patch?
MA: More than anything, I practiced spot bowling during this period. I also worked on adding more variations so that I have more options to deceive the batters.

DS: Can you be more specific?
MA: I can bowl well with the new ball. But I struggle to control my line and length during the death overs. During this camp, I worked with the old ball. I tried slower deliveries and yorker. Now, I'm feeling very comfortable with my death bowling.

DS: Did you work with any particular coach for this?
MA: I worked with Shiblu sir [Robiul Islam]. He worked with us during our camp in BKSP. I worked under him for two weeks. He taught me different variations. It was a great experience for me.

DS: In a very short time, you have become the leader of Bangladesh's pace attack. What will be yours and the Bangladesh pace attacks' plan in Sri Lanka?
MA: The wickets in the sub-continent almost always favour the spinners. We have made a plan to bowl according to the wicket. Our coach [Shiblu sir] has worked with us on bowling variations. We will try to bowl what he taught us.

DS: Over the years, batting has almost always been a big issue in big tournaments for Bangladesh. Have the batters done anything specific in the camp to ensure that it they don't let the team down in Sri Lanka?
MA: I think all of our batters worked really hard in the camp. I'm very optimistic that our batters will be able to provide decent performances in the tournament.

DS: We will be hosting ICC Women's T20 World Cup in couple of months' time. How do you see the team's preparation leading up to the World Cup? Will there be an extra pressure as hosts?
MA: If you plan step by step, I think everything becomes easier. I don't think there will be any pressure. The team will get great support from the home fans.

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The violence must end

Welcome offer of negotiation is being undermined by continued attacks

Twenty-nine dead, at least, and over 3,000 wounded, in one single day on Thursday. Eleven of those killed were students, a 17-year-old school child among them, and the rest includes a journalist, two rickshaw pullers and a pedestrian. While the identities of all the deceased could not be confirmed, what is apparent from media reports is that most of the victims were hit by shotgun pellets when law enforcers fired indiscriminately. A day later, even without any internet connectivity in the country, reports of violent crackdown on protesters are coming in. As of writing this editorial, at least 66 have been killed in attacks, many of them students. Dhaka as well as many other parts of the country have turned into areas of violence, with gun shots and grenades going off even late into the night.

What can possibly justify any response by the law enforcement that has led to this death toll? What is even more ironic is that while the attacks on protesters continued, the government was making calls for peace and dialogue. Peace and dialogue, as much as we all want it now, are not achieved through shotgun pellets and live bullets.

Who will take responsibility for all the deaths? The protests we have seen were largely peaceful—and the government, too, reacted with great restraint initially—before unprovoked attacks first by armed cadres of the ruling party, and then by law enforcement earlier in the week. What of the right to protest as enshrined in our constitution? It may seem pointless to ask this now, but what's the worst that would have happened had the protesters been allowed to carry out their shutdown programme without any intervention, as we saw in the first weeks of the protest? It may have caused inconvenience to ordinary citizens, and certainly the government, but it would not have led to so many unwarranted deaths. And if the aim on Thursday was to control a crowd from becoming violent, why did they not use non-lethal means to disperse them? Such indiscriminate and disproportionate violence has clearly only further incited an already angry crowd.

There are news reports of the cruel way that many of the students were killed. While we are glad that a police committee has been formed to probe the killing of Abu Sayed, can we expect the same for every death that has taken place? We can only hope that the judicial probe that has been promised to investigate the deaths will look into police excesses and recommend action accordingly.

It may well be that at this point other elements have infiltrated the movement and are carrying out violent activities not endorsed by the students. One of the coordinators of the movement has already disassociated themselves from political elements and destruction of public property. It is imperative that for the credibility of the movement, the students continue their protests peacefully. It is also important to distinguish the quota reform movement from those wanting to take advantage of the situation, but in order to do that, the government must first assuage the protesters. While we welcome the government's move to appeal to the court to keep 80 percent government jobs based on merit, and for the hearing to be held on Sunday, we urge it to follow through with confidence-building measures, first and foremost among which is putting a stop to the violence.

On top of all these, the government has decided to suspend internet connectivity in the country. To what end, we must ask. We have seen time and again how breakdowns in communication breed rumours, insecurity and anxiety. It also makes it impossibly difficult for journalists to do their job and provide a trusted account of what is happening on the ground. Ultimately, it further erodes trust and impedes any path to dialogue. We urge the authorities to restore internet connection across the country immediately.

Ensure proper inmate segregation

Jail overcrowding increases radicalisation risk

We are deeply concerned about the situation in Chattogram Central Jail, where notorious criminals, militants and terrorists are being kept in the same wards as general inmates. According to a report by the daily Samakal, the prison, with a capacity for 2,249 inmates, is currently housing twice as many prisoners. This not only degrades the living conditions for all inmates, but also puts the security of the prison at risk.

The report mentions that there are currently 79 secured cells for dangerous criminals in the prison while the number of such inmates exceeds 700. The recent transfer of imprisoned Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF) members from Bandarban has contributed to the increase in the number of such inmates. One building with secured cells is currently being used to keep KNF members only. As a result, the condemned prisoners and dangerous criminals from that building were shifted to a general ward. Inmates of this prison include leaders of JMB, Ansarullah Bangla Team, Huji and other terrorist outfits. Confining them together with general inmates increases the risk of radicalisation of the latter.

We have repeatedly warned about this issue, calling on the need for rehabilitation and deradicalisation of militants in prison. There have been reports of instances when militant prisoners took advantage of the gaps in surveillance in overcrowded prisons to create new outfits and recruit new members. This compromises the security of a prison and also threatens the future peace and stability of the nation. Besides the militancy threat, keeping notorious criminals with general inmates endangers the latter's lives. The recent killing of one prisoner by another at Chattogram Central Jail is evidence of that danger.

Overcrowding in prison also dehumanises inmates by stripping them of their basic rights such as a proper space to sleep. The objective of imprisonment should not only be punishment; the focus should be on rehabilitation. While the expansion of Chattogram Central Jail is crucial in the short run, planning modern detention centres with proper surveillance systems and facilities to ensure inmates' basic rights, and preparing them, on a case-by-case basis, for social reintegration should be the ultimate goal.

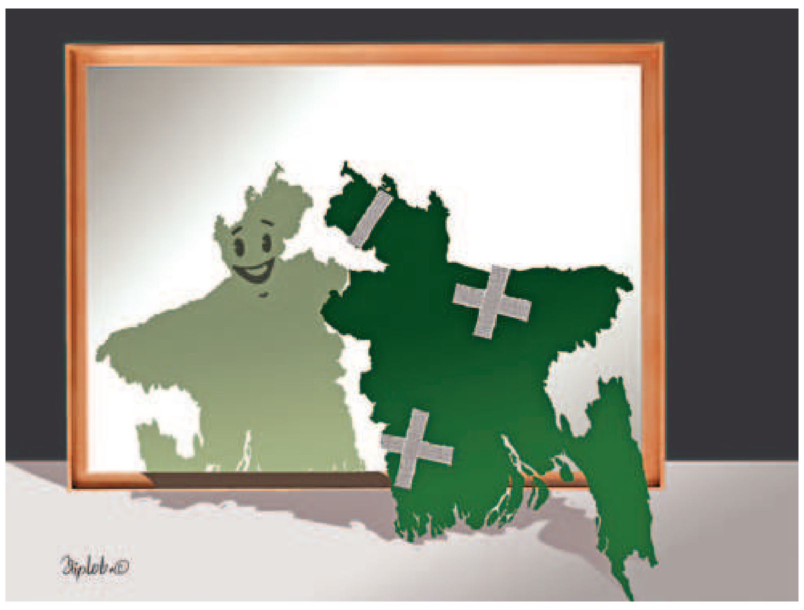
QUESTION LEAKS, QUOTA DEBACLE AND KLEPTOCRACY

When a quick buck reigns supreme

__Dr Manzoor Ahmed__
is professor emeritus at BRAC University, chair of Bangladesh Early Childhood Development Network (BEN), and adviser to the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

DR MANZOOR AHMED

The leak of question papers, revealed by a TV channel, of a railway recruitment examination under the Public Service Commission (PSC) has brought to the fore the problem of unfairness in public examinations of all kinds—be it selection of candidates for a job, admission to higher education institutions, or student performance at various levels of education. According to media reports, a syndicate comprising, among others, PSC employees and senior officials has been active for over two decades and has orchestrated at least 30 question paper leaks for government recruitment tests, including those for the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams, over the last 12 years. The PSC had to cancel the 24th BCS preliminary test in 2003 due to allegations of leaked question papers. During the 33rd BCS written test in 2013, there were media reports about alleged question paper leaks and those question papers allegedly getting sold for Tk 5 lakh per set.



VISUAL: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

Complaints about question leaks, buying and selling of question papers, and bribery for primary school teacher recruitment and secondary school teachers' certification written examinations and oral interviews have been reported periodically. Over the years, there have also been reports of question leaks during Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exams, as well as for university entrance and medical college entrance tests.

The lack of integrity of recruitment examinations disclosed again at this time is particularly egregious when students all over the country are protesting against the existing system of various quotas in government service recruitment, including a high 30 percent reserved for the descendants of 1971 freedom fighters. Freedom fighters themselves or even their children are no longer of age to enter a government job 53 years after the Liberation War. But then the demand for recruitment by merit instead of through quotas becomes futile if the recruitment exams are not fair or not honestly conducted.

Technical solutions are available for stemming question leaks, which require using digital technology that allows preparing multiple sets of questions and their random distribution to examinees at the last moment so they do not know which set of questions one may get at the test ("Plugging question leaks: A technical solution," The Daily Star, February 17, 2018). These solutions have been applied partially in the secondary and higher secondary board examinations; as a result, there have been less complaints about these examinations in recent years. No technical solution, however, can be fool-proof against totally dishonest and greedy people who will go to any length to make a quick buck in a social environment that breeds and tolerates such actions.

Technical means of plugging leaks should be more widely used in both academic and non-academic examinations. At the same time, political conditions have to be created for the technical means to be applied effectively and for violations of rules to be quickly and severely penalised.

The matter of question paper leak surely added to the frustration of the students who resumed the quota reformed movement earlier this month. Oil was poured in the fire when the ruling party leaders insinuated that the quota protesters were sympathetic to Razakars. And how can it be helpful in finding a reasonable resolution of the issue when the ruling party's student arm as well as law enforcement is unleashed to beat up protesters on campus and in the streets, leading to countless deaths and serious injuries? The university administrations remain hapless bystanders of the organised violence occurring on campuses. The university teachers, united in their own protest, are vocal in putting forth their pension benefit demands, but remain silent about the mayhem on campus. All of them have been failing to fulfil their obligation to protect students' freedom to express views peacefully without being subjected to violence by those holding opposing views.

The narrative of corruption at high levels in major institutions of the state at mind-boggling proportions coming out recently, by coincidence or not, adds to the build-up of a mood of dystopia among citizens, including students concerned about their future.

Declaration of assets and income required by public representation rules submitted by candidates for parliamentary and local government elections have revealed staggering percentage of growth of their wealth counted in multipliers of hundreds and thousands. However, the Election Commission (EC), the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) have not considered it necessary to ask any question and no candidate has been barred from election on this ground.

One is also reminded of the deplorable state of the country's financial and banking system that has become the instrument for looting peoples' money through loan defaulting and money laundering by a privileged group. Or the much-hyped mega infrastructure projects which are the costliest by world standards and pass on a heavy burden of loan repayment to future generations. In public perception, kleptocracy is the order of the day.

An air of uncertainty and despair engulfs young people. The cloud of dystopia thickens as public perception connects the dotted line between pervasive corruption, greed, inefficiency and ineptitude on the one hand, and lack of accountability and a culture of impunity created by a crony oligarchy of the political class, civil and law-enforcing bureaucracy and a greedily selfish business class working in collusion on the other.

Technical solutions including digital technology should be applied systematically to limit the chances of abusing the public examinations. A rational response to students' grievances about the quotas must be found by political decision-makers. But, above all, the political leadership must recognise the dystopia that submerges young people. The playbook for holding on to power need to change for the good of the regime and the nation.

Road safety and a nation's betrayal of its youth

__Mahiya Tabassum__
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

MAHIYA TABASSUM

As I write this, the weight of a recent tragedy bears heavily on my heart. Just months ago, I received a call that shattered my world: my brother-in-law, vibrant and full of life, had been killed in a road accident. The image of his disfigured face, the knowledge that he suffered for those final 10 minutes on the Bekutia Bridge, haunts me still. What was meant to be a symbol of progress—the eighth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge—instead became the site of unspeakable loss for two families.

PHOTO: **STAR**

This personal anguish is far from unique. In the wake of yet another devastating report on road accidents in Bangladesh, we are forced to confront an uncomfortable truth: our nation has failed its young people. The statistics released by the Road Safety Foundation are not just alarming; they are a damning indictment of our collective inaction and apathy. Since 2019, a staggering 5,619 students have lost their lives on our roads. Let that number sink in. These aren't mere statistics; they represent crushed dreams, devastated families, and a generation's potential cut tragically short.

The breakdown of these deaths is equally chilling: around 2,783 (49.52 percent) were either bikers or their passengers, at least 2,641 (47 percent) were children aged 5-17, around 1,534 (27.30 percent) were pedestrians killed by hit-and-run drivers, and 833 students died crossing train tracks in just five and a half years. Each of these numbers represents a life needlessly lost, a family forever altered.

I'm transported back to 2018, to the days of the Road Safety Movement. As an undergraduate, I stood alongside my peers, demanding change. The memory of being chased by armed "helmet gangs" still sends a chill down my spine. I can still taste the acrid sting of tear gas, and see the bruised and bloodied faces of friends and seniors. My younger sister, trapped with classmates in a violent confrontation in Dhanmondi, narrowly escaped harm. Those days left an indelible mark, a trauma that feels as fresh today as it did then.

We thought we had sparked real change. The deaths of Dia Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib galvanised the nation. We saw a new Road Transport Act, 17 directives from the Prime Minister's Office, and even a high-powered task force led by the home minister. Yet here we are, six years later, and the carnage continues unabated.

The tragedy in Mirsharai serves as a stark reminder of how little has changed. Eleven years ago, on July 11, 2011, as many as 45 lives—including 42 students—were snuffed out in a single, horrific accident. We vowed "never again," yet the body count continues to rise. In the first six months of this year alone, 611 students have already perished on our roads.

How many more children must die before we see meaningful action? How many more families must be torn apart? The development projects our government touts ring hollow when our youth are being mowed down at such an alarming rate. Besides, the regular occurrence of such accidents is inching closer to desensitising us, our hearts turning blunt to these tragedies. We cannot allow this to be our new normal.

The Road Safety Foundation's recommendations offer a starting point: launch comprehensive road safety campaigns in every educational institution; crack down on unsafe vehicles and reckless driving; and address the seven major causes they have identified, including faulty infrastructure and lack of knowledge about safe road use. But we need more than recommendations. We need action. We need enforcement. We need a fundamental shift in how we approach road safety as a society.

To readers who have lost loved ones to road accidents: I see you. I grieve with you. Your pain is not forgotten, and your loss will not be in vain if we can demand better from those in power, while also trying to be a part of the change we wish to see.

Ensuring the safety of the citizens should be non-negotiable. Road safety isn't just about statistics or policy. It's about the fundamental right of every person to travel without fear and to return home safely to their loved ones. It's about building a society where a simple commute doesn't carry the risk of becoming another heartbreaking headline.

We owe it to those we have lost, to those who still bear the physical and emotional scars of past movements, and to future generations to demand better. How long can the government move forward while holding onto empty promises and half measures? We need visible, meaningful action; our lives, and the lives of our loved ones, depend on it.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Advertisement: 01711623910
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GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
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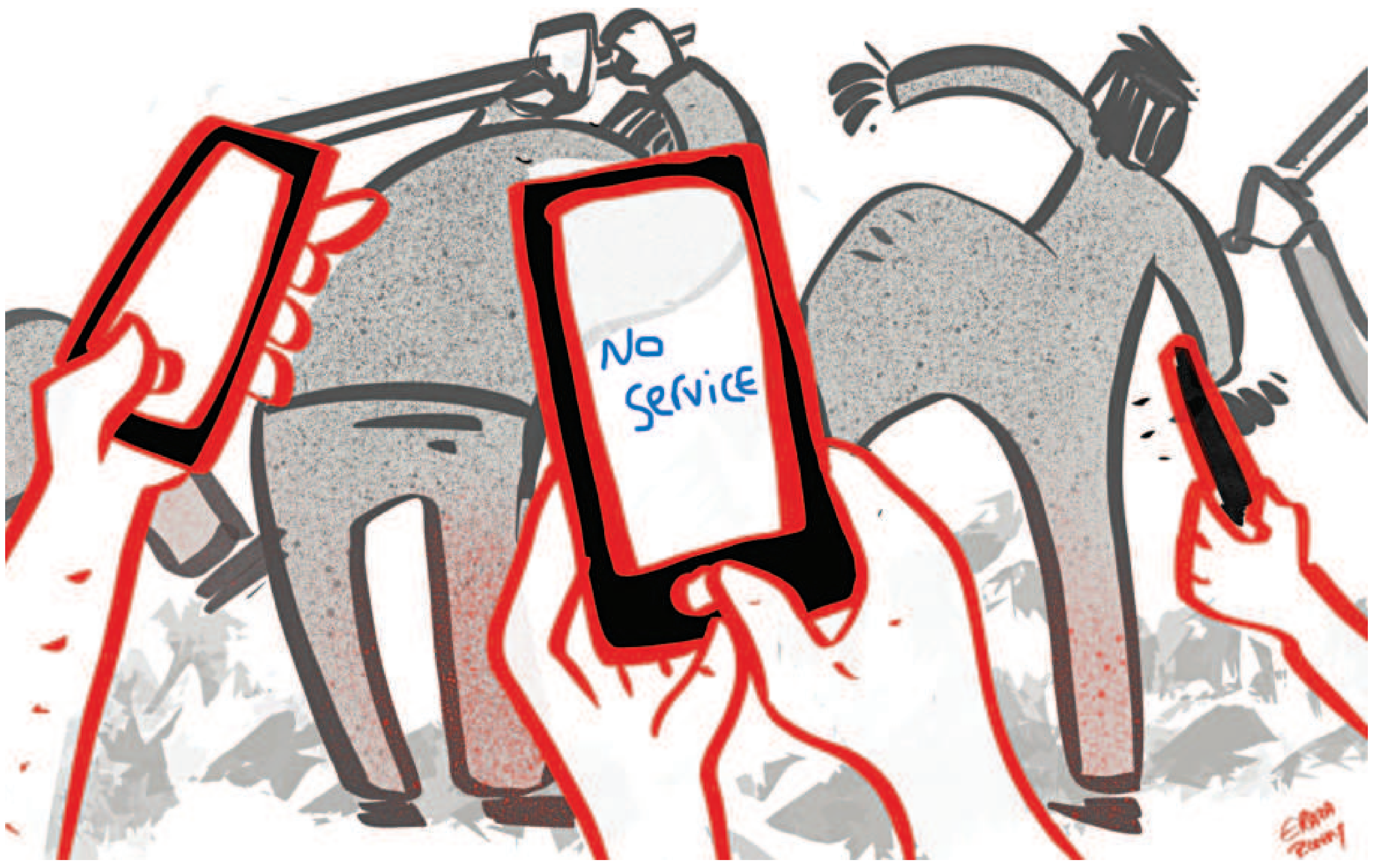
Whom do the information blackouts ultimately benefit?

Shaer Reaz
is a former journalist and technology enthusiast, founder and entrepreneur.

SHAER REAZ



VISUAL: **EHASANUR RAZA RONNY**

When the internet was initially made accessible to the public in the late 1980s, the once-secret communication tool developed by the US military was regarded as a passing fad, reserved for the technically competent and the computer savvy, and not something that would significantly alter daily life. Now, as I write this in the relative information darkness of a country-wide internet shutdown, on a text editor in lieu of Google Docs, with only yesterday's newspapers for fact-checking purposes, it is a sobering reality that we are crippled without access to the internet.

As Bangladesh struggles to contain the outpouring of frustrations of quota reformists, general students and dormant anti-government political opponents who would take advantage of the quota reform movement, internet shutdown is one of the major aspects of control that the Awami League government has exercised to curb the protests.

On July 19, news reports on TV channels communicated the government's official line that nationwide internet outage is due to a fire at a supposedly critical building in Dhaka, contradicting statements made by State Minister of Telecommunications and ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak that specifically mention enforced shutdown of internet access. Since the night of July 18, internet access has been intentionally withdrawn from the capital, as well as large swaths of the country. Previously, since early July 18, mobile data was completely inoperable across the whole city. This is nothing new, and it was an expected measure from a government that has repeatedly put down mass uprisings by controlling the flow of information.

During past elections and mass mobilisations, the effect of choking the free flow of information has clearly backfired. For example, during the previous quota reform movement and road safety movement in 2018, the nationwide shutdown of Facebook, Messenger, YouTube and mobile data led to a wildfire of rumours and speculations. Whether true or not, such rumours do not do the party any favours.

It is in stark contrast to the general attitude of the Awami League-led government when things are going well. "Smart Bangladesh," "Digital Bangladesh," and the general promise of growth through neoliberal application of technology has long been an election mandate of the party, and to be absolutely fair, the government has largely followed through by steadily increasing the bandwidth of internet connectivity, state-led funding and nurturing of tech parks, startup accelerators, recognition of innovators in the tech industry, and more. However, the price of unmasking a forward-thinking, technology-enabling government is apparently student deaths at the hands of police and Bangladesh Chhatra League during mass uprisings.

When it comes to accepting the blame or taking accountability of state-sponsored violence against students, the proponents of internet and technology-led innovation are equally fickle. The star and darling of startup founders and accelerators, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, has made comments that directly blame Facebook and social media platforms for the deaths of students. Facebook/Meta's complicity in political violence and genocide on a global scale is well-documented, but for Facebook to intentionally target a fourth-year student of English in Rangpur for summary execution—or at least 39 others confirmed killed in the protests as of this writing—is a bit of a stretch. Perhaps the state minister meant it less literally; perhaps he meant the "idea" of Facebook: unfiltered, uncontrolled stating of opinions, political organising, video documentation of police and BCL brutality, requests for help from general people so that high school and university students don't have to face the horrors of it all alone.

Forcing telecommunication operators to shut down mobile data access or reduce network bandwidth is also a common tactic, and we have seen it employed quite effectively to cut communications between protesting groups across the country. The neoliberal machine of the AL government has ensured, through bullying of tax collectors and regulatory bodies, that every private provider of information technology infrastructure is beholden to the government's requests for access or control.

This is a fact that we have also seen applied to foreign entities. Fearing the loss of access to vast user bases, companies like Meta and Google are commonly seen answering requests by the Bangladesh government for data on specific groups or individuals, and monitoring of supposedly encrypted network traffic on these platforms revealing more about users than they are aware of. While other parts of the world are fighting tooth and nail through enforcement of policies like the EU's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and via anti-trust commissions to protect user data, it is exactly here that we see our own government not only taking steps in the opposite direction, but actively utilising predatory data privacy policies of internet and social media platforms to surveil users in Bangladesh.

It is irony of the highest order that the interconnected nature of everyone's lives through the internet and social media—as promoted and established in part by the Awami League's electoral pledges—is also the bane of the party's existence, and one that requires a variety of measures to control. Whether it's the draconian Digital Security Act (now the Cyber Security Act), ICT Act, or more literal tools like BTRC's network jammer vans, threats against internet service providers and telcos or surveillance tools that monitor and track "persons of interest," the government has shown time and again that they have no qualms using information blackouts during elections and protests to establish their agendas.

Then why promote digital innovation and technology adoption in the first place, if your first order of business during a political crisis is to plunge the country into a medieval-era information blackout?

The answer is simple, and it is a sobering reality for tech innovators and proponents of technology to contend with. The more technology adoption there is, the more dependency there is on mediums of communication that ultimately end up in government control and regulations, the wider the blackout. We have seen how protesters use platforms like Facebook and Messenger to organise and coordinate their movements; by first funnelling them into positions where they depend on platforms like these and then creating a blanket enforced outage when the proverbial excrement hits the fan, the information blackout is double effective and actually crippling.

In a country where political representation, freedom of expression and mass mobilisation around common political issues is severely repressed, it is vital that information blackouts are resisted at the root level. Understanding how information flows are surveilled and where access to information can be severed is a critical component of ensuring rights to personal freedom of speech, political protest and assembly. It is important to realise that every political protest will inevitably turn to violent dispersal and information warfare, be it through misinformation or state-enforced blackouts.

If the state has indeed taken steps to provide internet access and digitisation of services with the malicious intent of accessing, surveilling and effectively controlling the flow of information, then it provides dissenters no other option but to take their organising and mobilising offline. It is a scenario where civil unrest can lead to increasingly dangerous and potentially violent situations with plenty of misinformation spreading post-fact, whereas, providing public forums for expressions of discontent without intentional information blackouts can minimise misinformation and unnecessary violence.

If the events of the quota reform movement are looked back upon, it is not going to be any stretch of the imagination to assume conversations post-fact are also full of misinformation and biased attempts at manipulation of public opinion. Numbers—of dead, injured, and picked up for questioning—will continue to be questioned, while events and narratives—that of law enforcement, the protesters, and state actors—will hold less and less value over time. This is a direct by-product of the information blackout imposed on the nation's media houses and civilians.

After being in power for 15 years, it is not strange to expect the Awami League to be comfortable in their position of power enough to let the conversation flow without attempting to control or disrupt it. Dialogue is the basis of any democracy, and if the AL is to show to the world that Bangladesh is indeed a functioning democratic nation—in reality or as just a perception—it is paramount that the government allow information technology to operate uninterrupted, even during times of political crisis. If not for the sake of ensuring freedom of speech and assembly, then for the sake of their own political image.

Are we educated merely to continue the cycle?

Abir Hossain
is a sub-editor at Campus, Rising Stars, and Star Youth.

ABIR HOSSAIN

Education is the beacon of enlightenment. It is also the backbone of a nation. Pursue it well enough, and you can make it up the ladder of success. One doesn't need an incentive to pursue education because the entity itself has always been a means to attain one's goals. Why wouldn't it? What is so wrong about envisioning a better life for oneself, demanding greater resources, and thus mobility? How does one attain that?

Time and again, education has been professed to be an area of great interest—one where our "leaders" would like to invest more. However, a glance at the fiscal year budgets over the last decade coupled with recent developments reveals a rather grim picture of where our education stands. It is stagnant, discriminatory and, unsurprisingly, corrupt. If the supposed backbone of the nation is lofty, made to stand on false promises, as students, what can we hope for, if anything at all?

Meritocracy and perseverance—while lauded by institutions—simply do not have a place in the system anymore. Rather, what gets precedence and thus, opportunities are connections, mostly with the corrupt. In a report by this daily, it was revealed that a syndicate involving officials and employees of the Public Service Commission (PSC) had leaked question papers for government recruitment tests, including those for the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams, at least 30 times over the last 12 years.

While investigators believe that the syndicate has been active for about two decades now, I can't help but wonder when this practice will come to a halt. Without much scrutiny, who is to say that the government officials who attained a position through the leaked question papers won't indulge in the same practices? After all, they themselves got in through unfair means. The possibility that these officials will allow future examinees to sit for the test without tampering with the outcome is slim. If this is the cycle that persists, who stops it? More importantly, can anyone stop it?

With momentum on the students' side, the quota reform movement has continued to stride forward and make its demands known. However, not even a united body of students across the nation, fighting for what is rightfully theirs, is enough to call for reform. Rather, it is being vilified and thwarted. If the students are unable to amplify their voices, what is our education being reduced to? When we are taught in classrooms, must we only learn to be obedient, even in the face of injustice? Must we submit with blind devotion to the powers that be? If so, then we all must be left to wonder what the real value of our education is. If we are unable to apply what we have learnt, think critically about a situation, and make changes that benefit the masses and not only the few, then we are only commodities helping the order remain in place—not enlightened, educated citizens. Yet, this shortcoming cannot be attributed to the education we undertake, but rather to the system that allows it to remain in place.

Ambitions, dare we have any, are more often than not rooted in change. Despite all the hurdles and bureaucratic inefficiencies of government jobs, I would like to believe that there are a handful of recruits who did make it based solely on their hard work and merit. Yet, it would be wishful thinking to assume that a handful of individuals can enact change. It seems awfully defeating that not even entering the realm of government jobs can help alter the status quo. They are, like most of us, at the mercy of the system, perhaps to an even greater extent. Even if someone were to take steps to eradicate corruption, who is to say that they won't be stopped, penalised, or worse?

When students are taught in classrooms, must they only learn to be obedient, even in the face of injustice? The photo was taken in Chattogram on July 16, 2024. FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

All of this is to say that once the current student body graduates and joins the workforce, they will hope to see change or undertake it themselves. The vigour of youth emerges because they have not been disillusioned into accepting the deficiencies of the present. It is all the more important for us because these deficiencies pose a risk to our future. The persistence of the status quo is an attack on our aspirations because it undermines the role of education. Should we expect the next generation of the workforce to undertake transformations in the system? Absolutely. But whether it will happen or not will be determined by the actions of the present.

If the cycle is to be broken, the students' demands have to be met. Otherwise, we will risk being stuck in the same vicious cycle of perpetuating corruption and disparaging our brightest minds. More importantly, the onus will then fall on the next generation to fix the foundations of a rotten system, when it is really down to the system to not only rectify such issues but also enable the next crop of leaders to build on their progress. For the time being, though, we are a long way from talking about progress or even stagnation.

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A dream shot down by pellets

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Asif Hasan dreamed of completing his studies and becoming a government administration cadre officer.

That dream, however, is never to come true, as the fourth semester English student of Northern University, lost his life to shotgun pellets lodged in his chest.

He and at least eight others were killed and several hundreds were injured during the violent clashes between quota reform protesters and law enforcers, who were assisted by ruling Awami League activists, in the capital's Uttara on Thursday.

Asif's father, who lost his wife to a motorcycle accident in March 2013, has been silenced by numbness, Moniruzzaman, the victim's cousin and a teacher of Hadipur Ahsania High School, told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

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Smoke fills the sky as a building of the Directorate General of Health Services burns in Mohakhali yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Lives upended by internet shutdown

STAR REPORT

Thirty-two-year-old Uttarkhan resident Noorjahan Kabir runs a Facebook-based business, for which she needs to pay her supplier weekly.

"I was supposed to pay him this [yesterday] morning, but was unable to access the bKash app without a working internet connection. Meanwhile, my supplier got concerned as he is dependent on the payments from online vendors like me to run his family."

Finding no other way, Noorjahan sent her husband to withdraw money from a nearby ATM around 11:00am. However, he came back empty-handed as the booth too was facing network issues.

Like her, people all over the country have been struggling to access essential services that rely on the internet to function, including digital money transactions, digital utility bill payments, online communication, and mobile credit recharge.

Senior photojournalist Sheikh Enam, from the capital's Mugda area, "I was supposed to pay my prepaid gas and electricity bills by today. There's no way to pay these bills with cash.

"If the meters run out, there will be no

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Essentials' prices spiral as supply chain disrupted

SUKANTA HALDER

The ongoing unrest centering the quota reform movement has ruptured the supply chain of essentials and other commodities, causing their prices to soar.

Take the case of Mohammad Rajib, an onion wholesaler at Karwan Bazar. He had three truckloads of onions sent from Magura and Rajbari to Dhaka but only one truck reached the capital.

Mohammad Rajib, an onion wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, had three truckloads of onions sent to Dhaka from Magura and Rajbari but only one truck reached the capital.

Like Rajib, almost all onion suppliers are on the same boat. Subsequently, the price of the local variety of onion has ticked up by Tk 2 a kg to Tk 100 in Dhaka's kitchen markets.

"If the situation persists, the price will go up every day," Rajib said.

Yusuf Bepary, a potato wholesaler at the same market, said he has been trying to bring the tuber from Bogura and Rajbari for the last two days as he could not find a truck even after agreeing to pay a substantial premium.

Usually the fare is Tk 18,000; now, it has gone up to Tk 24,000.

Yet, Yusuf could not find a trucker to come to Dhaka amid the countrywide blockade and violence.

Similarly, Mohammad Faruk, a rice wholesaler at Mirpur-1 kitchen market, was desperately searching for a truck to bring the rice he brought from Noagaon, Dinajpur and Kushtia.

Although the price of rice is yet to increase, Faruk is expecting it to go up if the current deadlock continues until next week.

Belayet Hossain, a wholesaler of pulse, oil, flour and sugar at the same market, said he could get any product from dealers since Thursday night.

"If the situation does not improve within Saturday, then the prices of products will go up," he said.

This correspondent found that chicken, fish and vegetables became dearer at Dhaka's kitchen markets yesterday.

Mohammad Rubel, a broiler chicken trader at Duaripara bazar, said the price has increased by Tk 10 to Tk 15 per kg in a day.

Due to supply shortage, the prices of fish such as rui, katla, hilsa have increased by Tk 100 to Tk 150 per kg, said Awlad Hossain, a fish trader at Hatirpool kitchen market.

The strike has affected the supply of commodities causing shortage of products, said Murtoza Zaman, chief executive of Unimart, one of the leading supermarkets with eight outlets.

"Our staff cannot come to the stores -- three of our employees have been injured during clashes," he said.

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QUOTA PROTESTS

HC judge tasked with probing deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, a High Court judge, has taken the responsibility of the commission formed to probe the deaths and criminal activities during the quota protest across the country.

He will talk to the officials concerned of the coordination and reforms unity under the Cabinet Division tomorrow in this regard.

As the head, Justice Diliruzzaman is expected to visit the places of occurrences soon and complete the inquiry in 30 working days, Md Shafiqul Islam, public relations officer of the Supreme Court, told The Daily Star yesterday.

On Thursday, the government formed the one-member commission.

Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain the same day issued a notification to this effect.

The coordination and reforms unity of the cabinet unit will provide the commission with secretarial assistance.

The commission will find the reasons behind the deaths of six persons on July 16 and identify those responsible for the deaths and recent incidents of violence, arson, lootings, and criminal activities, the notification said, adding that it will come into effect immediately.

Earlier in the day, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan nominated the name of Justice Diliruzzaman as the member of the commission following a request from the law ministry, Law Secretary Md Golam Sarwar told The Daily Star.

Horror engulfs Badda, Rampura as bullets fly

ASIFUR RAHMAN, MASHFIQ MIZAN, NAFIS ALMAS SIAM, *and* **AHMED DEEPTO**

It was absolute mayhem in Rampura and Badda areas yesterday.

Quota protesters clashed with police and BGB personnel since morning to dusk, leaving at least 13 killed and over 500 injured. Many of the victims had bullet and shotgun pellet wounds on the upper part of their bodies.

These correspondents visited the areas between Rampura and Mouchak yesterday and found all alleys blocked by the demonstrators with tree trunks and electricity poles.

Many teenagers were seen joining the protesters.

The situation took a turn for worse after Juma prayers as BGB opened fire on demonstrators who were marching towards the Rampura Bridge.

In retaliation, the demonstrators hurled brick chunks at police and BGB personnel. Some of them were seen vandalising CCTV cameras in front of buildings and shops.

Police and BGB personnel were stationed in front of BTV building. They had to deal with protesters from five sides -- Mouchak, Banasree, Aftabnagar, Badda, and Hatirjheel.

The clashes continued until 7:30pm. The demonstrators burnt tyres and rubbish on the street and vendalised a few shops.

The agitators vandalised and set fire to the PBI office in Banasree. They also ransacked the Rampura Police Station.

Between 3:30pm and 5:00pm, demonstrators from Badda area attempted to get to the Rampura Bridge at least five times, but they had to retreat in the face of firing by law enforcers.

A group of agitators were seen throwing brick chunks at law enforcers from in front of East West University at Aftabnagar.

Some locals were seen providing the demonstrators with drinking water. They also gave old cloths, which the agitators burnt to save themselves from the teargas.

BGB used bullets, hundreds of teargas canisters, and sound grenades to disperse the protesters.

The doctors in at least three hospitals nearby said most of the patients they received were shot by real bullets, not rubber bullets.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Glitch causes global tech outage

Millions affected as airlines, businesses, emergency services hit

CNN ONLINE

An enormous IT outage hit hard banks, grocery stores, TV networks, airlines and even emergency services across the world causing suffering to millions yesterday.

The problem occurred when cybersecurity firm Crowdstrike was conducting a software update of it's popular product Falcon Cybersecurity Software, said its CEO.

The company stressed that the issue was not due to a cyberattack. The CEO of the firm said the system was sent an update and that update had a software bug in it and caused a problem with Microsoft operating system.

"We identified this very quickly and remedied the issue. As the system came back online, it rebooted and working. And now we are working with each and every customer to bring their service back online," he said.

The Falcon is used by numerous fortune 500 companies including Microsoft. Crowdstrike also provides cyberattacks investigation.

Scores hurt as Islami Andolan activists clash with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital's Purana Paltan area turned into a battleground yesterday as activists of the Islami Andolan Bangladesh and Gana Sanghati Andolan clashed with police, leaving scores injured.

Sporadic clashes between the political party activists and law enforcers took place for about five hours from 11:30am.

The BNP and Islami Andolan were scheduled to hold rallies in front of the Jatiya Press Club and Baitul Mukarram, respectively, at 3:00pm to express solidarity with the ongoing student movement demanding reforms to quotas in government jobs.

A procession of Gana Sanghati Andolan, led by Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, marched towards the Jatiya Press Club around 11:30am.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

Palestinians mourn a relative killed in an Israeli strike, at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

Prisoners escape after Narsingdi jail comes under attack

Firearms looted from armoury

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Several hundred people yesterday afternoon attacked the Narsingdi district jail and set its main building on fire, leading to the escape of a large number of prisoners.

There were 826 prisoners in the jail.

Witnesses said the attackers, carrying sticks and iron roads, broke open the main entrance to the jail around 5:00pm.

They broke a part of the boundary wall, vandalised the office of the jail superintendent and set ablaze the main building.

Abul Kalam Azad, jail superintendent of Narsingdi, last night said, "We could not stop the attack as only eight guards were on duty at that time. The attackers broke into the armoury and looted firearms."

Asked how many inmates fled, he said they could not ascertain the number till 9:00pm.

Azad said they did not get support from the law enforcers on time.

Mustafizur Rahman, superintendent of police in Narsingdi, said, "Soon after hearing about the incident, we sent a police team to the jail. But criminals put up barricades on their way to the prison at different places."

He said that they were trying to take the situation under control.

Till the filing of this report around 10:00pm, gunshots were heard in the jail area every 10 to 15 minutes.

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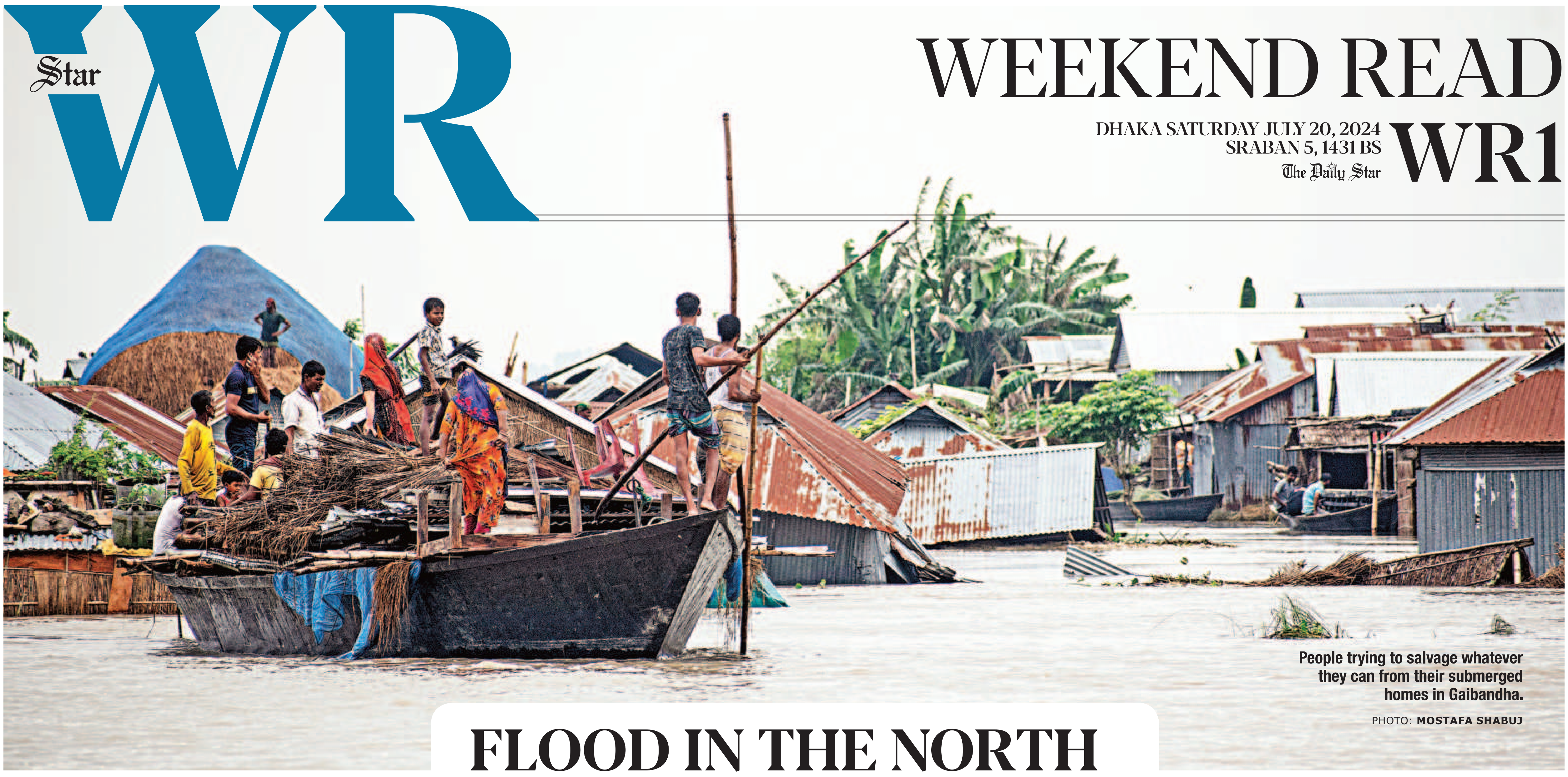

People trying to salvage whatever they can from their submerged homes in Gaibandha.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

FLOOD IN THE NORTH

A first-hand look into DEVASTATION

As the water recedes, revealing the scars it's leaving behind, fresh anxieties surface. River erosion is worsening in many of these areas.

MASHFIQ MIZAN *with* **S DILIP ROY**
back from Kurigram and Gaibandha

Is it a vast river, or a habitable land?

This is the question I kept asking myself while travelling to Kurigram, a district in northern Bangladesh, as my train passed through one submerged land after another.

The answer came in glimpses -- like rooftops peeking through the water and submerged Shaheed Minars hinting there was a school here once.

This year's floods in northern Bangladesh have been the worst in recent memory, particularly hitting remote areas of Kurigram and Gaibandha.

The suffering of those living near rivers and on chars (landforms created by sediment deposits) has been largely unseen due to the remoteness of the affected areas.

I reached Kurigram earlier this month to witness the crisis firsthand.

Kurigram, a district 378km from Dhaka, is almost like a village surrounded by rivers.

About 14 rivers from India enter Bangladesh through Kurigram. Additionally, two more transboundary rivers flow through this district.

Most of Kurigram's remote upazilas lie on the banks of these rivers.

For the northerners, every monsoon brings significant flooding.

But 2024 has been particularly brutal. The Teesta, Brahmaputra, and Dudhkumar rivers have flown above danger level for weeks, inundating the remote chars and mainland.

Losing homes to the rivers is nothing new for people in the north. However, it usually occurs due to river erosion after flood water recedes.

Rarely are homes washed away by the flood water itself. But this year, even before river erosion peaked, hundreds of homes have been submerged by flood waters.

Meanwhile, many stayed back in partially submerged houses as moving to shelters with families and livestock from remote areas is often not feasible.

The residents face a multitude of crises -- food shortages, lack of pure drinking water, and so on.

MAROONED IN KURIGRAM

Upon reaching Kurigram, I requested my colleague to take me to the most remote areas affected by the flood.

We reached Ulipur, some 19km further north from Kurigram.

In the first week of July, the Brahmaputra had surged as high as 80cm above the danger level at Hatiya point of Ulipur, submerging many villages and chars. The Teesta, Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers were also overflowing.

More than 20,000 people were marooned, and over 25 primary schools were closed in this upazila alone.

We drove to Anantapur ghat in Hatiya union of Ulipur.

This terminal, located on the mainland, had also been under water during this year's flood, a first in at least six years, according to locals.

We met Badsha Mia, a 55-year old with despair etched all over his face.

A rickshaw-puller in Dhaka, Badsha had returned to his village for Eid, only to get trapped by the flood. For 10 days, his home had been partially submerged, and his family was suffering from various skin diseases.

Many had to take shelter on an embankment in Ulipur of Kurigram.

Holding a pitcher, a woman wades through waist-deep water in Gaibandha in search for pure drinking water.

We parked our bike beside a shop in the terminal and boarded a small engine-driven trawler.

Then Momin bhai, our weathered boatman, steered his engine-driven vessel into the heavy current.

The sun beat down mercilessly, and within 30 minutes, I, miles away from my comfort zone, began to feel the heat.

As far as the eye could see, there was water, an endless flow of it.

Just a few months ago, this would have been dry land, the sandy canvas of the chars.

"Such are the lives of char dwellers," Momin said.

The journey took on an eerie, haunting turn when submerged rooftops or the skeletal remains of tin-shed buildings started poking through the water now and then. There were people here just a month ago, Momin explained the obvious.

The only other signs of life appeared sporadically: like a lone figure casting a net, in what would have been lush green fields a month prior.

A small boat overtook us, steered by two children, maybe ten or twelve years old. Their faces, etched with a maturity beyond their years, held a stoicism that mirrored the desolate landscape.

After crossing Gabur Char, Gujimari Char, Hawker Char, Babur Char, Jolengar Guri and other places on our way, we anchored our boat in Fakirer Char in Begumganj union.

Almost everyone we talked to on our way said this was the worst flood in six years and their homes had remained submerged for at least two weeks.

"Come, please sit?" "See our sufferings." "We have no one except Allah." These are the voices that welcomed us in Fakirer Char.

There, we met Abdul Rashid and his wife, Hasina Begum. They are a family of seven.

One of the villagers took us aside and said, "You must talk to him. He only had a lungi when we rescued him and nothing else. The river has taken everything."

"What's the point of talking to you? Can you provide us with food? Will clothes and food reach us?" Abdul Rashid confronted us.

He was sad and angry; he had just lost his two houses due to the flood.

After a few minutes, Rashid calmed down and took us on a boat to see where his house once stood.

His wife Hasina and two children accompanied us. After rowing for a few minutes, he stopped and pointed his fingers at what seemed like a mighty river and said, "There lay two of my houses."

A mosque, a madrasa, and more nearby homes completely disappeared in the water, while others remained partially submerged.

Shafiqur Rahman of the same char also lost his home in the flood. He has taken shelter in a relative's house, where 26 people from four families have taken shelter in a single room.

This was a common scenario in any house without water in it.

As we left the char, people gathered outside our boat and waved us goodbyes. Some even offered us guavas and other fruits from their trees. Such are the people of these chars, humble, kind, and resilient.

The devastation the flood left behind was almost similar in other char areas.

DESOLATION IN GAIBANDHA

We also visited the Phulbari upazila in Gaibandha later to see the situation there.

Here, at the Syedpur Primary School, hundreds took shelter with their livestock.

As many as seven families have been staying here in a single room.

We met Hajera Khanom, a 63-year year old who sought refuge in a primary school from Shatarkandi Char. She said she faced a loss worth Tk 1 crore due to submerged crop fields and damaged homes.

In Hatudanga area on the bank of the Brahmaputra embankment, I saw at least 12 families sheltering alongside livestock under the open sky. Polythenes set up with bamboo poles was all they had to shelter them from rain and sun.

Shahidul Islam, 60, had been living there under a shed alongside his 32 cows. He said he didn't go to the shelter because there were no rooms for his cattle.

Others shared similar sentiments.

Then we went to Balashi ferry ghat and sailed on another engine-driven boat towards the remote chars. The scene was similar to Kurigram: water everywhere, no trace of life, abandoned houses in ruins.

In Rasulpur Char, about half an hour from where we started, we saw some signs of life. There, we met Hazrat Ali. His home was submerged under waist-length water.

He, along with his family and livestock, had taken shelter on higher ground. They cooked on boats and had been living like this for at least 15 days, with no sanitation and a lack of clean drinking water.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

Ulipur's Begumganj Union Parishad Chairman Bablu Mia told The Daily Star, "Around 5,500 families in our union have been affected by floods. Only 500 flood-affected families have received government aid, with each family getting just 5kg of rice."

In previous years, the flood situation lasted for 8-12 days, but this year it started on July 2 and may continue for another week, he said.

Buraburi Union Parishad Chairman Asaduzzaman Khandkar said, "Around 4,000 families in our union have been affected, but only 300 families have received government relief."

District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer sources said 37,000 families in 55 of 73 unions in Kurigram's nine upazilas have been affected by the flood.

They have distributed 1,476 tonnes of rice, Tk 45,35,000 in cash, and 21,330 packets of dry food.

In previous years, 27,500 families were affected in 2023; 33,200 in 2022; 35,600 in 2018 and 52,000 families in 2017.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Saidul Arif said this year's flood is worse than the last 5-6 years. "The situation has been improving since Saturday (July 13) as the Brahmaputra water level is decreasing," he said.

According to Gaibandha Deputy Commissioner Kazi Nahid Rasul, 36,207 families in four upzilas and 26 unions of the district have been affected.

As the water recedes, revealing the scars it's leaving behind, fresh anxieties surface. River erosion is worsening in many of these areas.

The relentless rivers now threaten to claim the remaining scraps of land these communities cling on to. The spectre of displacement looms large, a constant reminder of their very existence.

Skin diseases, a consequence of prolonged immersion in floodwaters, have also become commonplace. The lack of clean drinking water further complicates the situation, increasing the risk of water-borne diseases.

These people need the government's help and attention. And they need it now.

As we left the char, people gathered outside our boat and waved us goodbyes. Some even offered us guavas and other fruits from their trees. Such are the people of these chars, humble, kind, and resilient.

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

FICTION

After the rain

I finished The Marionette, my last film, and fully devoted myself to making Bindu's career. With great delight and excitement, I chased her auditions and shootings, hiding behind film crews and curious bystanders.

MIR ARIF

Perhaps I should have met that girl. What if I was wrong and imagined an ordinary girl so fantastically that I couldn't even recognise her in real life? I would regret it later as things wouldn't turn out in my favour. I missed my chance to be happy, as moderate as it was, being with this false girl and not letting her know that she was the wrong person. Didn't they look somewhat identical, in their outfit and look? And the idea of standing her up on a fine day, waiting as eagerly as I was to meet with her. But I eschewed any conflicting thoughts and focused on my stagnant life. There was something that people sending me letters saw in my advertisement: publicity, gossip, fun. I received many similar claims and resisted the temptation of meeting them in person. Beneath their claims and long, florid sentences were lonely, depressed souls. They wrote in a desperate state of mind to find meaning and purpose in life. I was on the verge of losing my patience, though. I did away with other necessities—money, temptation, fame, friendship, waiting only for a genuine reply from the girl of my dreams who had changed my life with a kiss. I received another letter after a month—perfect timing at that moment, for I, with the devotion of a hermit, had already decided to wander on earth and empty my mind from pursuing a foolish dream.

I opened the letter quickly, my heart in my mouth. The letter contained a single question, no greetings or signing off. "Why are you so stupid?" It was a blow, an antidote to the fantasies I lived in. I was sure it was the girl I had been looking for so long that I didn't open any other letters from strangers. The sender was Bindu, so that was the name of my beloved, who apparently was a student, writing from the university dorm as the address revealed. I had no clue, no idea, what I could write back. First, I thought the very nature of her question was argumentative. It was a question to mildly rebuke me while at the same time congratulating me for my grandiose love and my efforts. In other words, she was also in love with me and couldn't say it another way. She had to be simple and fiery in her response. My reply was long and persuasive, asking her repetitively to meet me anywhere on earth. But never for once, did it occur to me why I wanted to meet her or why she would meet me. I still thought that my attempts to find someone through a newspaper advertisement were enough to show my desperation and genuineness.

It was evident, after several exchanges of letters, that she was more interested in my acting career than the feeling I had been nourishing for her. I was surprised to see that she didn't know my name and inquired about my siblings, my upbringing, my career. I was still the most sought-after face on screen. To show my prowess I offered her what many would have done for consent and validation. I told her she could be an actress, her uniquely beautiful face being the weapon. The audition would be easy. The pay was good, and the opportunity to travel to different locations in the country and abroad and the fun and excitement of attending social programs and being in the papers and magazines constantly were the added bonus. "It's a life with never-ending progress, profit, and entertainment. You get to discover yourself through the lives you play. You embody the whole nation." I wrote to her, asking her to meet with me but she refused this time. "I'm not going to be stood up again." To my horror, I realised who I had seen at the museum and what I had done, killing the possibility of something extraordinary had I not been so infatuated with my own ideals of love. Now more than anything, I wanted to remedy my mistakes. To secure her audition, I wrote to Mr. Debnath, one of my directors, who promised to assess her acting skills once I finished the shooting of *The Marionette*, a social realism of middle-class struggle in East Pakistan, which Mr. Debnath hoped would bring him much coveted international fame, something akin to Satyajit Roy. But it was one thing to satisfy the domestic audience with your vociferous dialogues, which in those times was uttered by a flesh and blood prompter on set, quite another to deceive foreign film critics and judges who could see the actor wasn't simply focused on the evolving story but rather on the voice dictating his gestures and movements.

I finished *The Marionette*, my last film, and fully devoted myself to making Bindu's career. With great delight and excitement, I chased her auditions and shootings, hiding behind film crews and curious bystanders. I saw her from a distance: how she was working through her first shooting; how naturally she applied 'method acting' using depths and emotions from personal experiences, something that the likes of Marlon Brando or James Dean used in Hollywood; how versatile she was with the changing nature of the industry, switching from black and white to colour films, understanding how backlighting and keylighting worked to add depth and textures to a scene. If she made any mistakes, especially when shooting under the hot, tropical sun, on a beach or mustard field or a dirt road, I would feel her frustrations. Things were the same with me—I too had to face such difficulties in the early years of my acting career. At that point, I felt Bindu and I were the same person. A time came when I could feel when she was around me, the warmth of her presence. Once I was sitting on a padded chair and realised somebody had just sat on it. It was still warm, and with the right temperature underneath me, I could *feel* her.

When Bindu's first film, *The Lost Tune*, came out, it created a great hubbub. The middle class saw in the story how talents could unfold years later even if they remained dormant in you for a long time. The film was applauded by critics for her debut performance and she signed contracts for two other films, one directed by Mr. Debnath himself, who now renewed his hopes of international fame with an adaptation of Manik Bandyopadhya's story, *Prehistoric*. Needless to say, *The Marionette* was a flop, both commercially and artistically, and Mr. Debnath rarely responded to my letters nowadays. On a fine day I wrote to Bindu asking about the kiss we shared, which made me feel so fresh, so full of life. She responded: "I don't think we ever kissed each other, but if you want we can meet sometime." Oh, how I wished I rather received my death sentence from a judge! That kiss that altered my life to the point of madness didn't exist in the first place? My whole life was based on one single event, one single purpose: to recreate the right moments of that kiss, that after the rain effect I held so high in my memory. But I didn't reveal insecurities in the response. Besides, my vanity was still too strong to easily agree to meet with her. Wasn't I the most popular film star in the industry with Best Actor awards for my two best social realist works, *The Ribbon of Life* and *My Homeland*? Didn't I receive the Pakistan Film Awards, which rarely awarded East Pakistani films and actors? I simply replied, "I'm so busy these days, but if I get a free weekend, I shall let you know. Best, K."

This is part three of the short story "After the Rain", to be serialised here at Star Literature.

Mir Arif *is a Bangladeshi author living in Ohio. He is working on his novel,* The Second Interpretation*, while awaiting the publication of his story collection,* Adrift. *Find him @mirarif.*

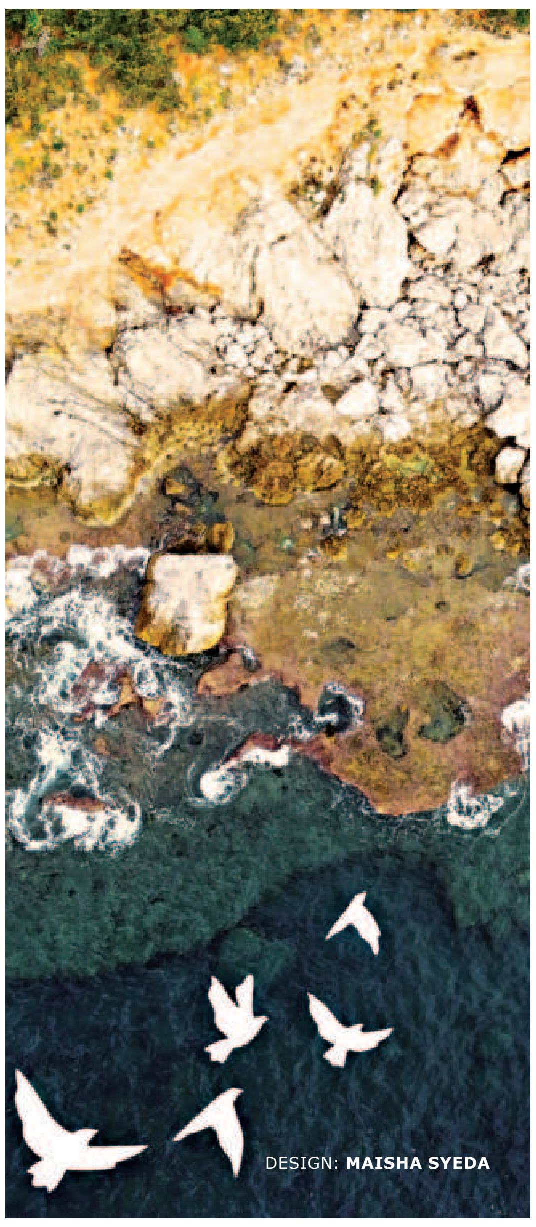
POETRY

Bird's eye view

A.M. FAHAD

I often think of flying on a bird's eye view
Spread my nimble wings over
A mighty wind that will impel me above
fields of rioting green—
unseen from the cages—my flaps are
used to fidgeting in—a bird's eye view over
a golden sunset under a gentle breeze
with no flinging of sorts but the release of
all my earthly sorrows—does
a bird experience grief 500 above
the ground where no soil or
mud can be found,
to bury all the worms/ache I have swallowed
to live?
I often think of flying on a bird's eye view
I've given everything I could give
I do not want to go back
to see/look at the empty homes and broken nests
Just this once, I want to
breathe in the air to look
and to see
with my eyes (that don't reek of death)
to feel the tug in my throat
taking flight like the yearning
inside of me—
to live
and (not) watch the world set itself on fire
from the clear blue skies above

A.M. Fahad *is an aspiring poet and writer from Dhaka. He uses vivid imagery and elements of nature to encapsulate his emotions with words, which often end up in a thought train rather than a conclusion. Find him at amfahad1747@gmail.com.*



DESIGN: **MAISHA SYEDA**

POETRY BY MARZIA RAHMAN

Gaza

Gaza
is not a city—any more
it's a grave, grieving
for the dead.

DESIGN: **AMREETA LETHE**

ILLUSTRATION: **MAISHA SYEDA**

Hide, if you want to live

Three-year-old Maria
asks
her nine-year-old
brother, Ibrahim.
How long we hide,
akhkh?
As long as we are alive.

An optimistic talk

Dead dads tell their dead
children
Don't worry, dear,
in another life—
we both will get the chance
to live.

Marzia Rahman *is a flash fiction writer and translator. Author of two books,* The Aftermath *and* Dot and Other Flashes, *she has been published widely in both print and online journals.*

DESIGN: **AMREETA LETHE**

The off-beat BENGAL QUEEN

PHOTOS: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

SHARMIN JOYA

The beauty of her aura is indistinctive, her smile, as magical as if she were the goddess of beauty, who melts your heart instantly. Paoli Dam is not just a diva for her looks, she is a powerhouse of acting, who won the hearts of millions with her portrayal of some of the most unconventional roles. Some of her remarkable roles include Madhobilata in ***Kaalbela*** (2009), Komli in ***Moner Manush*** (2010), Preiti ***in Kagojer Bou*** (2011), Ela ***in Elar Char Adhyay*** (2012), Meghla in ***Maati*** (2018), and Binodini in ***Bulbbul*** (2020).

The actress recently came to Bangladesh for the shooting of Fakhrul Arefeen Khan's ***Neel Jochhona***. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, she cherished the memories of her first visit to Bangladesh, her career, and more.

Returning to Bangladesh after four years still refreshes the memories of Paoli Dam's first visit. "It was in 2010, during the shoots of Gautam Ghosh's ***Moner Manush***, the Indo-Bangla joint venture," shared the actress, whose origin is Faridpur. "I haven't had the opportunity to visit Faridpur till now," she sighed.

"My mother hails from Jashore, and I haven't visited the place either. However, when we hold the premiere of ***Neel Jochhona***, I wish to bring my father with me, and we will visit Faridpur."

While we were speaking, sitting in the lobby of the five-star hotel where she was staying, a Japanese man interrupted us and asked for permission to take a selfie with Paoli. Apparently, he had inquired about Paoli from someone nearby at the hotel after being mesmerised by her beauty and then googled her. While confessing this, he said, "You have such a beautiful smile." The man bid us farewell, saying *"Dhonnobaad"* in Bangla.

As we got back to our conversation, Paoli expressed her excitement about working in ***Neel Jochhona,*** an adaptation of Mostak Ahmed's parapsychology novel ***Neel Jochonar Jibon.*** "***Interstellar*** and ***Everything Everywhere All at Once*** are two of my favourite films. Plots on the parapsychological genre have rarely been made in Bangla content. I have read the book from which the story has been adapted and it is fantastic. I am also thrilled that we will shoot on a green screen, and VFX is one of my favourite technologies."

This project marks the second Bangladeshi film for Paoli -- she made her debut in Dhallywood with Hashibur Reza Kallol's ***Swatta*** (2017), starring opposite Shakib Khan.

She was wearing a maroon pure cotton saree with a black backless blouse. Her eyes were drawn with dark kohl, complemented by the tiny bindi on her forehead, and a pair of grey *jhumkas*—her classy look made it seem as if she had just stepped out of a romantic classical novel. "I brought all silk sarees, but the weather is very humid, and luckily one of my co-actors, Sushama Sarker, gave me this beautiful cotton one, which I am wearing so comfortably."

In recent years, Paoli has been selective about her roles, and many also assumed that after she stepped into Bollywood, her appearance in Bengali films became sporadic. "It is not like that; however, I have been too selective in the past few years, and when I reflected on it, I realised the reasons. Perhaps, I am being too picky, or we are not producing enough quality content?" This took her to the conclusion that the Bangla industry needs more good writers. "Before the actor's input, it is important that writers and directors can create such characters." She explained that her brief for the role of Binodini in ***Bulbbul*** was so good, that she could pull off the character so well. It will be considered as one of her landmark performances in her career. "At the same time, I cannot be a part of any mediocre regressive subject, especially when it comes to women, and I always want to be associated with subjects that are progressive and speak about human empowerment."

She feels that at this point, both Bengals should collaborate more often and the exchange of writers and directors should have equal participation as much as actors. "For instance, Humayun Ahmed is very popular in Kolkata, and we have seen his works, and read his books. However, we don't see any of his stories being adapted to visuals. Exchange of such collaborations is highly required."

Among the roles she portrayed on the screen, how many of them have stayed with Paoli for long or to date? "Every great character has empowered me as a human being. For instance, Madhobilota, an epitome of love, Ela, the role of Keya Chakraborty, Komli, Binodini, Suchitra Sen, and Sreela, and there are some more– such roles have depth, and they have helped me understand different perspectives of life."

Paoli has a visible resemblance with legendary actress Suchitra Sen, and she has also played her role in the television series ***Mahanayak***. "The resemblance is uncanny! Although I didn't feel that much in the beginning. When I played her role, it felt surreal."

After the heartfelt conversation, Paoli bid farewell and made a promise to return soon. "The next time I return, I really want to visit both Jashore and Faridpur."

> **"My mother hails from Jashore, and I haven't visited the place either. However, when we hold the premiere of Neel Jochhona, I wish to bring my father with me, and we will visit Faridpur."**

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Maharaja

Binge
Ekti Khola Janala

Hoichoi
Noshtoneer season 2

Bongo
Kolkata Diaries

A FILM BY RASHED RAHA

Hulu
Hit Monkey

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA

১ম দিন
মুখোমুখি ফেরদৌসী মজুমদার

Anuswar Sanglap: Mukhomukhi Ferdousi Majumdar
July 25| 7 pm
Studio Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy

DUQS
POP BATTLE 2.0
POP CULTURE
Barbie
HOUSE of the DRAGON

DUQS Pop Battle 2.0
July 25| 10 am
TSC Auditorium, Dhaka University

Women in Digital
Indigo Soiree
A Tribute to
Bibi Russell

Indigo Soiree: A Tribute to Bibi Russell
Aug 2-Aug 3| 8:30 am
Banyan View, Mohammadpur

STYLE STATEMENT

Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan

Anant Ambani, 29, son of Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani, married his longtime girlfriend Radhika Merchant, also 29, in a lavish Mumbai ceremony on July 12. The event, widely discussed on social media, was attended by Bollywood celebrities, Hollywood stars, politicians, cricketers, and other distinguished guests.

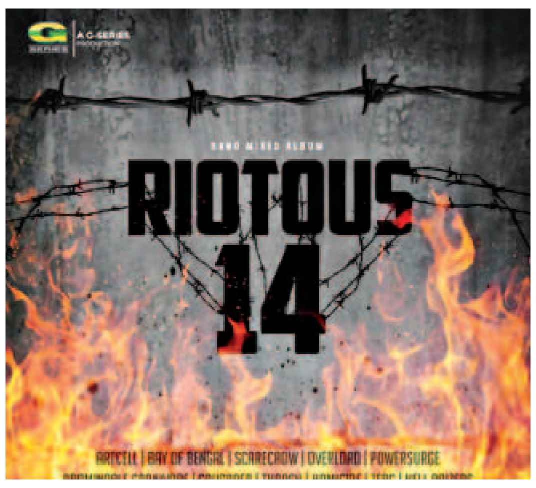
Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan attended the ceremony in a regal shade of olive green sherwani paired with a dhoti — accessorising the fit with a diamond and emerald necklace, tinted sunglasses, and brown shoes, to create a standout look.

His wife Gauri Khan wore a shimmery golden and nude lehenga with complementary coloured purse and jewellery.

This renowned couple truly was the talk of the town among the slew of glitzy wedding guests.

WHAT'S PLAY

Karar Oi Louho Kopat



Artcell's rendition of ***Karar Oi Louho Kopat*** in their album Riotous 14 breathes new life into Kazi Nazrul Islam's revolutionary anthem from 1921. The band's powerful music complements the fierce lyrics, creating a stirring contemporary interpretation of the classic protest song. Artcell's version maintains the original's spirit of defiance against oppression while adding a modern rock edge that resonates with today's listeners.

The song's enduring relevance is highlighted by Artcell's choice to include it in their repertoire. Their performance likely amplifies the raw emotion and call for freedom inherent in Nazrul's words, making the century-old message of breaking chains and overcoming barriers feel immediate and urgent.

This cover serves as a potent reminder of music's role in social movements and its ability to bridge generations in the fight for justice.

TV TALKIES

A well-done story of a 'Geek Girl' becoming chic

Fresh out of the fame she attained from starring as young Alicent Hightower in the HBO Max series House of the Dragon, actress Emily Carey helms her web-series as a lead in Netflix's ***Geek Girl***.

Based on the novel of the same name, authored by Holly Smale, the show delves into the journey of personal growth of a neurodivergent teenager named Harriet Manners — resembling a modern Cinderella story.

Harriet, a self-proclaimed geek disliked by her peers, is discovered by a top model agent. Seizing the chance to reinvent herself, she takes her best friend's dream, angers her nemesis, embarrasses herself in front of supermodel Nick, and lies to her loved ones.

Smale and Jessica Ruston adapted the first book of the bestselling YA series into a screenplay, directed by Declan O'Dwyer, capturing their joyful spirit. Emily Carey excels as Harriet, supported by Rochelle Harrington as Nat and Zac Looker as Toby.

This onscreen adaptation retains the novel's charm, with vibrant energy and actors who perfectly capture the essence of the source material.

Investment in the south is underwhelming even after Padma Bridge

Banks finance big industrial sectors in Dhaka, but do not want to take risks by financing industries in Barishal. There was a huge opportunity to invest in various sectors in the south, including shipbuilding.

JAGARAN CHAKMA, SUSANTA GHOSH AND DIPANKAR ROY

Two years have passed since the inauguration of Padma Bridge, but the southern region has still not managed to tap the potential brought about by the mega-project due to a lack of physical infrastructure and utilities.

It was estimated that the Padma Bridge would increase Bangladesh's GDP by over 1 percent and benefit about three crore people across 21 southwestern districts. Unfortunately, although it has eased transportation over the Padma River, the region's contribution to the national economy has not picked up as expected.

According to the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), only 18 investment proposals have been registered in Khulna and Barishal over the past year. Around 13 proposals, involving Tk 1,248 crore, were registered in the Khulna region while five projects, involving Tk 92.7 crore, were registered in the Barishal region.

According to businesses and experts, the number of proposals and investments are below expectations.

"There was a potential to grow the GDP by more than 1 percent after the operationalisation of the Padma bridge. But fulfilling that potential requires a 'Padma plus' infrastructure development model," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling.

"There is no scope to think that investment will come on its own. Rather, the environment for investment must be created."

The 'Padma Plus' model includes the development of necessary infrastructure, including proper connecting roads, gas pipelines and other utility services, to facilitate investment.

Raihan, who has been engaged with a study on the economic impact of the bridge since the beginning of the project, said Barishal and Khulna needed more connectivity to encourage investors.

Although the Dhaka–Bhanga Expressway leading up to the bridge from Dhaka offers large multi-lane roads, once the bridge is crossed, the roads begin to narrow, before ultimately turning into largely two-lane roads.

He added that the government was yet to complete the work for land acquisition in order to start the development of the proposed economic zones in these regions.

Mohammad Nizam Uddin, president of the Barishal Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said not a single company has invested in the greater Barishal region in the past two years as banks are not interested in financing projects.

"Banks finance big industrial sectors in Dhaka, but do not want to take risks by financing industries in Barishal," he alleged, adding that there was a huge opportunity to invest in different sectors in the region, including shipbuilding.

According to Nizam Uddin, the only noticeable industries in Barishal consist of a pharmaceutical factory, a biscuit maker, and a shoe factory. Banks do not even want to lend to small and medium enterprises in the region, he claimed.

Jakaria Jalal, head of strategy (planning) at Bashundhara LP Gas, said the main barrier to setting up heavy industries in Khulna and Barishal was a lack of gas connections. "There is huge potential to develop industry in these regions if gas connections can be ensured for industries."

Although liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is available, it is not viable for industries since it is two and half times more expensive than natural gas, he said, adding in the absence of gas connections, only power-based industries were feasible in these regions.

Abu Sayed Mahmud, assistant director of the BIDA's Barishal divisional office, said five companies have registered investment proposals in the region in the past year.

The proposals have come from Opsonin Bulk Drugs Ltd, Chemist Agro Biotic, Afia & Fatima Auto Rice Mill, Asfia Auto Rice Mill & Flour Mill, and Payra Recycling Plant.

These companies have registered with the BIDA for investment after the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, but they have yet to start operations.

He added that he was not aware of anybody seeking to secure permission to set up a large company in Barishal. "So, although it was expected, the industrialisation of Barishal failed to gather steam after the construction of the Padma Bridge."

In the division, 52 industrial establishments have so far received registration from the BIDA with combined investment plans of Tk 1,027 crore.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, president of the Barishal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said industrialisation would not accelerate if gas is unavailable.

He demanded reducing the interest rate of bank loans and tax concessions. "We have already invested crores of taka in the shipping sector and have faced losses."

Right now, those who have invested in the waterways are facing huge financial losses as road connectivity has enhanced thanks to the opening of the bridge.

Businessmen said that they were not interested in investing in the region due to a lack of gas connections and connectivity.

Pronab Kumar Roy, director of the BIDA for the Khulna division, said although the Padma Bridge has been opened, industrialisation is yet to get momentum. Only some small and medium industries were being established, but not heavy industries.

Sharif Atiar Rahman, senior vice president of the Khulna Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said investors would not be encouraged to invest heavily until gas is made available for industries.

However, he said people in the Khulna region were benefiting as they can now take a round trip to Dhaka in just a single day, which was unimaginable before the Padma Bridge was constructed.

"People can now transport agricultural products and fish to Dhaka within three and a half hours."

Plans to set up economic zones in southwest yet to gather pace

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza) has taken the initiative to set up 17 economic zones in the southwestern part of the country, but their implementation is yet to gain momentum because of lengthy procedures linked to land acquisition and feasibility studies.

The state-run agency is optimistic that the road connectivity established between Dhaka and the region, following the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, will attract more investment in the industrial sector and create job opportunities.

Earlier, it said the 6.15km bridge will also connect Bangladesh with the Asian Highway, paving the way for an industrial revolution to take place in the country, particularly in 21 southwestern districts.

The Beza has selected five sites for establishing economic zones in Bagerhat, two each in Khulna, Gopalganj, and Barishal, and one each in Faridpur, Madaripur, Bhola, Shariatpur, Satkhira and Kushtia. The zones are part of the government's goal to set up 100 economic zones across the country, aiming to create one crore jobs and export $40 billion worth of goods and services from the enclaves by 2040.

According to a BEZA official, the Mongla Economic Zone (MEZ) is being developed on 205 acres of land near the Mongla Port. It has already constructed the administrative building, boundary walls, connecting bridge and roads, power sub-stations, and water connections. Powerpack Economic Zone Ltd is developing the MEZ under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

The land-lease deal has been prepared to set up three industrial units there. BEZA sources said there was a slight development regarding the Indian Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Mongla. The process to form a joint venture has already begun and is currently awaiting implementation.

The Beza has acquired 100 acres of land for the Indian SEZ, with ARTELIA Consulting set to work on implementing the project.

"All negotiations have been completed. We are just waiting for the prime minister's approval to form the joint venture," said a Beza official, requesting anonymity.

The agency plans to set up an ecotourism park on 1,546 acres of land near the Sundarbans in Bagerhat. Furthermore, it has approved the proposal of building two economic zones in Shariatpur: one on 525 acres of land in Jajira upazila and the other on 686 acres of land in Goshairhat upazila.

The Beza has also agreed in principle to build an economic zone on 1,125 acres of land in the Rajoir upazila of Madaripur.

The government has decided to establish an economic zone on 888 acres of land in the Faridpur sadar upazila. Moreover, a feasibility study has already been carried out for another zone on 200 acres of land in Gopalganj's Kotalipara. A detailed project plan has been prepared.

The governing body of the Beza has chosen Terokhada upazila to set up an economic zone. The task to conduct the feasibility study for an economic zone in Magura's Sreepur upazila and another in Satkhira sadar upazila has been initiated.

The feasibility study for the economic zone on about 430 acres of land in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila has been conducted. One zone in the Batiaghata upazila of Khulna is in the pipeline, with the Satkhira district administration providing 262 acres of land. A project has been undertaken to conduct the feasibility study.

The feasibility study for setting up an economic zone in Barishal's Agailjhara has been completed. The Beza has also approved the proposal to develop an economic zone in Hizla.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) said it is establishing an export processing zone in Aliapur union under Patuakhali sadar upazila on 411 acres of land, around 40km from the Payra port and 80km from the Mongla port. The estimated cost is Tk 1,443 crore.

Sources said they have already appointed a developer to build the zone, and they are hoping to make it suitable for investment by 2026.

Referring to the master plan of the zone, a Bepza official said they would be able to accommodate 306 industries in the zone, which could potentially attract $1.5 billion in investment and create 100,000 jobs. At least $1.8 billion worth of products will be exported from the zone once it is operational, said the official.

A small glimpse into the potential of the Padma Bridge is offered by the Patuakhali Industrial Estate. After the completion of the bridge, 15 new industrial establishments have been set up there. As it lies along the Patuakhali-Dhaka highway, local entrepreneurs are eager to set up industrial establishments.

Md Al Amin, an official of the Patuakhali BSCIC Industrial City, said that after the opening of Padma Bridge, a direct road network has been established between Patuakhali and Dhaka.

"As a result, industrial products can easily be sent to different parts of the country at lower costs. Due to this, many companies have been established in the zone."

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DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 21, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 178 | SRABAN 6, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 14, 1446 HIJRI | 8 PAGES : TK 15.00

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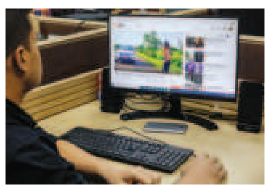

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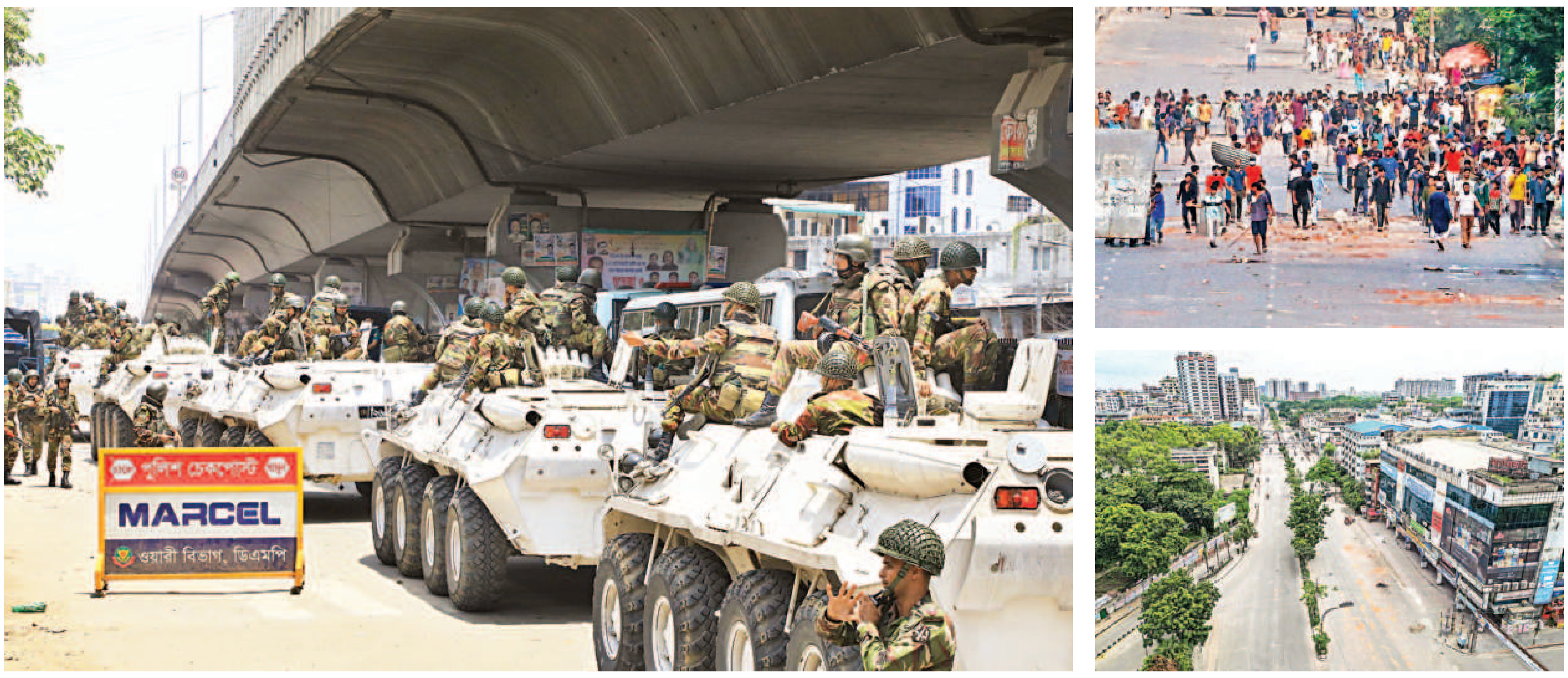
P3



A convoy of military vehicles in the capital's Jatrabari area around noon yesterday. Armed forces were deployed across the country after a curfew was imposed Friday midnight. *Top right,* Agitators gather in Jatrabari with billboards and corrugated iron sheets to use them as shields. *Bottom right,* The capital's Science Lab area, which was one of the flashpoints of Friday's violence, wore a deserted look amid the curfew yesterday.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Curfew to stay in force until further notice

Says home boss; 2hr break from 3pm today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to extend the ongoing curfew, which was scheduled to end at 10:00am today, until further notice.

The curfew, however, will be relaxed for two hours starting from 3:00pm today.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan made the announcement at a press briefing following a meeting with law enforcement agencies at his Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

On Thursday, the government imposed a nationwide curfew and deployed armed forces to assist the civil administration in ensuring national securities and protecting lives and properties.

This is the first instance of a curfew being imposed in the last one and half decades.

Responding to a query, the minister

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

At least 21 dead on first day of curfew

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first day of curfew was marked by sporadic incidents of violence that left at least 21 people dead and scores injured in Dhaka and other parts of the country yesterday. Most of the victims were hit by bullets.

On Friday night, the government imposed nationwide curfew and deployed army personnel to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and public properties in the wake of fierce violence centring on quota protests.

Members of the armywere seen patrolling different city points and other districts since yesterday morning. They also set up makeshift bunkers with sandbags at different points.

Amid the curfew, thousands of protesters, both students and non-students, took to the streets with processions, blocked roads and highways and torched tyres and planks of woodon the streets in Dhaka and elsewhere.

- Total death toll at least 127 as fierce clashes continue
- Army patrol begins
- 4 people, including 2 cops, succumb to previous day's injuries
- Govt announces general holidays for today, tomorrow

Of the victims, nine were killed in the capital and four each in Savar, Narayanganj and Mymensingh, hospital authorities said.

In addition, two policemen were brought dead to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, said Inspector Bacchu Mia, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost. Police and morgue sources said both were beaten to death during clashes on Friday.

Also, two people who suffered head injuries during violence in the city's Mohammadpur on Friday died at National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Of the nine victims in the capital, eight were either brought dead or declared dead at the DMCH, Bacchu Mia told The Daily Star. Most of them suffered bullet and pellet injuries during clashes in Jatrabari, Rayerbagh, Azimpur and Mirpur.

Another victim was brought dead at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said its director Prof Dr Shafiur Rahman.

Including yesterday's victims, at least 127 lives have been lost since Tuesday, when six people were killed in violence. On Thursday, at least 29 more people were killed in fierce clashes between protesters and law enforcers, aided by ruling party activists. Another victim injured in Wednesday's violence also died on Thursday. On Friday, at least 66 people were killed across the country.

The overall death toll and that from yesterday's violence may rise, as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Violence flares in Mymensingh, Savar, N'ganj

STAR REPORT

Fierce clashes between agitators and law enforcers in Mymensingh, Savar, and Narayanganj left at least 12 people dead yesterday.

At least four were killed in each of these places.

Over 100 people took treatment at hospitals for injuries sustained in the violence in Savar and Narayanganj.

In Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila, three people were killed during clashes on the first day of the nationwide curfew. At least 30 people, including 12 police officials, were injured.

Witnesses said the agitators blocked the Mymensingh-Kishoreganj Highway at Kaltapara around 11:00am and police rushed there to try and disperse them.

Of the injured, 16 were taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where Rakib, 18; Biplob, 19; and Jubayer, 18, died around noon, said Md Zakiul Islam, deputy director of the hospital.

Contacted, Gouripur Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Imran Al Hossain confirmed the deaths.

In the district's Phulpur upazila, a pedestrian was reportedly killed, while 10 others, including three policemen, were hurt in clashes between agitators and law enforcers in the Amuakanda Bridge area.

The deceased was identified as Saiful Islam, 32, of the upazila, said police.

In Savar, poultry trader Kurban Ali, 55, was killed as police opened fire during a chase and counter-chase with demonstrators at the Bazar Bus Stand.

He was shot in the throat while he was in his shop, his family said.

Witnesses said the agitators gathered there around 2:00pm. The clash erupted when police fired shots to disperse them. The demonstrators retaliated by throwing brick chunks at them.

Kurban was taken to Enam Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead, said Rezaur Rahman, a doctor there.

Rickshaw-puller Roni, 27, of Savar's Shahibagh, was shot during a clash around 5:30pm on the Savar

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Key organiser of quota demo 'picked up'

Allege family and witnesses, point fingers at cops

ASIFUR RAHAMAN *and* **AHMED DEEPTO**

Nahid Islam, a key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, was picked up by plainclothes persons from a house in Sabujbagh early yesterday, according to witnesses.

They alleged the people broke the locks of the building gates to enter and detain Nahid, a masters student of DU's sociology department who has been leading the quota reform protests from the front line since the first week of July.

His family members and fellow protesters alleged that law enforcers picked him up as he declined the government's proposal for a dialogue ahead of the Supreme Court's hearing on the quota issue today.

However, three of the 27 protest organisers met the law minister on Friday night in this regard.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Notice

Internet outage has forced us to cut the number of pages to 8 from 16. Our website is also inaccessible. We regret the inconvenience.

Two varying sets of demands from quota protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the quota reform protests have come up with two varying sets of demands.

Three key coordinators of the Baishamyabirodhi Chhatra Andolan placed eight-point demand at a meeting with three ministers at State Guesthouse Padma on Friday night.

Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam and Hasib Al Islam participated in the meeting with Law Minister Anisul Huq, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury and State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Muhammad Ali Arafat.

They demanded that those in the government, who instigated Chhatra League and instructed the law enforcement agencies to attack the protesters, be brought to book after an investigation.

Three key organisers of quota protests place 8-point demand before three ministers.

They also called for financial assistance and monthly allowance to the families of those killed and injured during the protests.

The demands also include resignation of the vice-chancellors and proctors for whose "silent role" the students came under attack.

They said the seats at the university halls should be allocated through the university authorities concerned, and the students' unions must be made effective.

The three coordinators demanded immediate withdrawal of the law enforcers from all universities and reopening of halls.

The government must ensure that those who are involved in the movement will face no political or legal harassment or any punitive measures from the university administration, they added.

All the cases filed over the quota reform protests have to be withdrawn immediately, the protest organisers said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

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Security personnel patrol the road near the Jatrabari toll plaza of the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital yesterday after violence broke out there. *Top right,* a bus burns after an arson attack in Jatrabari. *Bottom right,* army personnel checking the shopping bag of a rickshaw passenger in Khamarbari area during curfew hours.

PHOTO: **STAR**

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP

Losing start for Tigresses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh began their Women's Asia Cup campaign on the back foot, losing against hosts Sri Lanka by seven wickets at the Dambulla Ranagiri International Stadium last night.

The women in red and green opted to bat first in a decent batting wicket, but found themselves in trouble losing early wickets. The Nigar Sultana Joty-led side lost three wickets for six runs and then reached 46 for four in 10 overs.

Joty's 48 eventually helped the Tigresses post 111 for eight.

The bowlers, however, failed to put up a fight as the Lankans raced to the target in 17.1 overs. Left-arm spinner Nahida Akter took all three wickets for Bangladesh. Vishmi Gunaratne scored a half-century for Sri Lanka.

In the other match of the day, Thailand beat Malaysia by 22 runs.

Curfew to stay in force until further notice

FROM PAGE 1

said the government will do everything required to bring back normalcy to the country.

"We will take stern actions against those involved in subversive activities and killings using the quota reform protest," he said, adding that law enforcers did not see any students' involvement in destructive activities.

Asaduzzaman said the quota protesters placed an eight-point demand and government will accept the logical ones at the earliest.

He said the miscreants are using firearms and bombs against law enforcers. Even common people came under their attacks, he added.

> **"All these [destructive activities] are being conducted to dislodge the government and form a government with anti-liberation forces. They are tirelessly trying to achieve their goal," Asaduzzaman said.**

"The curfew has been announced as miscreants are inflicting huge damage [to our country]. We had no other options. Our main target is to bring back normalcy," he said.

The minister said the government will identify the miscreants involved in vandalism killings and take stern actions against them.

Acknowledging that people will suffer during the curfew, he urged all to cooperate with the law enforcers to identify "the country's enemies".

Asked about the death toll in the ongoing unrest, the minister said he will not be able to ascertain the exact number at this moment.

At least 21 dead on first day of curfew

FROM PAGE 1

families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved-ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families. The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Some of yesterday's fiercest clashes took place in Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, Mirpur-10, and Mohammadpur.

Besides, law enforcers opened fire on agitators when they took out processions at Badda and Malibagh rail crossing areas. They lobbed teargas canisters and sound grenades in Rayerbagh from low-flying helicopters. Gunshots were heard in Banasree areas as well, witnesses said.

Like in the past few days, Dhaka remained cut off from the rest of the country as road and rail communications remained suspended.

At least 11 international flights were either cancelled or delayed for hours "due to a lack of passengers and a glitch in the flight data system", causing sufferings to several hundred passengers.

In an executive order, the government yesterday announced holidays for today and tomorrow for all government, autonomous, semi-autonomous and non-government offices except those providing emergency services, Public Administration Senior Secretary Mesbah Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan also announced holidays for the lower courts. But one or multiple magistrates will perform duties at the courts of chief judicial and chief metropolitan magistrates round the clock, said a press release issued by the SC registrar general.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and the High Court Division will function from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

Today, the apex court is set to hold hearing of two leave-to-appeal petitions that challenged the June 5 HC judgment, reinstating quotas in government jobs.

A tense situation prevails across the country.

Many citizens called The Daily Star reporters and voiced their concerns over the ongoing violence.

Streets of Dhaka wore a deserted look as only a handful number of rickshaws were seen plying. During the recess of curfew for two hours from 12 noon, many rushed to kitchen markets and other destinations for emergency work.

Almost all shops in the capital were closed. Many onlookers went to the main roads to assess the situation.

As the day progressed, hundreds of agitators, including members of the public, took to the streets to stage demonstration.

JATRABARI

Violent clashes took place in phases in Rayerbagh of Jatrabari as protesters blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway from Chittagong Road area to Kajla by placing several trucks and covered vans haphazardly.

Law enforcers fired gunshots, lobbed teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse them. The protesters hurled brick chunks at the law enforcers, and also set afire tyres and planks of wood at different spots.

A local resident told The Daily Star around 5:30pm that he saw helicopters flying low.

"I saw choppers hovering and charging teargas canisters and sound grenades at the protesters," he said.

Witnesses said that streets in Kajla, Rayerbagh, and Chittagong road of Jatrabari saw running battles between demonstrators and law enforcers since morning.

A tense situation has been prevailing in the area since Thursday.

MOHAMMADPUR

In Mohammadpur, the police fired bullets, teargas canisters and numerous sound grenades to prevent a crowd from reaching Mohammadpur Police Station in the afternoon.

The protesters threw brick chips and stones at police and then took position at Mohammadpur Bus Stand. They also blocked the road at different pointsfrom Mohammadpur Bus Stand to Beribadh area.

A reporter of The Daily Star was present there.

Members of the Armed Police Battalion, the BGB and the army reached the area around 5:15pm and a severe clash broke out between protesters and law enforcers.

Till 6:30pm, members of law enforcement agencies fired numerous shots while the demonstrators threw brickbats and stones.

Earlier, hundreds of protesters blocked Mohammadpur-Beribadh road and put up makeshift barricades in adjacent areas around 11:00am.

At one point, the agitators marched towards Mohammadpur Police Station, chanting anti-government slogans.

The protesters included students, children and general people, including women.

Hundreds of protesters also blocked Sat Masjid Road around 4:00pm.

Aged between 15 and 25, the agitators set up barricades at all major intersections from Dhanmondi 15 to Shankar neighborhood.

Around 6:00pm, police used teargas and sound grenades to disperse them. But the protesters, most of whom wore facemask, quickly took shelter in nearby lanes.

When police stopped firing, they regrouped and returned to the street, and hurled brick chunks and stones at police.

MIRPUR

Mirpur-10 and adjoining areas also saw severe clashes as law enforcers opened fire and charged teargas shells and sound grenades on the protesters who gathered on Rokeya Sarani from Kazipara to Benarashi Palli.

A number of residents and witnesses said they saw many injured being taken in ambulances and rickshaws from the spot. They saw also helicopters hovering in the sky.

Around 1:30pm, several hundred people, mostly youths, blocked the road near Kazipara Metro station. A media vehicle was torched there.

Things became tense around 1:45pm, when police opened fire on demonstrators, according to witnesses.

At 3:00pm, a huge number of people gathered on the road from Kazipara to Benarashi Palli and burnt tyres and woods at different places on the road. Additional police, Rab and BGB personnel were called in.

Locals saw armored vehicles and water cannons there.

Several hundred people then brought out a procession from the Kazipara end around 6:00pm when police, Rab and BGB members opened fire, leading to clashes, witnesses said.

At least four journalists were assaulted by protesters who expressed their anger, saying the media is not reporting the actual death toll.

Sporadic clashes also took place at different places on Mouchak-Rampura road for several hours. Law enforcers dispersed protesters by firing rubber bullets and teargas shells, witnesses said.

Parts of the road remain blocked since Thursday.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, assistant inspector general of police (media) said the two police members who were killed during clashes are Giasuddin, a Nayek of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and Muktadir, an assistant sub-inspector of tourist police.

At least 650 police members were wounded across the country till Friday, he added.

However, he said he had no information about the total death toll or the volume of ammunition used on the protesters so far.

Rab director Legal and Media Wing Lt Col Munim Ferdous said none of their members was wounded yesterday. Till Friday, over 100 Rab members were injured, one of them critically. Besides, two Rab vehicles were torched, while two ambulances and nine pick-ups were vandalised.

He said both Rab and BGB were flying helicopters over the Dhaka sky to quell the protest.

Two varying sets

FROM PAGE 1

However, another group of protest coordinators in text messages to different media outlets last evening said the Friday's meeting with ministers was a personal decision of a few individuals.

They said their movement will continue until the next announcement is made and the "nine-point demand" is met.

Abdul Kader, a coordinator of the quota protests, placed the nine-point demand in a statement at 9:30pm on Friday.

The demands include an apology from the prime minister for her remarks and resignation of Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan resign from cabinet.

These demands were left out of the eight-point demand.

Yesterday's text message from Umama Fatima, a key leader of the ongoing movement, contained names of 24 coordinators and 42 assistant coordinators.

It said the coordination committee will let people know about their decision and demands after discussion among themselves once the internet services are restored.

"The government has completely stopped the broadband and mobile internet services ..... That's why it was not possible for us to contact all the coordinators across the country.

"Taking advantage of this, the government itself and a quarter have been spreading rumours," the text message read.

It said the main target and victim of the "digital crackdown" is their platform.

The Daily Star yesterday tried to contact at least 10 coordinators of the protests but was able to reach four, who confirmed the authenticity of the text message.

About the eight-point demand of the three key protest organisers, the message said, "Their decision is devoid of the spirit of the protests."

Meanwhile, the law minister and the education minister yesterday told this newspaper that a logical solution to the students' demands is possible.

"The students have placed their [eight] demands before us. We have discussed those. We think it is possible to find a reasonable solution to what they said on the percentages of job quotas," Anisul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury said, "Since a hearing on the matter will be held at the Supreme Court tomorrow [today], a solution will come. We and the students are on the same page regarding these demands."

Violence flares in Mymensingh

FROM PAGE 1

Bazar Road. He too was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Mehedi, 24, a mason, was shot in the head around 6:45pm during a clash on the same road. He was also taken to the same hospital and declared dead.

"My son was returning home from work. He was not a protester," said Mehedi's mother Jahanara Begum.

Sixth-grader Saad Mohammad Khan, 13, was killed when he went to watch a clash in Savar's Dogormura area around 6:00pm. He was shot in the abdomen.

He was taken to Enam Medical College Hospital, where he died around 8:30pm, said doctors.

Around 50 people with bullet and shotgun-pellet injuries received treatment at the hospital and at Savar Upazila Health Complex.

Eight of them were in the ICU of Enam Medical.

In Narayanganj, sporadic clashes went on all day long from the Signboard area to Kanchpur on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway.

Six vehicles and a market were torched.

Law enforcers hurled sound grenades from helicopters to disperse the agitators.

Three men -- Sajal, 22, Shahin, 23, and Hridoy, 22 -- were declared dead in the district's Sugondha Hospital, said hospital manager Abdul Jalil.

Sajal, who was shot in the abdomen, appeared for SSC exams this year, while Shahin, who had pellet wounds on his body, was a cashier at a hotel. Hridoy had bullet injuries in the head and waist.

Meanwhile, garment worker Minarul, 25, was brought dead to the Narayanganj 300-bed Hospital around 8:00pm last night, said Apu Kumar Saha, a medical officer there.

He was shot in the abdomen during the clash, the doctor said quoting Minarul's parents.

Around 50 people with bullet and pellet injuries were admitted to a private hospital in Narayanganj's Signboard area between 6:00pm and 8:00pm, doctors said.

In Kishoreganj's Pakundia upazila, 20 people, including an assistant commissioner (land) and five policemen, were injured as agitators clashed with police and ruling party activists in the Pakundia Bazar area.

In Narsingdi, the Panchadhana Muktijoddha Complex was vandalised and torched by demonstrators around 12:30pm, said police.

In Shibpur upazila, they vandalised a highway police outpost around 3:00pm.

In Sylhet, several groups of people were seen trying to block the Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway but police and army personnel obstructed them.

In Gazipur, a police box was vandalised at Board Bazar and another one was torched at Chandana intersection.

(Our correspondents from the districts contributed to this report.)

Key organiser of quota demo 'picked up'

FROM PAGE 1

The three – Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam and Hasib Al Islam – placed an eight-point demand to the minister, while Nahid and others earlier announced a nine-point demand.

Multiple witnesses told The Daily Star that around 25-30 plainclothes persons, including a woman, came to the building in two black vans and two SUV's around 1:10am.

After about 10-15 minutes, around five of them jumped over the boundary wall and broke the main gate's lock with an iron rod from the inside. They then brought a cutter from the car and cut two locks of a collapsible gate inside the building, a witness, who is a guard of an adjacent building, described.

He said the people brought out a man from the second floor and left the area around 2:30am.

"The woman among them told us not to call or tell anyone about the incident."

Another witness said locals in the area did not know who Nahid was nor the reason behind his detention.

This newspaper was able to contact Nahid's friend, who was with him that night.

Requesting anonymity, he said, "When they [plainclothes persons] reached the first floor, we knew they came for us. Nahid told me to run and I went and hid on the rooftop. They then took him away.

"I later heard they were from the Detective Branch of police and that a Rab team was also with them."

These correspondents waited in front of the building from 7:30am to 9:00am yesterday to talk to the tenants and house owners, but no one responded.

Nahid's father Badrul Islam said he learned his son was picked up from the house owners.

"My son has been fighting against discriminations. The government tried to convince him to sit with them before the Supreme Court's hearing but my son denied it. That's why the law enforcers picked him up."

However, no law enforcement agency has admitted to picking Nahid up till the filing of this report around 9:00pm.

His father spent the day rushing from the DB office to the CID office and then Sabujbagh Police Station.

In the evening, he said they were yet to get any news from any law enforcers regarding Nahid's whereabouts.

"We want our son back immediately."

Around 11:00pm, Nahid's father filed a general diary with Khilgaon Police Station.

Contacted, both the DB and Rab denied the allegation of picking up Nahid from Sabujbagh. Deputy Commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropalitan Police Faruk Hossain said they did not detain any of the protesters.

Lt Col Munim Ferdous, director legal and media wing of Rab, said, he doesn't know about any such incident.

Nahid is the member-secretary of Democratic Students Force, a newly formed political party. Its convenor Akhter Hossain, former welfare secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union, was also arrested on Wednesday from the campus.

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Deployment of armed forces was necessary

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government was compelled to deploy armed forces to protect lives and properties.

He, however, said the curfew will be relaxed when the situation becomes normal.

Quader was addressing a press briefing at the party president's Dhanmondi office.

In an ill-attempt, the BNP-Jamaat is trying to keep the country's people hostage using the quota movement, Quader alleged.

The AL spokesperson said criminals have gathered in the capital under the directive of BNP leader Tarique Rahman, aiming to take advantage of the quota movement.

He urged all to assist the armed forces to face the criminals and foil their evil plan. Quader hoped that the court's verdict will be acceptable by students.

Foreign minister to brief envoys today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud will brief foreign diplomats today on the current crisis that has arisen out of the quota reform movement in Bangladesh.

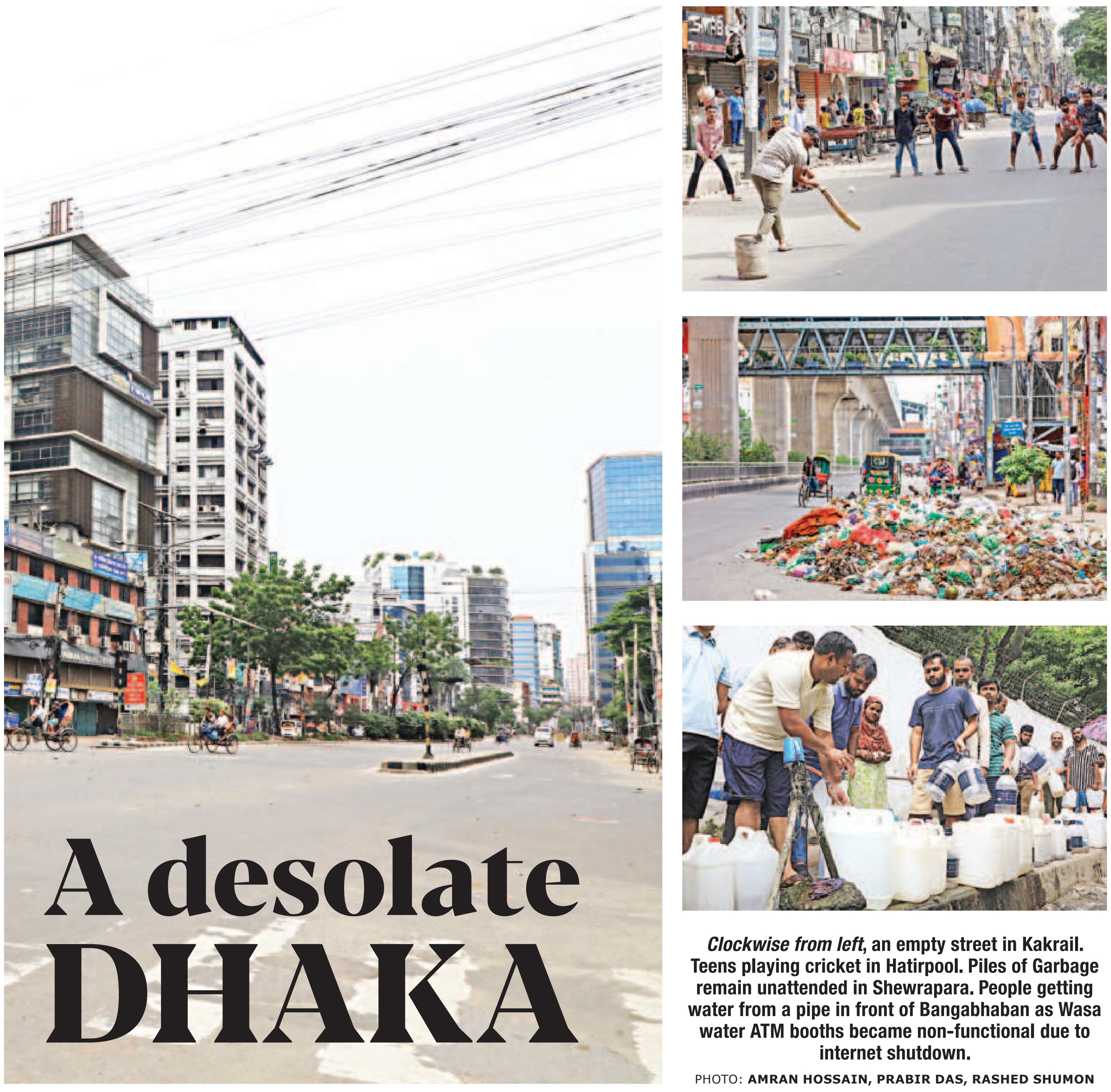
The briefing will be held at the state guesthouse Jamuna at 11:00am, he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

He also thanked the foreign embassies in Dhaka for not making any public statements on the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

Last Thursday, the foreign ministry sent a verbal note to the foreign missions in Dhaka, describing the current situation.

It said that the government has read the demands of the students who were demonstrating for reform to the quota

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A desolate DHAKA

Clockwise from left, an empty street in Kakrail. Teens playing cricket in Hatirpool. Piles of Garbage remain unattended in Shewrapara. People getting water from a pipe in front of Bangabhaban as Wasa water ATM booths became non-functional due to internet shutdown.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

All major roads and streets in Dhaka wore a deserted look amid curfew yesterday.

Apart from a few sporadic clashes between agitators and law enforcers in different areas, much of the city remained largely empty as most people chose to stay at home throughout the day.

From morning till noon, the kitchen markets, shopping malls, offices and all sorts of businesses remained completely closed. Pedestrians and vehicles were rarely noticed even on the busiest streets including Mirpur Road, Manik Mia Avenue, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, and Sat Masjid Road.

Only a few rickshaws, ambulances and some police vehicles were seen plying the capital's roads, while no public and private transports could be seen anywhere in the city.

When the curfew was lifted on 12:00pm for two hours, people rushed to shops and kitchen markets to buy essentials.

However, the panic-stricken people moved cautiously in and around their neighbourhoods even during this time, only opting for the nearest shops and bazaars, thereby causing long queues and supply shortages in the stores, leaving many compelled to return home empty handed.

The shop owners were seen keeping their shutters half open so they could close shops at any moment if needed.

Rubaya Ahmed went to buy eggs, vegetables, chicken and fish for her family. After waiting for half an hour, she could only purchase four eggs and some vegetables.

Chicken, eggs and fresh fish were out of stock in many shops.

"I walked from one shop to another but could not find chicken and fish. I managed to buy four eggs and some vegetables. The vegetables were not fresh, but I had no choice," she said.

Many customers also alleged that the shop owners were demanding higher prices for essential commodities.

Long queues also formed in front of mobile top-up outlets and mobile financial services (MFS) agent outlets. Amid the countrywide internet shutdown, people are heavily relying on mobile phones for communication.

However, many people could not recharge their phone balance due to poor mobile phone network, and send or receive funds through MFS agents.

Rakib Hasan, a resident of Dhanmondi, said he could not recharge his phone and hence will be unable to make any emergency call for the rest of the day.

"My family lives in another district and they are very worried about the situation in Dhaka. I need to maintain regular communication with them, but due to poor network , even communication through mobile phone has become extremely difficult," he said.

"I also regularly use MFS for financial transactions. Due to poor network and long queues at the agent outlets, I could not send or receive money for four days," Rakib added.

'How many bullets does it take to kill a person, sir?'

Grief-stricken SI asks after losing 17-year-old son in Jatrabari clash

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Moynal Hossain, a sub-inspector at Razarbagh Police Lines, and his wife were frantically running from one room to another at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, looking for their son Imam Hossain Tayeem, 17, yesterday.

"Do you know, where we can find this boy?" the couple asked everyone, showing a photograph of Tayeem.

However, even after looking for him for two hours since 5:00pm, they could not find his name on the list of the injured or deceased.

Seeing the photograph, a journalist suggested that Moynal search the emergency mortuary. The tensed father immediately took off in that direction, and found Tayeem's lifeless body there around 7:00pm.

Shell-shocked, Moynal froze for a moment. His wife collapsed on the floor, wailing, "Oh almighty, who took my son? Why did you go outside without telling us, my son?"

Tayeem, a college student in Narayanganj, had left his home around 11:00am yesterday to join an agitation as part of the quota reform protests at Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, which has been a flashpoint of violent clashes for the past three days.

About an hour later, his parents got a phone call that said Tayeem was shot and being taken to DMCH.

"My youngest son had been protesting for quota reforms since the beginning. Yesterday too, he went out to the streets, defying my instruction to stay home amid the curfew," said Moynal.

> **Tayeem, a college student in Narayanganj, had left his house around 11:00am yesterday to join an agitation as part of the ongoing quota reform protest at Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, which has been a hotspot of violent clashes for the past three days.**

After finding Tayeem's body, Moynal was heard talking to someone over phone, "Sir, my son is dead. His chest was torn apart by bullets [pellets]. Sir, my son is no more."

The aggrieved father asked, "How many bullets does it take to kill a person, sir?"

The Daily Star could not verify who was on the other side of the phone.

INTERNET SHUTDOWN

ATM services, digital banking disrupted

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Online banking, ATM and digital payment services including money transfers and utility bill payments continued to be disrupted yesterday amid the ongoing internet blackout across the country since Thursday.

Robiul Islam, who has an account with EXIM Bank, wanted to withdraw money as he urgently needed cash but failed to do so from numerous ATM booths in different areas of Dhaka.

He finally managed to withdraw money from an ATM booth of Mutual Trust Bank at Panthapath.

"Most ATM booths of different banks were shut down, while those that were open had no money," he told this correspondent.

> **Most ATM booths of different banks were shut down, while those that were open had no money.**
>
> **ROBIUL ISLAM**
> A bank account holder

Contacted, Mohammad Feroz Hossen, managing director of EXIM Bank, said they loaded all of their ATM booths with money before the ongoing unrest began.

While all of their ATM booths remained open since then, there is a possibility that some of the booths ran out of cash because the bank was facing difficulties to load money to the booths amid the unrest, he added.

Faria Anjum, a student, wanted to use her bank card for buying some urgent medicines for her mother at Popular Diagnostic Centre in Shantinagar due to shortage of cash in hand.

But she was unable to do so as the POS (point of sale) machine at the diagnostic centre could not run without internet.

"There should be no problem in withdrawing cash if ATM booths have adequate funds. However, ATM booths in some areas are vulnerable to risk of attacks, so those have been kept shut as a precautionary measure," said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

Saiful Islam, executive director and spokesperson of Bangladesh Bank, said the central bank's systems were operating well and there were no problems at their end.

However, online banking transactions have not been taking place amid disruption to data services, he added.

The transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Family's struggle to bury a loved one

Vendor dies amid violence in Banasree

ASIFUR RAHMAN *and*
AHMED DEEPTO

"Please help! We need money to send this body to his village for funeral. Donate whatever you can."

There lied the body of Jashim Uddin, 32, on a khatia (wooden platform), covered in a white cloth.

The appeal for help came from his uncle Kala Miah, a street vendor.

These correspondents spotted him in front of a mosque in Sipahibag Bazar area of Khilgaon on Friday evening.

Jashim died when BGB and police, opened fire at protesters in Banasree area around 5:00pm on that day, claimed locals.

They brought the body to a nearby hospital where Kala Miah identified him. The body was handed over to Kala Miah without an autopsy at 7:00pm.

From there, he brought the body to Sipahibag and started collecting funds.

"Look, I am a street vendor, so was my nephew. He used to sell chanachur (a traditional spicy snack). We were already in a tight spot due to rising costs of essentials. On top of that, we didn't earn any money due to violence for the last three days," said Kala Miah.

"His [Jashim's] family lives in Sarail of Brahmanbaria. We need to send the body back home. But I don't have any money. So, I am collecting funds," he told these correspondents.

People, from all backgrounds and ages, were seen chipping in, donating five-taka coins or ten-taka notes, up to over Tk 1,000.

Within an hour, Kala Miah managed to collect Tk 60,000 with the help of locals.

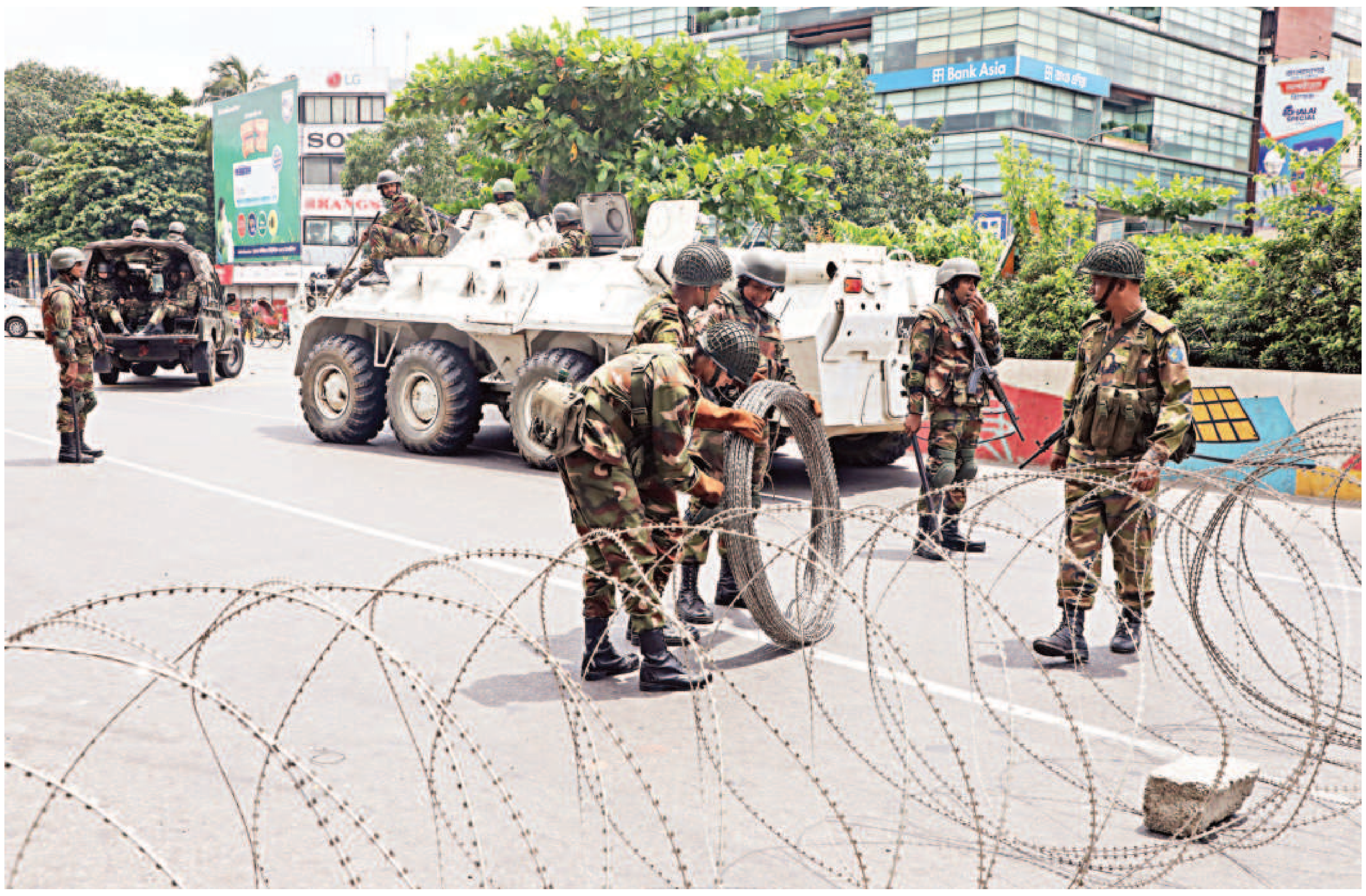
He didn't waste any time. He hired a microbus and left Dhaka with the lifeless body of his nephew.

Before leaving, he said, "Jashim has five children -- four daughters and a physically challenged son. All of them are aged between one and 12. What will happen to them?"

Jashim was sick for the last two days and couldn't earn a single penny as the whole area remained a warzone during the movement.

He was suffering from fever for a week. So, he couldn't venture out to sell chanachur.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Army personnel laying razor wires across the road at Bijoy Sarani intersection in Dhaka on the first day of countrywide curfew yesterday. PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

No let up in price hike

People suffer as unrest causes supply disruption for third day

SUKANTA HALDER

As consumers hit the markets yesterday amid the nationwide curfew, they had to pay higher prices due to supply of essentials -- rice, vegetables, eggs, etc. -- facing disruptions for the third consecutive day.

Transportation of perishable commodities to the capital remained scarce, hiking the prices.

Jashim Uddin, a resident of Farmgate's Tejturibazar, said he had to pay a lot higher for vegetables and fishes at the local market.

"The traders say they had to hike the prices as they are not getting enough supply. How can we afford to pay the extra in these trying times?" he asked.

Khaled Mia, a resident of the Pallabi area, echoed him.

The supply shortage has increased prices of fish such as hilsa, rui, katla, and some others by Tk 180 to Tk 250 per kg, said Awlad Hossain, a fish trader at Hatirpool kitchen market.

Rahidul Islam, a wholesaler at Mahasthan Bazar, one of the biggest wholesale markets in Bogura, said they cannot send fresh farm produce to Dhaka and other major cities due to the unavailability of trucks.

"Even, when one is available, we have to pay thrice the fare we used to pay," he said, adding that he had to pay Tk 60,000 for a truck which used to be only Tk 20,000 before the unrest.

"Drivers are unwilling to move in fear of attacks," he said.

Due to the crisis, most farmers are not bringing their produce to the market, he said.

"Vegetables are rotting in the fields, and we can't do anything about it," he added.

Sabbir Nasir, executive director of ACI logistics, which owns supermarket retail chain Shawapno, said the unrest is hurting their business.

"Sales have dropped by 30 to 35 percent since Thursday," he said, adding that 48 out of their 483 outlets were closed across the country yesterday.

Nasir said Shawapno's internal supply chain for product delivery across the country started operating in a limited scale yesterday.

Unimart, another supermarket chain, yesterday opened its eight outlets for only one and a half hours from noon, said its chief executive Murtoza Zaman.

He said the decision was taken due to supply chain disruption, alongside several of their staffers being hurt in the unrest.

The unrest has also affected the supply chain of country's biggest commodity importers and processors.

Bishawjit Saha, head of corporate affairs of City Group, said, "We couldn't supply any product yesterday due to unavailability of drivers."

Taslim Shahriar, deputy general manager at Meghna Group, said they could resume limited scale delivery of goods yesterday following a hiatus of two days.

Safiul Atahar Taslim, finance director at TK Group, said they are trying hard to keep the supply of goods as usual.

Since Wednesday, their supply dropped 30 percent, he added.

Passengers stuck as flights grounded

11 international flights cancelled; global IT outage hits Dhaka airport

RASHIDUL HASAN *and*
PORIMOL PALMA

Hundreds of passengers were stranded at the Dhaka airport yesterday after flights were grounded due to a glitch in a cyber security software widely used by airlines.

Some flights were also cancelled due to a low turnout of passengers.

Many of them could not reach the airport amid the ongoing countrywide violence.

Sources at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said 11 international flights were either delayed or cancelled in the last 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday.

Many foreign airlines including, Saudia, Air Arabia, and Emirates cancelled the flights, said sources.

Saudi-bound passenger Rimon Mia went through a great ordeal to reach Dhaka from Barishal amid road blockades, lack of transportation, and violence on the streets.

However, upon reaching the airport, he was told that his flight was cancelled.

"My flight was scheduled for takeoff at 6:00am today [yesterday]. I was not informed about the cancellation. No one at the airport is telling me when is the next flight," he said.

"I don't know what to do now as my visa expires in two days," he said.

He added that he did not even have a place to stay in Dhaka as he had no relatives here in the capital.

Similarly, Salamat Sheikh, a Dubai-bound passenger, reached Dhaka from Cumilla by renting a car for Tk 10,000. After entering the airport, he was informed that his flight was cancelled.

Many other passengers shared similar ordeals.

"In the current situation, how will I go outside [out of the airport]? Who will give us security?" asked one Saudi-bound passenger, Mohammad Abir, who came from Narayanganj.

Meanwhile, many passengers failed to reach the airport on time due to the road and rail blockades.

Twelve Bangladeshi migrants who were supposed to fly to Brunei at 2:00am on Friday found out that there flight was cancelled due to a shortage of passengers.

"We arranged accommodation for the 12 Bangladeshi migrants," an official at the airport said.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, however, said operations at the Dhaka airport were going on smoothly without any obstructions.

Air tickets would be counted as curfew pass for the passengers going to airports, the minister added.

Faruk said stern actions will be taken if any airlines increase fares taking advantage of the current situation.

On Friday, an enormous IT outage hit hard banks, grocery stores, TV networks, airlines and even emergency services across the world causing suffering to millions.

The problem occurred when cybersecurity firm Crowdstrike was conducting a software update of it's popular product Falcon Cybersecurity Software, said its CEO.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Two shopkeepers sit idle in front of their closed shop in Kataban yesterday morning. Due to the ongoing curfew, most of the shops remained shut in the capital.

Family's struggle

FROM PAGE 3

As a result, he did not earn much.

Just when his physical condition was improving, he saw Banasree, Rampura, and his other usual places of business turn into a battlefield as armed law enforcers fired tear shells, sound grenades and shotgun pellets to disperse protesters, said his neighbour Ruma Begum.

The situation persisted for three days and took a turn for the worse after Juma prayers on Friday when BGB fired live bullets to stop protesters from marching towards the BTV area.

The violence spread to Banasree as Rab helicopters patrolled over the area and fired tear shells and sound grenades on the ground.

"Due to his financial situation, Jashim was getting increasingly restless. He left his home around evening," said Ruma.

Before leaving, he shared peanuts with me and other neighbours, and left with a smile.

"I will be back soon," Ruma quoted Jashim as saying.

"Never have we thought that he will return in white cloth, lying in a poll of blood," Ruma cried.

Yesterday morning, this newspaper contacted Kala Miah again. He said they managed to reach Brahmanbaria amid the curfew.

Some of the money was spent at the funeral, while the remaining were given to his family members.

ATM services

FROM PAGE 3

while carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data services since Thursday amid the ongoing violence centring the quota reform protests.

Broadband and mobile network operators said this decision was taken by the government in view of the current situation, adding that they were dependent on the directives of the authorities concerned to resume the services.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 21

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAT	4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Foreign minister

FROM PAGE 3

system in government jobs, and that the authorities were working to come to a solution.

Besides, the government was also taking necessary measures to ensure peace and stability amid the demonstrations, the note added.

At the briefing yesterday, Hasan Mahmud also said the foreign embassies can inform the foreign ministry if they have any concern.

"The government has declared curfew and deployed army in aid of the civil administration in the wake of violence."

The minister said the BNP-Jamaat, using the cover of quota protesters, have destroyed public properties. "These attacks are on the state and people," he said.

He went on to say that some of the foreign media have wrongly reported the number of casualties and requested them to verify the numbers before publication.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian at a briefing in Beijing said China noted what happened recently in Bangladesh and that it was Bangladesh's internal affairs.

"We believe that the government of Bangladesh will properly handle it and uphold national solidarity and stability."

WFP
World Food Programme
বিশ্ব খাদ্য কর্মসূচী
wfp.org

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Call for Expressions of Interest For contracting NGOs for WFP's 2025-2026 Partnership cycle (from January 2025 to end 2025/26) To implement the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Bangladesh to Enhance Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites experienced local/national/international NGOs to submit an Expression of Interest for the implementation of "Humanitarian assistance programmes to enhance food security, nutrition and resilience."

About the Programme:
Under the Country Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026), WFP will support Bangladesh on its path to ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030 through four strategic outcomes (SO):

▶ **SO1:** Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises.
▶ **SO2:** The nutrition needs of women, children, and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
▶ **SO3:** Vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
▶ **SO4:** Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises.

WFP, through its partners, currently provides humanitarian assistance to approximately 1.2 million people in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), other UN agencies, and NGOs, WFP is also working in various sectors namely Food Security, Nutrition, Emergency response and Common Services. In the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities and the camps, WFP will continue to: i) provide humanitarian food assistance to the Rohingya population every month through E-vouchers; ii) build the resilience of refugees and local communities through skills development, livelihoods, market linkages, food assistance for assets and volunteer services; iii) support schools and learning centres with school feeding and capacity building for relevant national institutions; iv) implementation of an integrated package of malnutrition prevention and treatment interventions and nutrition services targeting children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women; v) implement safety-net programmes; vi) implement disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security of vulnerable population; vii) implement Food and Nutrition Security Programme in Urban areas; viii) provide lifesaving food assistance during Emergency Response to any disaster in any geographical location in Bangladesh (through the provision of a standby emergency roster).

Conditions for entry:
The organization must have:
- A fully filled-in profile in the UN partner Portal (UNPP)
- Legal status (valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau)
- Experience in the geographic area for which it applies
- Experience in implementing food, nutrition, education (specifically school feeding), cash-based transfers and/or market-based interventions
- Experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
- Experience in emergency preparedness and response
- Organization's strategic objectives that are aligned with WFP's strategic priorities; SO1 to SO4 mentioned above
- Adequate resource capacity (financial human resources and procurement)
- Relevant sector experience (Food, Nutrition, Logistics and Common Services)
- Strong project management experience
- Adequate financial capacity to conduct the required activities supported by an audited financial statement
- Strong relationships with local administration and relevant local and regional institutions

Application Process:
Interested parties are advised to monitor the UN Partner Portal (https://www.unpartnerportal.org/dashboard) for opportunities published for Bangladesh (Calls for Expressions of Interest – CFEI / Request for Proposal - RFP – under Partnership opportunities) during the period between July and September 2024. Please note, unlike previous years, that these partnership opportunities require a full proposal from the outset.

All interested local/national/international NGOs with a valid registration certificate from the NGO Affairs Bureau must ensure that their Organizational Profile on the Portal is fully updated with all the latest information and documents, and they must actively apply to the WFP partnership opportunity with a full proposal. Applications must be submitted through the UN partner portal within the timeframes given. A detailed guideline for creating an organizational profile in UN Partner Portal is available at https://supportcso.unpartnerportal.org/hc/en-us/sections/360000940774. Please note that there are no fees for applications and that applying is free of charge.

In case interested NGO's encounter any technical difficulties with UNPP, please contact bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org.

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিগত ০১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখে "দৈনিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন" ও "দ্যা ডেইলী ষ্টার" পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতালের অর্ন্তগত ঢাকার বাসাবোতে বারডেম নার্সিং কলেজ, নার্সিং হোষ্টেল এবং ১০০ বেডের হাসপাতাল নির্মানের জন্য স্থাপত্য নকশা প্রনয়ন, স্ট্রাকচারাল ডিজাইন , প্রাক্কলন এবং অন্যান্য আনুষাঙ্গিক ডকুমেন্ট প্রস্তুতের জন্য কারিগরি ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব জমাদানের তারিখ ২১ জুলাই এর পরিবর্তে বর্ধিত করণ করে ২৮ জুলাই ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ দিন ধার্য্য করা হলো। ইতিপূর্বে প্রকাশিত অন্যান্য শর্ত অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

মহাপরিচালক
বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A sudden curfew

Govt must explain the unprecedented scale of deaths

A nation-wide government curfew was declared from midnight on Friday till 10 am on Sunday. A government declares curfew and brings the army to the aid of civilian administration as a last resort when a situation gets out of control. We are made to understand that this last resort had to be taken to stop the unbelievable violence we have been witnessing for the last four days, especially on Friday. We hope and expect the army to handle the situation judiciously and not in the way the police and BGB have, which has been shockingly brutal. We must remember that a curfew does assist the restoration of law and order, but it also throttles the economy, kills small businesses, greatly harms the lives of daily wage earners and generates harmful rumours. Thus, it should be enforced for the shortest period of time.

This brings us to the most horrific part of this crisis—at least 66 (confirmed) lives lost in one day (July 19) and hundreds injured. It puts the death toll as confirmed by this paper at 101, though the actual figure is probably much higher. More deaths have been reported on Saturday. People, mostly students, have been shot dead throughout the country. What happened that so many people had to be killed? According to media reports, the majority of deaths was caused by firing from the police and the BGB (with the highest death toll on July 19). Is it acceptable that law enforcement agents and other state actors can shoot so many civilians "to control a situation?" Can something as irresponsible as law enforcers indiscriminately firing bullets and throwing sound grenades from helicopters, be legitimate? In fact, their action instead of reducing violence, inflamed it further. The nation demands a credible explanation for such unprecedented deaths along with a believable investigation into these killings. Those responsible must be given befitting punishment and those who ordered such violent measures to be taken must be held accountable.

There is some truth in the government's statement that political elements have entered the students' anti-quota movement. It is obvious that non-student elements including those that are political have become players in the crisis which makes it all the more important that the government differentiates the students from these non-student elements. The onus is on the government to find a solution acceptable to the quota protestors. The government must also ensure that no student is intimidated, harassed or attacked for being part of the movement by the police, university authorities or by members of the Chhatra League.

We condemn the large-scale destruction and arson attacks on government establishments which we believe were carried out by non-student actors and fair investigations must be made of these incidents. We urge the government to refrain from any further hardline approach to this crisis and restore the country to normalcy as soon as possible.

Why this prolonged internet shutdown?

Curfew, internet outage combine to severely restrict space for citizens

The nationwide complete internet shutdown has not only brought life as we know it to a screeching halt but also cut off Bangladesh from the rest of the world. The blanket shutdown, which started on Thursday evening and continued as of writing this editorial on Saturday evening, is unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh. Never before has there been such a lengthy internet outage encompassing the whole country. Together with the curfew, also in effect since midnight on Friday, the total restriction of both digital and physical spaces has caused unimaginable sufferings.

As per a report by this daily, people all over the country have been struggling to access essential services that rely on internet to function, including digital transactions, utility bill payments, online communications, mobile credit recharge, etc. Customers couldn't use ATM booths or the apps enabling mobile financial services (MFS), nor could they pay through their bank cards or use other online banking services. The only ray of hope for MFS users was the *247# service, but its scope too was limited. In fact, any service or activity requiring internet has been halted, and its cumulative effect is immeasurable at this stage. In the IT sector alone, BASIS estimates a loss of Tk 80 crore in the first 24 hours of outage. As well as the staggering daily financial losses for the IT and digital commerce sectors, another significant concern is the reputational damage for those operating in these sectors.

The question is, how can the government justify such severe and prolonged restrictions? Internet shutdown is one of the major aspects of control that the government has exercised to curb protests over the last decade. This time, it took it a notch up, timing it with a curfew. The justification given for such measures is that they are essential to restore normalcy amid the complete breakdown of law and order that saw over a hundred people killed in just three days in the ongoing quota reform movement. But the risks of internet outage, in particular, far outweigh any benefits. Besides the losses and sufferings that it brings for citizens, an outage invariably means information blackouts which can only lead to the spread of rumours and misinformation. In a country where freedom of expression and mass mobilisations around common political issues are severely restricted, it is vital that such blackouts are resisted as they sow the seeds of long-term instability. Only free flow of information can neutralise such threats.

We, therefore, urge the government to restore internet connections immediately. It must give citizens a breather from the suffocating environment that has been prevailing because of its failure to ensure peace in the ongoing student movement.

What lies ahead for the nation

Shahab Enam Khan
is professor of international relations at Jahangirnagar University.

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

Let's begin by revisiting the timeless concept of "protest" in political science. Throughout history, small, loosely connected groups united by a common cause have sparked remarkable and transformative change, political or otherwise. This is a powerful reminder that no display of excessive power goes unnoticed in the annals of history, and no death goes unpunished.

Take the example of 1952. It sowed the seeds of independence and the great Liberation War of 1971. Civil rights movement in the US, the European colour revolutions, the Arab Spring, or perhaps the Indian independence movement—all thrived on the bonding of powerless groups of people against the powerful.

While protests are formed by the powerless banding together, it is common for a wide range of entities—each presenting diverse motivations and grievances—to join them. This diversity underscores the complexity and depth of social issues and individual as well as collective aspirations that fuel protests. That is exactly what is happening in Bangladesh under the quota reform movement 2.0.

The vibrant and energetic young protesters are in their teens and twenties, most of them first-time voters. While electoral politics is not at all a feature of this movement, some have blatantly tried to give it a political spin. As an organic reaction, I am sure many fringe elements have tried to blend in with the movement. Still, their participation does not invalidate the core cause of the general students under any circumstances. Hence, motivations could be different, but the grievances of different sections perhaps coincide.

The students exposed the overall social mistrust and grievances towards political enterprises. One needs to dig deeper beyond our comfortable political narratives.

A protester told me, "The recent protests by auto-rickshaw drivers in May 2024 got the government's prompt and compassionate response. And look at us; aren't we supposed to run the country in the coming years? You think they value merit?"

Another promptly added, "Did we ask for political change? We asked for policy changes and reforms. Can you ask the government who appoints these university administrators or Public Service Commission officials? Our parents and their hard work pay for these universities to run, and all the development work the government brags about."

Nonetheless, the students' awakening was unsurprising for those with some political sensibility left.

The grievances were all clearly written on the walls, as my Dhaka-based journalist friend Shafiqul Alam said, "Those anti-quota protests are bigger than the Nur-led successful protests in 2018." He added that this time protestors have achieved a far greater goal: a major moral reckoning among millions of apolitical young people. With jobs staggering, graft and connections deciding one's place in society, the cost of migration to the West getting pricier, and the economy in the doldrums, this new generation will decide the fate of our of democracy in the next few years.

This time protestors have achieved a far greater goal—a major moral reckoning among millions of apolitical young people.
PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

This leaves us with three painful but critical paths forward.

First, the distribution of quotas must be reformed, which I guess will be done soon through the apex court, as the law minister declared, followed by judicial inquiries to bring justice to the fallen lives. The sooner, the better.

Second, a genuine commitment to reforming the education sector and national integrity institutions must be visible. University recruitment and admission processes must undergo massive reform and become rigorous. The unholy nexus between student politics, vested interests and political patronage must be eliminated. Awami League was often advised to tame its student wing. Its ineptness in doing so compelled the general students to take a stand this time.

At the same time, I can relate to AL's comfortably slow reaction to teachers' pension-related movements because many of the teachers are in good term with the ruling party. And the teachers, in general, lack the ability to take to the street to protest. If a meaningful outcome of the teachers' protest is expected and reforms are to be meaningful, the so-called leaders among the teachers should control their appetite for undue benefits and change their political subservience.

If the government is willing to see stability, all these efforts should be accompanied by political sanity. Denial, false narratives or digital crackdowns cannot be the go-to tactics in politics in the coming years. Let's not forget, the blame game and exploitation of the Liberation War narrative by anyone haven't worked over the past few weeks.

Finally, the students should be given due honour and dignity. Humiliating them will not bring any good and denying them their rights today or tomorrow will not strengthen the nation. They deserve a better academic framework to develop as good human resources.

I must remind you that our students are also a part of a global transformation, in which the number of protests each year has tripled between 2006 and 2024. The transformation shows that the political attitude of "we know everything," inequality, inflation, nationalism, conflictive social relations, and sycophancy can lead to more turmoil in the future.

If the abovementioned issues remain unaddressed, things can go very wrong in the coming months. Mark this as an early admonition from a public university faculty member.

Let there be sanity.

Stop money laundering to curb inflation

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MOHAMMAD JAHIDUR RAHMAN

The finance minister, in his final speech in parliament on the proposed budget for FY24-25, said: "While it is necessary to adopt contractionary policies to control inflation, it is undeniable that in the long run, this approach can slow down growth."

Inflation, which erodes the purchasing power for consumers as well as businesses, happens in two ways. One is through an increase in the production cost of goods or services, generally referred to as cost-push inflation; the other happens through an increase in the demand for goods and services due to increased supply of money in the market, which is referred to as demand-pull inflation.

When more jobs and higher wages increase people's income level, it leads to a rise in consumer spending. The overall effect is an increase in aggregate demand, which gives firms the opportunity to increase the prices of their goods and services. As soon as this happens on a large enough scale, it leads to an increase in demand-pull inflation.

The current inflation in Bangladesh has not been driven by an increase in the money supply in the market. Rather, a large portion of the active labour force is unemployed or underpaid due to the impact of post-Covid global factors and the war in Ukraine.

A low unemployment rate is unquestionably good in general, but it can cause inflation because zero or near-zero unemployment means people have higher disposable income. The unemployment rate in Bangladesh was 4.38 percent in 2019, which climbed to 5.21 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic's affects. The unemployment rate dropped to a low of 4.7 percent in 2022. The Ukraine war that started in February 2022 halted the post-pandemic recovery process—and employment generation could not gain much momentum. So, it is evident that low unemployment (or an economy with full employment), which is a cause for demand-pull inflation, is not applicable in the Bangladesh context.z

The inflation rate as of May 2024 was 9.89 percent, whereas it was 5.57 percent in January 2020. So, what we have in Bangladesh is cost-push inflation. The devaluation of our currency has led to an increase in the import cost of raw materials, leading to an increase in the overall price level. The official exchange rate of the US dollar against the taka was 84.86 in 2021. It was Tk 103.02 and 109.75 in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Finally, it stood at Tk 117.00 after the introduction of a crawling peg exchange rate.

The value of a country's currency and its exchange rate significantly influences the level of inflation. If a country's currency depreciates, the cost of imported goods affects domestic pricing. Thus, a weaker currency triggers inflation.

To control inflation, the standard response of a central bank would be to raise official interest rates. When the central bank increases interest rates, borrowing for commercial banks becomes more expensive. Both consumers and businesses might think twice about taking loans for major purchases or investments. This slows down spending, typically lowering overall demand, which leads to reduced inflation.

This monetary instrument to curb inflation is best suited for inflation triggered by an excessive supply of money. But in the case of inflation in Bangladesh, it is triggered by a rise in the cost of production, especially due to an excessive rise in the dollar price. In August 2021, Bangladesh Bank had $48.1 billion in foreign currency reserves, which came down to $24.2 billion in May 2024.

Here, it is evident that the higher inflation rate prevailing in Bangladesh is not due to demand-pull inflation; it is due to a shortage of Forex reserves and an increase in the dollar price. So, contractionary monetary policy will not function here as expected.

Increased policy rate and the introduction of a specific margin plus Six-Month Moving Average Rate of Treasury Bill (SMART) as a lending rate will make the economy grow. It will limit the earning capacity of consumers and affect producers, leading them to lower production. Thus, a vicious cycle will take over the economy, pulling the growth rate down or even push it towards negative growth.

Since the current inflation in Bangladesh cannot be most effectively addressed with a contractionary monetary policy, an alternative financial regulatory intervention through the repatriation of overdue export proceeds and curbing money laundering is needed.

In 2022-23, the mismatch between the actual realisation reported by Bangladesh Bank and the shipment figure provided by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) was $12.08 billion. EPB data showed that goods and services exports stood at $63.05 billion in FY23, whereas the central bank reported that Bangladesh received $50.97 billion in the same year. There may be some differences between the export data of the Bangladesh Bank and the EPB due to disagreements and the time lag effect. But such a huge gap must be investigated meticulously to find any unrepatriated export amount.

According to Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Tk 26,400 crore or $3.1 billion is illegally siphoned out of Bangladesh every year. Reportedly, hundi, over-invoicing, under-invoicing, and trade mis-invoicing are the primary ways of money laundering.

Corruption has a negative impact on the economic growth of any country, as it reduces investment and consequently lowers the growth rate of industrial output. Undoubtedly, corruption is a big hindrance to sustainable development. But it's not the biggest hindrance for an economy. When money acquired through corruption circulates within the economy, it still generates employment and thus contributes to increasing GDP. The biggest hindrance to sustainable development is the money getting laundered abroad. Money, whether earned legally or illegally, once laundered out of the country, is most likely lost forever and will not make any contribution to its economic activities. The damage that this does is massive, which is why it is so vital to stop money laundering in Bangladesh.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

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Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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Star SPORT
DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 21, 2024, SRABAN 6, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Women's Asia Cup
India vs UAE
Live from 2:30 pm
Pakistan vs Nepal
Live from 7:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
England vs West Indies
Second Test, Day 4
Live from 4:00 pm

BCB in observation mood as nat'l camp gets held up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus on Saturday said the board is currently observing the ongoing countrywide unrest and is optimistic about holding the national team's scheduled camp in Chattogram once the situation improves.

"The plan remains the same. We are observing the whole situation. We don't know how long the curfew will continue. Let's see what happens," Jalal told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Bangladesh team was scheduled to begin their preparation camp today in Chattogram ahead of their two-match Test series against Pakistan next month.

Several members of the national team were expected to travel to Chattogram on Saturday for the preparation camp, however, due to the current situation, they had to postpone their flight.

"We have delayed our travel plan to Chattogram. We were supposed to fly today [Saturday]. But it was postponed. We are closely following the direction of the government. We will act accordingly," said cricket operations manager Shahriar Nafees.

During the scheduled camp, the Tigers are expected to play two practice matches on July 23 and 29 respectively before flying to Pakistan mid-August for the Test series, which are part of the ICC Test Championship.

Jalal said that the BCB is still optimistic about holding those matches but they are giving top priority to players' safety.

Jalal informed that some of the national team's foreign coaching staff are already in Dhaka following their vacation post the ICC T20 World Cup and the board is expecting the others to join them soon.

"David Hemp [batting coach] and Andre Adams [fast bowling coach] have already arrived in Dhaka. The rest of the foreign coaching staff are expected to arrive within a few days. There were some flight disturbances for a Microsoft complication. Hopefully, we will learn about their arrival dates very soon."

The first Test in Rawalpindi will take place on August 21-25 while Karachi will host the second Test on August 30-September 3.

Meanwhile, the BCB had to cancel two scheduled white-ball matches between the High Performance Unit and Bangladesh Tigers at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on July 19 and 20 respectively due to the ongoing unrest.

'We are competing in Olympics as token participation'

SPORTS REPORTER

Swimmer Sonia Khatun, who will represent Bangladesh in the forthcoming Paris Olympics through a wildcard, said she was unhappy with her preparation for the mega event and criticised the prevailing culture in the country's athletics of taking part in the Olympics just to make up the numbers.

"Considering the magnitude of the Paris Olympics, my preparation is not good enough," Sonia told The Daily Star on the eve of her departure to Paris.

"I have been training at the BKSP for the last two months whereas other swimmers across the world began their preparation for the Paris Olympic Games right after the Tokyo Olympics," she added.

The 25-year-old swimmer feels that there is no point in Bangladesh continuing to send athletes for the Olympics if the federations and other relevant sports bodies do not invest in athletes and aim to win medals.

"We are taking part in the Olympics as token participation. We feel really sad when we produce poor timings and don't win any medals. I think we should not participate in the Olympics just for the sake of it.

"If we want to develop our sports, we need to undertake proper planning and also require strong financial backing. We should set a goal and then design the training and other related things to achieve it."

In the last nine editions, since the 1988 Sydney Olympics, Bangladesh have always participated in the swimming discipline in the Games through wildcards, but haven't achieved anything of note.

Sonia, the national record holder in 100m butterfly event, is set to become the fourth female swimmer after Doli Akter, Sonia Akter and Junayna Ahmed to represent Bangladesh in the Olympics.

The Bangladesh Navy swimmer will compete in the 50m freestyle event, where her current best timing is 30.11 seconds, which she set during the Hangzhou Asian Games in China last year.

The Bangladesh Navy swimmer spoke how competing in the Olympics will be a dream come true for her but her underwhelming preparation for the biggest sports extravaganza in the world has somewhat dampened her enthusiasm.

"Of course, like all other athletes, I always dreamed of competing at the Olympics. Despite this lack of preparation, I am optimistic about giving my best and surpassing my previous best timing,".

Sonia, whose journey in swimming began in 2013 after getting admitted at the BKSP, prefers butterfly and freestyle events but will have to compete in the 50m freestyle event in Paris, in which Bangladesh's three-time Olympian Doli Akter (30.72 and 30.23 seconds), Sonia Akter (29.99 seconds) and Junayna Ahmed (29.78) had competed in the past.

Cricketers uncertain about away tours

SPORTS REPORTER

Several cricketers are dealing with uncertainty regarding their upcoming tours abroad due to the country's ongoing political unrest.

While the red-ball team of High Performance (HP) Unit are already in Australia -- currently facing Pakistan Shaheens in the first of two four-day matches -- the white-ball squad is expected to fly to Australia on July 27 for two one-dayers and a T20 tournament, involving Pakistan Shaheens and Big Bash teams.

HP's white-ball preparation had taken a blow as their last two practice matches against Bangladesh Tigers had to be cancelled, and it appears that most of them could likely be forced to stay in Chattogram if the nation-wide curfew, enforced yesterday, is extended.

"We were scheduled to travel to Dhaka on July 23. I don't know when we will be able to fly to Australia," Afif Hossain, who is set to lead HP team in Australia during the one-day series and is also part of the T20 squad, told The Daily Star yesterday.

> **"We were scheduled to travel to Dhaka on July 23. I don't know when we will be able to fly to Australia."**
>
> **AFIF HOSSAIN,** who is set to lead HP team in Australia

Meanwhile, all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, who was picked by Montreal Tigers in upcoming Global T20 Canada, scheduled to start on July 25, informed he is yet to get visa for Canada.

"I came to my home in Feni two days ago. As far as I know, everyone's visa issues are ongoing. It's not sure [about him playing in Global T20 Canada]," said Saifuddin, who was in Chattogram with Bangla Tigers.

Saifuddin aside, Shoriful Islam and Shakib Al Hasan will represent Bangla Tigers Mississauga and Rishad Hossain will feature for Toronto Nationals in the franchise tournament. Shakib, who is currently representing Los Angeles Knight Riders in the ongoing Major League Cricket in the USA, is expected to fly to Canada after the tournament ends.

NEWS

Heatwave poses big challenge for Greece's workers

REUTERS, *Athens*

Yannis Asimakopoulos has worked as a food delivery driver in Athens for 17 years and cannot recall a hotter summer as a new heatwave gripped Greece this week.

Authorities shut all archaeological sites in Athens for a second consecutive day on Thursday and restricted outdoor work as the country sizzled under its second heatwave of the summer.

Thermal cameras have recorded temperatures of about 70 Celsius (158 Fahrenheit) on the road surface, but delivery drivers on their scooters are still needed.

"Driving is really hard. You have to wear a helmet, the lens of the helmet fogs up from the sweat. You have to stop all the time, the tyres melt faster, the street is slippery, the conditions in general are really difficult," Asimakopoulos said after the end of his shift at noon.

"Every year I see a huge difference in the temperature. I see a rise and it lasts longer. Before it was two or three days," he added.

As with many countries in Europe, Greece has repeatedly seen high temperatures disrupt daily activities since June, and hundreds of wildfires have broken out following the warmest winter on record that scientists link to global climate change.

This year Greece recorded its warmest-ever winter. June was also the hottest on record and the current heatwave is forecast to be the country's longest ever, said Kostas Lagouvardos, research director of the national observatory.

The government has ordered some businesses not to let their employees perform heavy outdoor duty from midday until 5 pm (0900 GMT to 1400 GMT) this week as the mercury is expected to reach 42 Celsius (105.8 Fahrenheit) in parts of the country.

For many delivery workers, that is not an option, Asimakopoulos said.

"Many people... who need more money for their families will continue to work, and the employers will exploit this." More than 20,000 drivers deliver food, beverages and other goods in Athens. Their unions are demanding the restriction in working hours to apply when temperature reaches 38 Celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit), not 40 or higher.

In some areas, even the lowest temperature recorded was already 30 degrees Celsius, increasing the impact of heat stress on humans, Lagouvardos said, adding: "There is no hour in the day to feel better."

Israel's occupation

FROM PAGE 8

Hamas even as demands grow for him to reach a deal that would free hostages.

According to the Gaza health ministry, more than 38,919 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 90,000 people have been injured in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7.

All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to "breaking point" due to an influx of people wounded by Israeli bombardments, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Washington has been pushing for a truce deal between Israel and Hamas since President Joe Biden released details of what he said was an Israeli ceasefire roadmap on May 31.

But despite the efforts of Egyptian and Qatari mediators, indirect negotiations between the foes have not yet led to a final a deal. Biden last week said there were "still gaps to close" but progress was being made.

Meanwhile, a drone attack on Israeli land injured several people on Friday night. The Israeli military said they detected the Iran-made drone beforehand but could not shoot it down due to human error.

Houthi movement in Yemen claimed responsibility for the attack.

Restore internet now

FROM PAGE 8

Editors' Council is urging the government to quickly resume the internet service all over the country, the statement added.

The statement was issued on Friday. However, due to a technical glitch, this portion, which was in our yesterday's report titled "Lives upended by internet shutdown", got dropped. We regret the error.

Mindless destruction leaves them in ruins

FROM PAGE 8

However, when they could not break the shutter on the first floor, they smashed the window glasses to get into the station.

They vandalised ticket counters, vending machines, fire extinguishers, TV screens, CCTV cameras and each and every room on the floor, the official said, wishing anonymity.

They even tried to break open the ticket vending machines to loot money, he said.

"It seems the attackers had a personal grudge against the metro rail...," he said.

Replying to a question, he said it would take some time to replace all these equipment and fix the rooms. For example, he said, they have to set up vending machines, which have to be customised as per our usability.

"Besides, all these sophisticated equipment need to be replaced. We also have to carry out trials before starting operations in the stations," he said.

Mass Rapid Transit Line-6, the country's first metro rail line, was made partially operational from Uttara to Agargaon in December 2022. The Agargaon-Motijheel section opened for service in October last year.

The government is implementing a Tk 33,472 crore project to build the 21.26km line from Uttara to Kamalapur, with most of the fund coming from Japan as loan.

SC hears today pleas against HC verdict

FROM PAGE 8

keep the provision of quotas in public service, and the court cannot interfere in this decision.

On July 18, Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, fixed today as the date for the hearing at its full bench led by the chief justice.

He passed the order after Attorney General AM Amin Uddin appealed for an early hearing of the petitions considering those as an important and urgent matter.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 this year declared illegal the circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, which cancelled the quota system in government jobs.

The circular said that in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class 1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class 2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

The HC in the full text of its judgement, released on July 14, also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for freedom fighters' children, districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups and others, if any, and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible, preferably within three months, from the date of receipt of the order.

The court, however, said the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs, if necessary, and can fill the vacant posts from the merit list if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

Protesting the HC judgment on June 5, students staged demonstrations at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University. They took to the streets on July 1, demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 circular.

Students intensified their protests across the country since July 4 as the Appellate Division did not stay the HC verdict following a government petition.

Amid the situation, the government and two DU students moved two petitions before the Appellate Division seeking stay on the HC verdict.

Following their petitions, the Appellate Division on July 10 directed the authorities concerned to maintain the status quo regarding the subject matter of the case till filing of civil petitions for leave to appeal.

"The impugned judgement of the High Court shall remain inoperative till that period," the Appellate Division said in the full text of its order.

'Stop using excessive force on protesters'

FROM PAGE 8

the independence, impartiality, transparency, thoroughness, and effectiveness of the commission.

They demanded that the terms of reference of the commission be made public.

They said they are further concerned that there is no information on what, if any, effective steps are being taken to ensure public participation in the commission's process or safety and security of the victims and witnesses.

They also expressed concern about the transparency of the investigation, saying that there being no information on whether the hearings of the commission will be public, or open to the media or whether or how it will engage with the public.

They also demanded the immediate restoration of internet services across the country, as it is critical for informing and engaging the public in the investigation process.

The signatories include Shahdeen Malik, ZI Khan Panna, Sara Hossain, Fawzia Karim Firoze, Aneek R Huq, Jyotirmoy Barua, Rashna Imam, Manzur Al Matin, Snehadri Chakraborty, Nahid Mahtab, Md Anamul Haq Chowdhury, Qazi Zahed Iqbal, Shakir Khondokar, Anam Hossain, and Rezaur Rahman Lenin.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Forum Bangladesh yesterday demanded that the government ensure fundamental rights of every citizen of the country, especially the right to live, freedom of expression, and freedom of rally.

It also demanded that the judiciary committee formed to investigate the deaths during the protest publish its report and make the investigation process participatory and independent, says a press release.

Terming the quota protest a political conspiracy, the ruling party is trying to corner its opponent while the major opposition party is trying to take political advantage of the demonstration by extending support.

As a result, the nonpolitical movement led to extreme violence, which is the indication of political bankruptcy of both parties. The rights body also thinks that the parties are responsible for violating human rights through violence.

The body demanded compensation for the families of the deceased and wounded and bringing persons responsible to book.

N Korea launching more trash balloons

Says Seoul military

AFP, *Seoul*

North Korea is launching more balloons believed to be carrying trash towards the South, Seoul's military said Thursday, in the latest round of a tit-for-tat balloon war between the two Koreas.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North was "launching (suspected) trash balloons aimed at the South once again", adding they were currently floating across the border.

"Citizens are advised to be cautious of falling debris. If you find any fallen balloons do not touch them and report them to the nearest military unit or police station," it added.

Seoul city authorities issued an alert to residents Thursday, saying "a suspected balloon from North Korea is confirmed to have entered the airspace of Northern Gyeonggi province. Citizens should be cautious of outside activities." This is the eighth round of trash-carrying balloons launched by Pyongyang since late May.

The nuclear-armed North has already sent more than a thousand of the balloons south, calling it retaliation for ones carrying anti-regime propaganda floated northwards by activists south of the border.

DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 21, 2024, SRABAN 6, 1431 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Star BUSINESS

Internet blackout wallops life and living

MAHMUDUL HASAN

A countrywide internet blackout dealt a massive blow to the lives of the Bangladeshis, upending their digital lifestyle and leaving businesses staring at huge financial losses.

The complete non-availability of the internet has left people without social media, internet-based voice and video calls, online transactions and many more essential services for three days.

Mobile financial services (MFSs), which have become the lifeblood for crores of people, have come to a halt, leaving many with no money in hand.

Export and import activities at sea and land ports are also paused as the entire process depends on the internet.

This scenario delivered the wrong message to the world, portraying Bangladesh as an unreliable business partner.

The digital commerce sector is facing losses of $5 million every day, said Fahim Ahmed, CEO of ride-hailing company Pathao.

From logistical support to money collection, everything is being affected due to the absence of internet, he said.

Russell T Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, said: "Many of my association members called and cried as they fear this prolonged internet outage may destroy their businesses in the blink of an eye."

As the internet was suspended without prior notice, IT firms and freelancers could not notify clients about the outage, which may also lead to a downgrade of Bangladesh's rating in the global IT services industry, he added.

He urged the government to restore internet services at least for the export-oriented IT businesses and other firms.

Md Arafat, a resident of Dhaka, said he tried multiple times yesterday to top-up his phone through MFS accounts, but failed. Local flexiload shops offered no solution.

This scenario delivered the wrong message to the world, portraying Bangladesh as an unreliable business partner

Officials of telecom operators said they are losing around Tk 35 crore to Tk 40 crore in revenue each day.

The internet blackout started in Bangladesh on July 16, when the telecom regulator ordered operators to shut down 4G internet services in over 50 university areas amid quota reform protests.

The next day, the government, utilising its own technology, shut down mobile internet to help law enforcers tackle the existing situation, said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for ICT.

On July 18, a fire broke out in the building of the Department of Disaster Management in the capital's Mohakhali area, damaging the internet transmission lines of some data centres hosted in adjacent buildings.

The same day, at around 8pm, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) said the fire may eat away 30-40 percent of bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

But at around 9pm, users across Bangladesh faced a complete broadband blackout, leaving them totally disconnected from the outside world.

The government had ordered international terrestrial cable and international internet gateway companies to stop supplying bandwidth to the internet service providers, said multiple industry players seeking anonymity.

However, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said miscreants had set ablaze a data centre in Mohakhali, which had led to the internet disruption.

Yesterday, the BTRC and the ISPAB said they needed more time to repair the damaged data centre and transmission lines.

Standing in stark contrast to the usual bustle, an eerie calm prevails at Naya Paltan, with the silence broken only by the passing of the occasional rickshaws during a nationwide curfew imposed by the government. The photo was taken around 11:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Fresh blow to fragile economy

AHSAN HABIB

The countrywide shutdown and subsequent violence centring the quota reform movement crippled business and economic activities for the last three days, dealing a further blow to an economy that is already ailing due to high inflation, falling exports and depleting forex reserves.

Fearing further violence and arson, factories, including those in the biggest export-earning sector of garments, remained shut.

Additionally, passenger and freight vehicles stayed away from plying roads and highways, disrupting the transport of exportable goods and imported items to and from the ports.

At the same time, a countrywide internet blackout affected the assessment of imported and exported goods by the customs, causing indefinite delays in clearance.

The ongoing internet blackout also forced the closure of digital commerce activities for a second consecutive day.

Markets in Dhaka and Chattogram, the two biggest economic hubs of the country, shuttered their stores fearing attacks, with only small neighbourhood shops offering essentials to the few who ventured out.

Over the past few days, several public and private assets were also vandalised and set on fire, which will contribute to losses.

Importantly, such a situation will also impact the image of the country. So, export orders and investment may take a hit.

"On the one hand, this has direct ramifications for export earnings. On the other, the current situation tarnishes the image of our country to international customers," said Syed Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Group, one of the largest garment exporters in Bangladesh.

"Global buyers started to believe that Bangladesh had been able to come out of political volatility. This increased their confidence. Now, they feel bad."

Tanvir added that the imposition of a curfew by the government indicates that the situation is extremely volatile. "We have not seen this in almost two decades."

He added that export shipments would be delayed because of problems in transport, which may have a ripple effect.

As such, he called for a quick resolution to the stalemate.

Kamran T Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), said the situation could have been resolved much earlier.

It is so sad that so many students have been killed, he said.

"Trade and businesses will be impacted. Already, the price level has climbed," he said, adding that investment would be affected too.

To reduce economic losses, a fast solution is necessary. The course of the economy depends largely on a proper resolution to the existing impasse, he added.

To reduce economic losses, a fast solution is necessary. The course of the economy depends largely on a proper resolution to the existing impasse, said Kamran T Rahman, president of MCCI

Prof Selim Raihan, executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), said the economy is bleeding.

The political situation will lead to further deterioration of the economy, he added.

The government should have resolved the demands of the students through a dialogue. "This kind of situation could have been avoided in view of the current economic challenges.

"Any disruption to the economic activities is very costly," he added.

The extent of destruction witnessed in the country has raised the alarm for the economy. This type of situation will create uncertainty and it is not good for the economy, Raihan said.

"The supply chain has been disrupted. Activities in the export-oriented sector are almost suspended. Internet-based business activities are down. This will have a major negative impact on the economy."

Faruque Hassan, managing director of Giant Group and a former BGMEA president, said indirect losses would be more costly than direct losses, especially in terms of losing work orders.

A top official of a leading listed drug company, said the pharmaceutical sector usually remains out of the purview of any restrictions. But that is not the case this time around.

"This time, the government did not announce that the curfew would not be applicable for the pharmaceutical sector. So, we had to keep our plants closed."

Due to problems in transporting medicine, many pharmacies remained closed. As a result, drug sales may halve, he added.

Garment sector's losses piling up as factories remain shut

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment factories kept production suspended yesterday and decided to keep the units closed today as well considering the safety of the workers and the factories amid ongoing countrywide violence and curfew imposed by the government.

For now, the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) decided to keep the factories shut until today.

The boards of directors of the two associations will sit again today to decide whether the factory shutdown will be extended or not, BGMEA President SM Mannan Kochi and BKMEA Executive President Mohammad Hatem told The Daily Star over phone.

The suspension of the internet is also hampering the garment sector as factories cannot send inspection reports to international retailers and brands online, which is a must every day to keep the buyers updated, said Faruque Hassan, managing director of Giant Group, a garment exporter.

In the last two days, many goods-laden trucks failed to reach Chattogram port from the factories, but factory owners could not convey that to the buyers as there was no internet, he added.

"If the curfew continues, it will be difficult to keep the factories open," BKMEA's Hatem said.

He said the BKMEA member factories were shut yesterday after the association announced the factory closure a day earlier.

But a few factories at Konabari and Gazipur opened yesterday as factory owners and workers did not know about the imposition of the curfew, the BGMEA chief said.

Garment is the main export earner of the country, contributing over 84 percent to national exports a year.

The sector is losing over $500 million every day due to the closure of factories, industry insiders said.

The indirect losses are greater than direct losses in the case of factory closures, said Faruque Hassan, also a former BGMEA president.

"If a factory is closed, buyers either cancel the work orders or seek discounts or air shipment. They may also shift work orders to other countries due to delays in production."

AT A GLANCE

- BGMEA, BKMEA shut factories from July 20 to July 21
- They will meet today to discuss extension of factory shutdown
- Garment sector accounts for **84**% of Bangladesh's total exports
- Violence and curfew create obstacles to transporting goods
- Internet blackout hampering communication with int'l buyers

LOSSES

- Garment sector losing over $**500**m every day due to factory closure, owners say
- Indirect losses are greater than direct losses

Ports, transport at a standstill

JAGARAN CHAKMA, DWAIPAYAN BARUA *and* **MOHAMMAD SUMAN**

Export and import activities suffered severe disruptions for the third day yesterday amid transport problems because of violence centring the quota reform movement and internet shutdown by the government.

The deadlock affected industrial production and shipment of exportable goods from the ports, especially Chattogram port, which handles roughly 90 percent of Bangladesh's international trade.

Truck and lorry drivers are reluctant to ply their vehicles, for which deliveries of the construction sector's raw materials could not be taken from the port, creating a backlog in production and delivery of the final products.

"Production is being severely hampered as workers, technicians and engineers cannot come to work for the curfew," said Tapan Sengupta, deputy managing director of BSRM.

No raw materials could be received from the port as logistics service providers do not want to risk their vehicles being vandalised, he said.

"We could not even reach products to dealers and clients over the past week," he added.

Almost all steel mills have suspended production, said Jahangir Alam, president of Bangladesh Steel Manufacturers Association.

The mills are unable to receive raw materials from the port and are having to pay storage rent daily, he said. Similarly, no revenue has been earned over the past week but bank loan interest will still have to be paid, he added.

The sufferings of industries such as steel and cement will affect development activities, including the real estate sector, he said.

According to Alam, the effect will be apparent after a couple of months when the rise in production costs will be passed onto consumers.

If production of steel and cement is hampered, its effect directly falls on the construction sector, particularly housing, as these are the major raw materials, said FR Khan, managing director of bti, a leading developer.

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MIRPUR-10, KAZIPARA METRO STATIONS

Mindless destruction leaves them in ruins

At least a year needed to fix them, say officials; metro service suspended indefinitely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From vending machines to ticket counters, from offices to police control rooms, from computers to television screens and close circuit cameras -- everything inside the Mirpur-10 metro station was smashed to bits.

On Friday evening, miscreants carried out mindless destruction inside the Mirpur-10 and Kazipara stations amid the ongoing unrest.

The scale of destruction was such that it would take at least a year to repair and replace the equipment and structures, authorities said.

The extent of destruction has also put a question mark on the resumption of metro service.

The metro rail authority suspended its operation for indefinite period from yesterday, amid the ongoing unrest. Before the suspension, more than 3 lakh people used the metro services every day.

"There is nothing left... They damaged and looted everything needed for the operations...," said MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, while visiting the Mirpur-10 station yesterday afternoon, along with other DMTCL officials.

While they were visiting the Mirpur-10 station, miscreants attacked the Kazipara station once again, another official said.

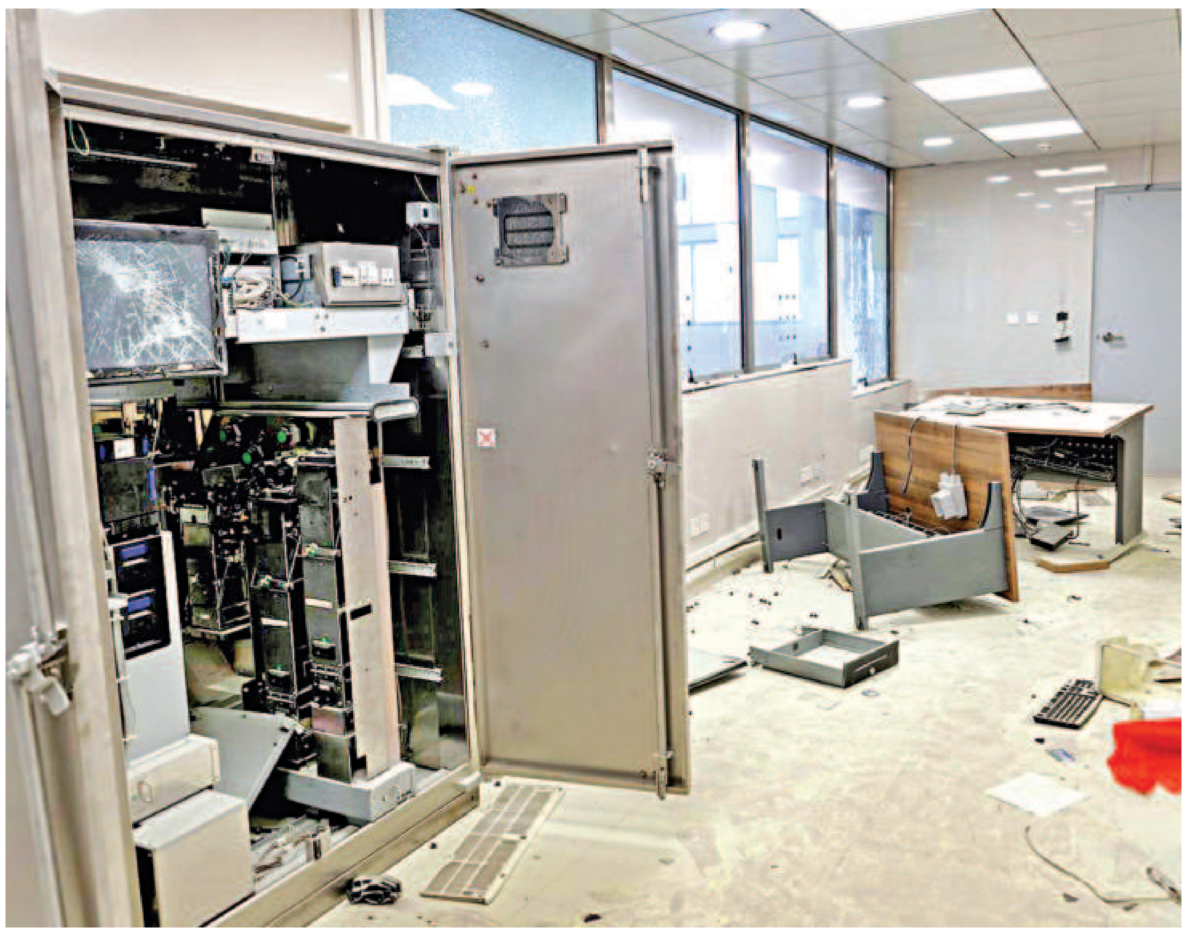
Asked when services at the stations can be resumed, MAN Siddique couldn't provide any timeframe.

"The people with technical knowledge, who visited the station [Mirpur-10] with me, said it would take at least a year to make the two stations operational," he said.

Asked whether the destruction will affect the resumption of overall metro rail operations, he said, "It's not possible to comment on the matter now. We will check all the aspects once the situation returns to normal."

Another official, who visited the Mirpur-10 station, said miscreants broke down the (north-west end) entrance gate.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Vandals damaged a ticket vending machine and furniture in a room of the Mirpur-10 metro rail station on Friday afternoon. The attack caused extensive damage to the station and it will take at least one year to make the station operational again, said DMTCL.

PHOTO: **COURTESY OF DMTCL**

Restore internet now

Editors' Council urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council has demanded that the authorities concerned immediately resume the internet service across the country.

In a statement, the council's President Mahfuz Anam and its General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud said the internet service has been suspended across the country since Thursday night, due to which quick exchange of news and scrutiny of information are being hampered.

The council thinks the suspension of internet service in such a manner creates apprehension of information blackout, which can lead to the spread of rumors, and false and baseless information.

In this situation, the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

GOVERNMENT JOBS

SC hears today pleas against HC verdict that reinstated quota

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All eyes are on the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court that is set today to hear two leave to appeal petitions that challenged the High Court judgment of reinstating quotas in government jobs.

> **The government and two Dhaka University students filed the petitions with the SC on July 16 and 18 seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict.**

The full bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, will sit after 10:00am for hearing the petitions as the curfew will be in force till that time, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Usually, the Appellate Division sits at 9:00am on every working day.

The government and two Dhaka University students filed the petitions with the SC on July 16 and 18 seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict.

In the petitions, they said it is a policy decision of the government whether to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

DMCH morgue never been thicker with grief

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, DIPAN NANDY *and* **MD ABBAS**

The air at Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue was never this thick with grief before yesterday.

Kamrul Islam could not look more shattered -- his younger son Nayeem Hawlader had just died from bullet wounds. Next to him was one Suraiya Akhter, who was weeping inconsolably over the death of her father from bullet wounds too.

Near them were distraught friends and relatives of Tahir Zaman Priyo, who arrived at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on hearing news of his death.

When the correspondents visited the DMCH morgue at 4:30pm, the place was overcrowded with shell-shocked relatives of the deceased. For the next hour, the correspondents saw at least 12 dead bodies entering the morgue.

One of the dead bodies was of Kamrul's son Nayeem, a second year HSC student of Raoshan Ara Degree College in Jatrabari. On Friday, he joined the student protests with his friends and sustained bullet wounds that took his life.

Although his father Kamrul is beside himself with grief, his elder brother Noman is proud as his brother died a hero.

"I am feeling extremely proud as my brother did not lose his life in any political party's programme. He was active in the movement going on against the discriminatory quota system -- he sacrificed his life for a just movement," Noman said.

Suraiya Akhter's father happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, just like Arif from Bhola's Lalmohon area.

"We live just opposite the BNP party office. When the clash took place with police and BNP men, my father went there to witness the situation. Suddenly, bullets hit my father in the back," she said.

Her father, a rickshaw puller, died on his way to hospital.

Like Suraiya's father, Arif was an innocent bystander.

Just a month ago, Arif started working at a hotel in Jatrabari, a site of fierce clashes between the police and the protesters.

"My brother was not involved in any politics or clashes. He suffered a bullet wound in his head on Friday in Kajla-Boubazar area. His body bore no other injury mark," Rashed said.

Relatives and friends of freelance photojournalist Tahir Zaman Priyo, were seen sitting in front of the morgue as autopsy was performed on his body.

Priyo was killed during a clash between police and protesters on Friday in Science Lab area while on duty.

He was hit by a bullet in the head and was pronounced dead at 10:00pm on Friday when he was brought to DMCH, according to his grandfather Shafiul Alam.

Like Priyo, Tourist Police's Assistant Sub-Inspector Muktadir was killed while on duty.

"My brother was walking towards his Banasree office from Rayerbagh house. At that time, some miscreants swooped on him, beat him up indiscriminately and smashed his face," his brother Kuddus Ali said.

Muktadir was taken to the DMCH where the doctor declared him dead.

'Stop using excessive force on protesters'

44 jurists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-four noted law practitioners, including jurists, legal researchers, and professionals, yesterday condemned the use of "excessive and disproportionate" force on students demonstrating for quota reforms.

"We demand that the excessive use of force must be stopped immediately, and justice along with adequate reparations must be provided to the victims and their grieving families," they said in a statement sent to media via text messages.

They demanded that the perpetrators of the atrocities be held accountable for their actions.

They said they are also concerned by the composition and mandate of the inquiry commission. They questioned if the standards applicable to domestic investigations under the international human rights law were being maintained, particularly regarding

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BNP leader Amir Khasru arrested

Rizvi, Nazrul placed on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police arrested BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury from his Banani residence yesterday.

Confirming the incident to The Daily Star, Shamsuddin Didar, a senior member of the BNP chairperson's press wing, said Amir was picked up from his home around 10:00pm.

Earlier in the day, a Dhaka court placed BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan and the party's Senior-Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi on one-day remands each in a violence case filed with Paltan Police Station.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mosharraf Hossain passed the order after they were produced before the court. Kabir Hossain Howlader, a DB inspector and the case investigating officer, sought two-day remands for each, said a court source.

DB arrested Nazrul from his Banani residence early yesterday, while police arrested Rizvi from in front of the Jatiya Press Club on Friday afternoon.

On the other hand, Nurul Haque Nur, convener of the Gono Odhikar Parishad, was allegedly picked up by law enforcers from his Uttara home early yesterday.

Speaking to journalists, Nur's wife Maria Nur, alleged that law enforcers broke the front door and entered their house.

"I looked for my husband at the DB office. But they denied arresting him. I clearly saw that those who picked up my husband were wearing Rab, DB, and police uniforms," she said, demanding to know the whereabouts of her husband and his unconditional release.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir demanded the immediate release of the arrestees.

Khaleda's condition stable

Says her physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid widespread rumours that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health has deteriorated, her personal physician yesterday said the former prime minister's condition was stable.

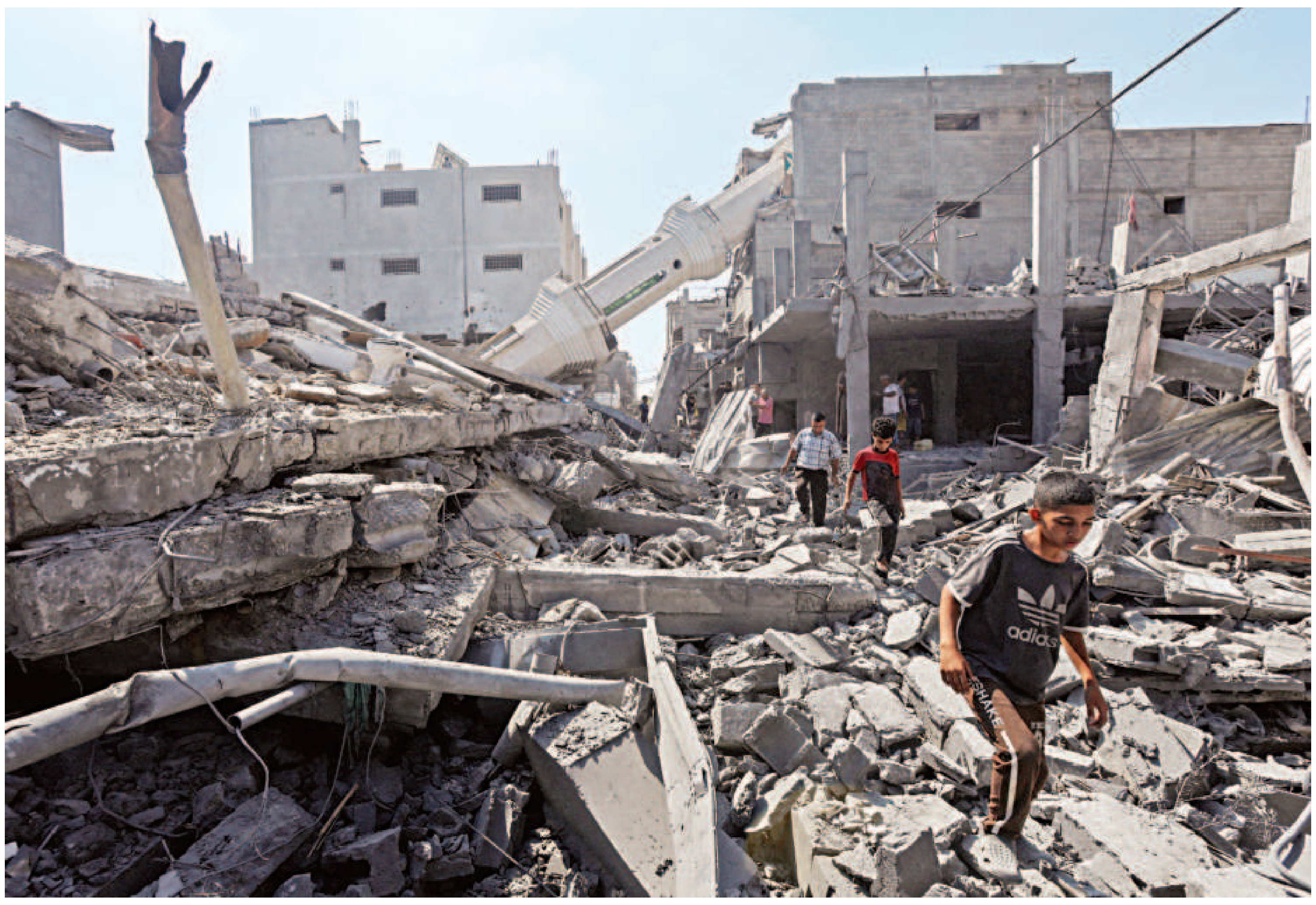
"She's being treated at the Evercare Hospital at the advise of the medical board," Dr AZM Zahid Hossain said.

She gave samples for several blood tests yesterday, Shamsuddin Didar, a senior member of BNP chairperson's Press Wing, told The Daily Star last night.

On June 21, Khaleda was admitted to the coronary care unit at Evercare Hospital following breathing complications.

On June 23, a pacemaker was implanted in her chest. She was discharged from the hospital on July 2.

She was admitted to the hospital again on July 8 as her health condition deteriorated.



Palestinians inspect the damage as the collapsed minaret of Abdullah Azzam mosque leans against a house after the mosque was hit by an Israeli strike in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: **AFP**

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Israel's occupation violates int'l law

Rules UN top court; death toll in Gaza rises to 38,919

AGENCIES

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has said Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is "illegal and should come to end as rapidly as possible."

In a non-binding opinion on Friday evening, the UN top court in The Hague said Israel must pay reparations to Palestinians as they lost lands and property due to its occupation.

The lands in its ownership have been under dispute since 1967 after the six-day war when Israel almost tripled the size of the territory under its control.

Before the hearings, Israel said it did not recognise the legitimacy of the proceedings at the world court. Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu called the ICJ opinion a "decision of lies".

The ICJ judgement does carry a moral and political weight to have the world court determine that Israel's occupation violates international law and must end as soon as possible, reports CNN.

The Palestinian authority welcomed the ruling, and said the international communities should respect the ruling and force Israel to end the occupation.

Palestinian group Hamas called for immediate implementation of the judgement.

On the ground, Palestinians mourned relatives killed in overnight Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, where Israel's prime minister has vowed to intensify the pressure on

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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ROSA
BEYOND BEAUTY

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The Daily Star
SECOND EDITION
DHAKA MONDAY JULY 22, 2024
REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 179 | SRABAN 7, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 15, 1446 HIJRI | 12 PAGES : TK 15.00

KSRM
শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

Saudi-bound migrant workers in a bind
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Did we have to pay such a heavy price for this verdict?
P8

Australian involvement in the 1971 Liberation War
P10

Verstappen says he is no longer the leader of the pack
P11

SC VERDICT ON GOVT JOBS

93pc on merit, 7pc from quota

Govt to implement SC recommendations, circular likely tomorrow, says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

5pc for children of living and martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas

1pc for ethnic minorities

1pc for physically challenged, third gender

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered major reforms to the quota system in jobs at government, semi-government and autonomous bodies, curtailing quotas to only seven percent from the existing 56 percent.

According to the SC order, 93 percent jobs in civil service will be merit-based.

The apex court also scrapped a High Court judgment that reinstated quotas in government jobs.

The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan fixed five percent quota for children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas. One percent quota has been reserved for ethnic minorities and another one percent for persons with disability and people of third gender.

In the short verdict, the top court made no mention of the grandchildren of freedom fighters.

If qualified candidates are not available from the fixed quotas, the vacant posts will be filled from the general merit list. But despite the court order, the government may cancel, amend or reform the quota system if necessary, considering the overall situation, it said.

This has been done to "ensure the principle of equality and representation of backward section of people in the republic's jobs," the SC order said, citing articles 19, 27, 28 (4) and 29 (3) of the constitution.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Army personnel stand guard in front of the main entrance to the Supreme Court around noon yesterday. Security was beefed up in and around the court as the Appellate Division during curfew hours held a hearing on a case regarding quotas in government jobs.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Shutdown paused for 48 hours'

Say 3 protest leaders including Nahid; others say they'll press on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three organisers of the quota reform protests yesterday suspended the "complete shutdown" programme for 48 hours while others said they would continue with it.

At a press briefing at the Gonoshasthaya Hospital last night, the three --Nahid Islam, Sarjis Alam, and Hasnat Abdullah – also issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the government to meet four demands -- withdrawal of the curfew, reopening of all universities and their residential halls, restoration of internet services, and security of all coordinators of the protests.

Nahid said they suspended the shutdown and issued the ultimatum since there is a curfew and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

DEATHS OF STUDENTS

Judicial body to unearth reasons

Hopes apex court in its observation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday hoped that the students would call off their demonstrations for quota reforms following its verdict in a quota-related case and return to their educational institutions.

The deaths of many people during the demonstrations were "unexpected", observed the apex court while delivering the verdict.

It said it expects the judicial probe commission, led by a High Court judge, to unearth the reasons behind the deaths of the students and the government to take necessary legal steps against those responsible as per the recommendations of the commission.

The seven-member bench, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, requested the government to ensure necessary support to the commission so that it can perform its duty.

It also asked the government to help establish a favourable environment at educational institutions immediately.

According to the verdict, 93 percent government jobs would be based on merit while the remaining seven percent recruitments would be on quotas.

The court said the 2018 government circular cancelling quotas in government jobs was reinstated when the Supreme Court issued a status quo on the High Court's verdict on July 10.

Earlier, the High Court had declared the circular illegal.

"But our students could not properly realise the actual meaning of our order, resulting in different unwanted incidents and many deaths, which is in no way desirable," it said.

The chief justice said they have asked the protesters to place their points before the court through their lawyers but they did not. However, two students, on the behalf of general students, appeared before the court seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict, he said.

The court asked the students to return to their educational institutions immediately and get ready to take on the great responsibility of the state in future.

It asked the chiefs of all universities, colleges, schools, and madrasas to immediately take necessary measures so that students can return to their institutions.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TIMELINE

JUNE 5
High Court rules the 2018 government circular, which abolished the quota system, illegal, resulting in its reinstatement.

JUNE 9
The government challenges the HC rule with the Supreme Court.

JULY 4
SC rejects government's appeal to stay the HC verdict.

JULY 9
Two Dhaka University students file petition, seeking a stay on the HC verdict.

SEE PAGE 2

At least 7 killed, on 2nd day of curfew

Six others injured in previous days' clashes die in hospitals

STAR REPORT

So far, 140 people died in the ongoing violence

At least seven people were killed and dozens wounded in the capital and two other districts in sporadic clashes between law enforcers and agitators on the second day of nationwide curfew yesterday.

Meanwhile, six more people, who were injured in earlier clashes, died yesterday, police and hospital authorities said.

Most of the victims were hit by bullets.

On Saturday night, the government extended the nationwide curfew till further notice to tackle the ongoing violence centring the quota protest.

The curfew was declared and army personnel were deployed on Friday to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and public properties.

For the second day, members of the armed forces were seen patrolling different points in Dhaka and other districts yesterday.

Of the seven killed, five were brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from Sign Board, Chittagong Road and Dhania areas of the city, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

3hr break in curfew from 2pm today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing nationwide curfew will remain in force until further notice with a three-hour break from 2:00pm today.

From now on, the home ministry will decide about curfew in Dhaka city, Dhaka district, Narayanganj city, Narayanganj district, Gazipur city, and Gazipur and Narsingdi districts.

Considering the situation, district magistrates and police commissioners of the metropolitan areas will make decisions whether the curfew will remain in force in their respective areas.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said this during a press briefing after a meeting with the representatives of the law enforcement agencies at his Dhanmondi residence last night.

He hoped that the law

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Picked up early Saturday, Nahid returns battered

ZIAUDDIN SHIPLU *and*
SAIM BIN MUJIB

Nahid Islam, a key organiser of quota reform movement, alleged he was "tortured physically" until he was unconscious.

In the early hours Saturday, he was picked up allegedly by law enforcers from a house in the capital's Sabujbagh.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nahid said, "After taking me into a room, they interrogated me over the student movement. They tortured me mentally and physically. At one point, I lost consciousness."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

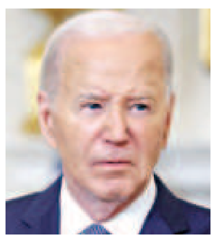
A father wails as he carries his bullet-hit son to a hospital in the capital's Matuail yesterday afternoon.

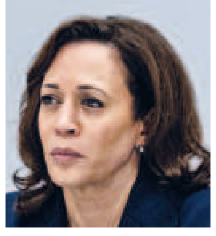
US PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

Biden quits race amid criticism

Endorses Kamala Harris to replace him

AGENCIES





US President Joe Biden has withdrawn from the presidential race amid growing calls by his Democratic peers, reports BBC.

He said he would speak to the nation later this week in detail about his decision. He has backed his running mate Kamala Harris, the vice president, to replace him.

Biden faced growing calls to quit the race after a devastating debate earlier this month where he struggled to find words to reply to Republican candidate Donald Trump.

Though he tried to remain defiant, in recent days, a growing number of heavyweight Democrats, including former House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Representative Adam Schiff, joined the call.

According to a White House source, Pelosi reportedly told Biden he cannot win the Nov 5 election.

Schiff said in a statement on Wednesday that he has "serious concerns" about whether Biden can defeat Trump, the first Democrat to come out after the Saturday assassination attempt against the former president.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Biden said, "My fellow Democrats, I have decided not to accept the nomination and to focus all my energies on my duties as president for the remainder of my term. My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my vice president... Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats - it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this."

In another statement issued by Biden, he said, "It has been the greatest honour of my life to serve as your president. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interests of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as president for the remainder of my term.

Left, as one policeman aims his rifle at agitators ahead, another wipes his sweat during clashes that went on for hours in the capital's Matuail yesterday afternoon. *Right top,* the agitators opposite the policemen use a gas tanker as a barricade between them and the cops. *Right bottom,* a police tow truck that was set ablaze on Saturday is yet to be removed from a road in Matuail.

PHOTO: **STAR**

PROTESTS IN BANGLADESH

US issues travel alert for its citizens

AFP, *Washington*

The US State Department has warned Americans not to travel to Bangladesh and said it is allowing voluntary departure of non-emergency US government employees and their families from the country rocked by protests.

Travellers should not visit Bangladesh due to the ongoing unrest in Dhaka, the department said on Saturday in an advisory that escalated its advice of "reconsider travel" from earlier in the day.

The State Department is allowing the voluntary departure of non-emergency US government employees and family members, the advisory said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

TIMELINE

JULY 10
SC orders status quo on the quota issue for four weeks.

JULY 11
HC says the government can change, reduce, or increase the ratio or percentage of quotas.

JULY 14
HC publishes full text of its verdict.

JULY 21
The Appellate Division of the SC scraps HC verdict that reinstated the quota system.
It sets new quota percentages at -- 93 for merit-based hiring; five for the children of living and martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas; one for members of ethnic minorities; and one for those with physical disabilities and "third gender" persons.

93pc on merit, 7pc from quota

FROM PAGE 1

The verdict comes amid violent unrest centring quota reform movement.

More than 140 people, including seven yesterday, have been killed and several thousand injured since Tuesday as law enforcers joined in by ruling Awami League men clashed with protesters in Dhaka and elsewhere. The sheer scale of the violence prompted the government to impose curfew and deploy armed forces across the country.

After 2007, when emergency was declared, this is the first time that the government deployed members of armed forces in aid to civil administration, except during elections.

"We firmly believe that the students will withdraw the quota movement after the verdict and order," said Justice Obaidul Hassan in the observation.

The court asked the students to return to their institutions immediately. It also asked the government to ensure a congenial atmosphere at educational institutions across the country.

'CIRCULAR TOMORROW'

Law Minister Anisul Huq said they will implement the judgment, and a circular in this regard is expected by tomorrow.

At present, there are 20 grades in government job, and the quota system was applicable to 13th-20th grade following a 2018 government circular, which abolished the quota system in 9th-13th grade (Class-I and Class-II) government jobs.

Contacted, Anisul Huq said yesterday's SC order will be applicable to 9th-20th grades. "There is no quota system in 1st- 8th grades of government job. So the quota in 1st-8th grades was not considerable here [in the verdict]."

But Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain said they will analyse different angles of the court order.

"My initial understanding of the short verdict is that a new quota system will be applicable to all grades. But we will analyse different aspects and issue a clear circular by Tuesday," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

An organiser of the student movement said they consider the verdict a positive move, but they will not make any comment until the government issues a circular clearing everything up.

Another organiser in a text message to media outlets said the SC verdict was unclear and "left enough room for confusion among the public."

QUOTA PROTEST TIMELINE

In October 2018, the government through a hastily issued circular cancelled the quota system in jobs of 9th to 13th grades amid a quota reform movement at different universities.

The students never wanted its abolition, they demanded that it be revised down.

At the time, there was a 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren, 10 percent for districts, 10 percent for women, five percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for physically challenged people.

The government decision to abolish the quota system was challenged in the High Court by seven children of freedom fighters. In response, the HC on June 5 declared the government circular illegal, essentially reinstating the 56 percent quota.

The HC verdict triggered a student protest on public university campuses in Dhaka and subsequently in other districts.

Students from private universities, colleges and in some cases from schools joined the movement across the country.

Protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 declined to issue a stay on the HC verdict, triggering a massive one-point movement for quota reform.

After three days of nationwide movement, the SC gave a status quo on the HC verdict and set August 7 for hearing. The decision did little to pacify the protesters.

The movement turned violent after Chhatra League men attacked the agitating students on Dhaka University and some other universities on July 15.

The attack came hours after Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said BCL "would give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota movement who labelled themselves as Razakars and were arrogant."

Violence escalated further on the following days after the killing of several students during their clashes with law enforcers and pro-government activists, who were seen attacking the students with iron pipes, rods, sticks and hockey sticks in Dhaka and elsewhere. Some of them also opened fire on the protesters in and outside the capital.

In the wake of the situation, the government requested the top court to hold an early hearing as death toll continued to rise.

THE VERDICT

Yesterday, the court sat around 10:20am amid heightened security in and outside the SC premises, with army, Rab and police personnel taking position at key points.

After dealing with two other cases, the bench started hearing the much-talked-about case with several senior lawyers seeking to place arguments on behalf of the students.

The court allocated five minutes for each after Attorney General AM Amin Uddin started his arguments seeking to scrap the HC verdict.

Then nine SC lawyers placed their arguments.

The court also heard the arguments from the counsels of the original writ petitioners as well as the two students of Dhaka University who challenged the HC verdict.

The arguments took place for around two and a half hours, and the bench took a 40-minute break before delivering the judgment at a jam-packed courtroom around 1:30pm.

The court disposed of the two leave-to-appeal petitions, saying the June 5 HC is scrapped.

The bench said although setting quota is a "policy matter of the state", they, considering the overall situation, were applying article 104 of the constitution for "complete justice."

Article 104 allows the Appellate Division to issue such directions, orders, decrees or writs for doing compete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

The court also directed the government to issue a circular in this regard immediately.

Other six judges of the bench are Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique, Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, Justice Md Shahinur Islam and Justice Kashefa Hussain.

THE ARGUMENTS

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Secretary Shah Monjurul Hoque placed arguments for the government and the two Dhaka University students who filed the leave-to-appeal petitions challenging the HC judgement.

Senior Advocate Md Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury argued for the writ petitioners who challenged the legality of the 2018 government circular.

Besides, senior lawyers Tanya Amir, Ahsanul Karim, Sara Hossain, ZI Khan Panna and Tanjib-Ul-Alam placed statements on behalf of the protesting students.

The court also heard former attorney general AF Hassan Ariff, SCBA President AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, former SCBA President Zainul Abedin and lawyer Md Eunus Ali Akond.

The attorney general appealed for scrapping of the HC verdict.

He said the HC verdict was self-contradictory as it upheld the reservation of 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and at the same time said the judgement will not prevent the government from changing, reducing or increasing the quota.

It is a policy matter of the government whether to keep quota. Therefore, the HC cannot interfere in policy matters, he said.

The constitution does not permit the HC to order the government.

Advocate Shah Monjurul Hoque said the HC verdict did not discuss why it interfered in the government's policy matter, and is hence liable to be scrapped.

The HC judgement is wrong as it termed freedom fighters as "a backward section of citizens" though there is no definition of the term, he said.

Tanya Amir said freedom fighters and their children and grandchildren are not backward citizens.

Rather, they are the most respected and dignified citizens of the country, she said, adding that the writ petition, on which the HC delivered the verdict, is not maintainable.

Sara Hossain said the quota system should be reformed to eliminate discriminations.

Lawyers AF Hassan Ariff, Zainul Abedin, Mahbubub Uddin Khokon, Ahsanul Karim Tanjib-Ul-Alam, ZI Khan Panna placed their arguments in favour of scrapping the HC judgement.

Advocate Munsrul Hoque Chowdhury opposed the leave-to-appeal petitions, saying that freedom fighters and their children suffered a lot for 21 years since August 15, 1975.

There was no illegality in the HC verdict in treating them as a backward section of citizens, he said.

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan told him that the constitution does not define "backward section" of citizens.

Mahbub Uddin Khokon said so many lives could have been saved had the government moved the leave-to-appeal petition before.

The chief justice asked him not to place any political arguments before the court.

3hr break in curfew from 2pm today

FROM PAGE 1

and order will be normal within a day or two. He urged people to have patience till then.

The minister alleged that BNP-Jamaat carried out vandalism across the country to capture power taking advantage of the quota reform demonstrations by students.

He claimed that students accepted the decision of the Supreme Court that fixed 93 percent recruitment based on merit.

Judicial body to unearth reasons, take legal steps

FROM PAGE 1

The court urged parents to tell their children to return to their institutions and focus on studies.

It said the students are the future of the country and that they would one day take on responsibility of the judiciary, the executive, and the legislative.

"They have to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War and the independence in their thoughts and minds; and only then the country will not deviate from its goal. Our motherland, established by the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will survive," the court said.

"The martyrs and the freedom fighters are the brightest sons of the soil. We achieved the red-green flag thanks to their sacrifice. The nation will not accept anything disrespectful towards them. Everybody should be careful so that no one fails to pay the due respect to the sacrifice of the valiant freedom fighters," it said.

Picked up early Saturday, Nahid returns battered

FROM PAGE 1

He was being treated at a city hospital with severe pain and deep bruises on his left thigh and shoulder.

A student of Dhaka University's sociology department, Nahid said when he gained consciousness around dawn yesterday, he found himself dumped under a bridge in Purbachal.

"I learned where I was after looking at a signboard. After walking along the road for some time, I found a CNG and went home."

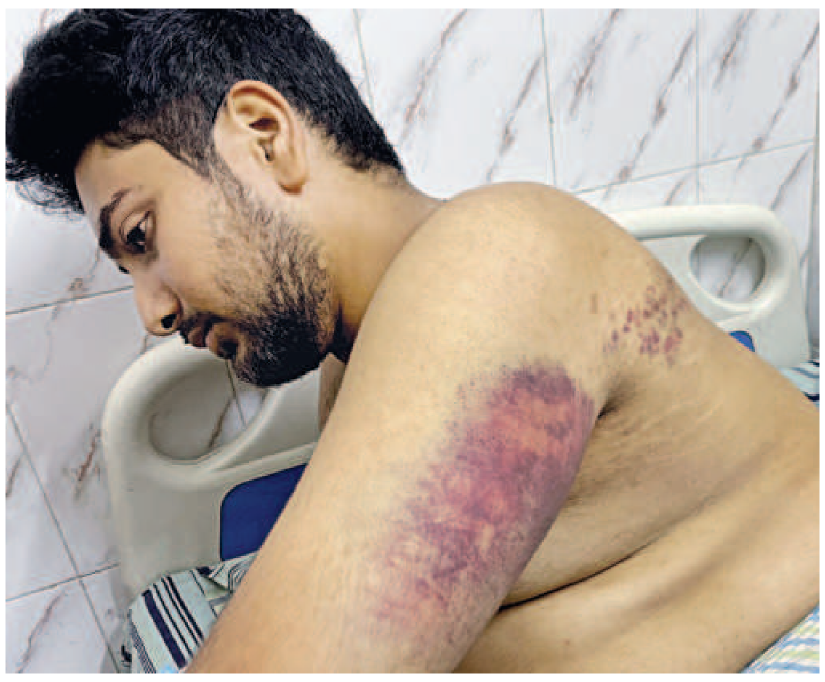
Around 12:00pm, he went to the hospital.

"On Friday night, I couldn't return home as the curfew was imposed. I was staying at a friend's house. Around 3:00am, I came to know that police are looking for me. When they came, they told me I need to go with them and then detained me."

There were around four vehicles and at least 25 plainclothes people there, he said, adding, "They blindfolded me with three or four layers of cloth."

He was then handcuffed and after around a 40-minutes-long journey, he was taken into the room and tortured.

About the other protest organisers, Nahid said the coordinators were having trouble communicating due to the internet shutdown. "Many were traceless or went to safe place or were picked up. That's why we aren't being able to reach a common decision.



Nahid Islam shows one of the deep bruises he sustained during the torture.

"I communicated with them [the three protest organisers who met three ministers] till around 10:00pm [on Friday]. However, since then I haven't been able to contact them."

He said he later came to know that different sets of demands were issued.

"I think to avoid the situation, they gave varying statements or took their own different steps. But those do not represent the entire anti-discriminations movement panel."

About the three coordinators meeting the ministers and their demands, Nahid said, "My opinion was that we shouldn't go for any dialogue and the situation was not favourable for it. If the government takes steps to ensure our safety, then we'll decide.

"I believe they met the cabinet members in the face of pressure or to avoid any untoward situation. They said they only placed their demands but didn't have any discussion. They said the media misquoted them."

He said he will make further comments on the movement after sitting with the other coordinators and protesters.

"If the campuses are declared open; law enforcers are removed from the campuses and our safety is ensured, only then we'll make the final statement regarding our movement."

Regarding the Appellate Division's verdict yesterday, he said the SC "only gave a recommendation".

"But it's up to the government to decide whether the quota [percentages] will be increased or decreased. Until the government issues a circular or policy in this regard, it's not finalised ... We'll make a comment regarding it once the government decision is given.

"We saw bloodshed, were harassed, many were killed, thousands of students and police personnel were injured ... So much damage was done during this movement ... These need to be addressed."

Nahid further said, "We demand justice for the victims of the killings and demand legal action against and the expulsion of the Chhatra League men. These would be among our demands."

His father Badrul Islam said after they came to know his son was picked up by the plainclothes persons, he went to the office of the Detective Branch of police but they did not give him any information.

"They only kept our phone numbers, saying they would let us know once they find out about Nahid's whereabouts. Then we went to Khilgaon Police Station to file a GD, but they did not take take it into cognizance."

Meanwhile, Faruk Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "We have no information about this [Nahid being picked up]."

The Daily Star contacted Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan for his comments of the allegations of torture made by Nahid but he cut the line as soon as he heard the question.

পূবালী ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং
শরী'আহ্ ভিত্তিক ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা
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পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.
Open your Account from anywhere
PI Banking - a Pubali Bank apps
Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches

QUOTA VERDICT

'It's a victory for govt, not students'

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader and Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said the Supreme Court verdict regarding the quota system in government jobs reflects the government's wish, not the students'.

In an instant reaction, the JP chief said, "The government has won in the Supreme Court verdict as it has fulfilled its demand.

"On the other hand, demand of the students who have been waging movement against all kinds of discrimination in the government jobs, has not been fulfilled," GM Quader told The Daily Star over the phone.

"What the students demanded, were not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

'Step down and give people relief'

Fakhrul urges govt

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the government to step down to give people relief from the current violent situation.

Speaking at a press conference at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office, he also urged the government to stop its "evil" efforts to put the blame onto BNP and the opposition parties for the violence by using the media.

Fakhrul also said media outlets are running "made up" statements of some arrested leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

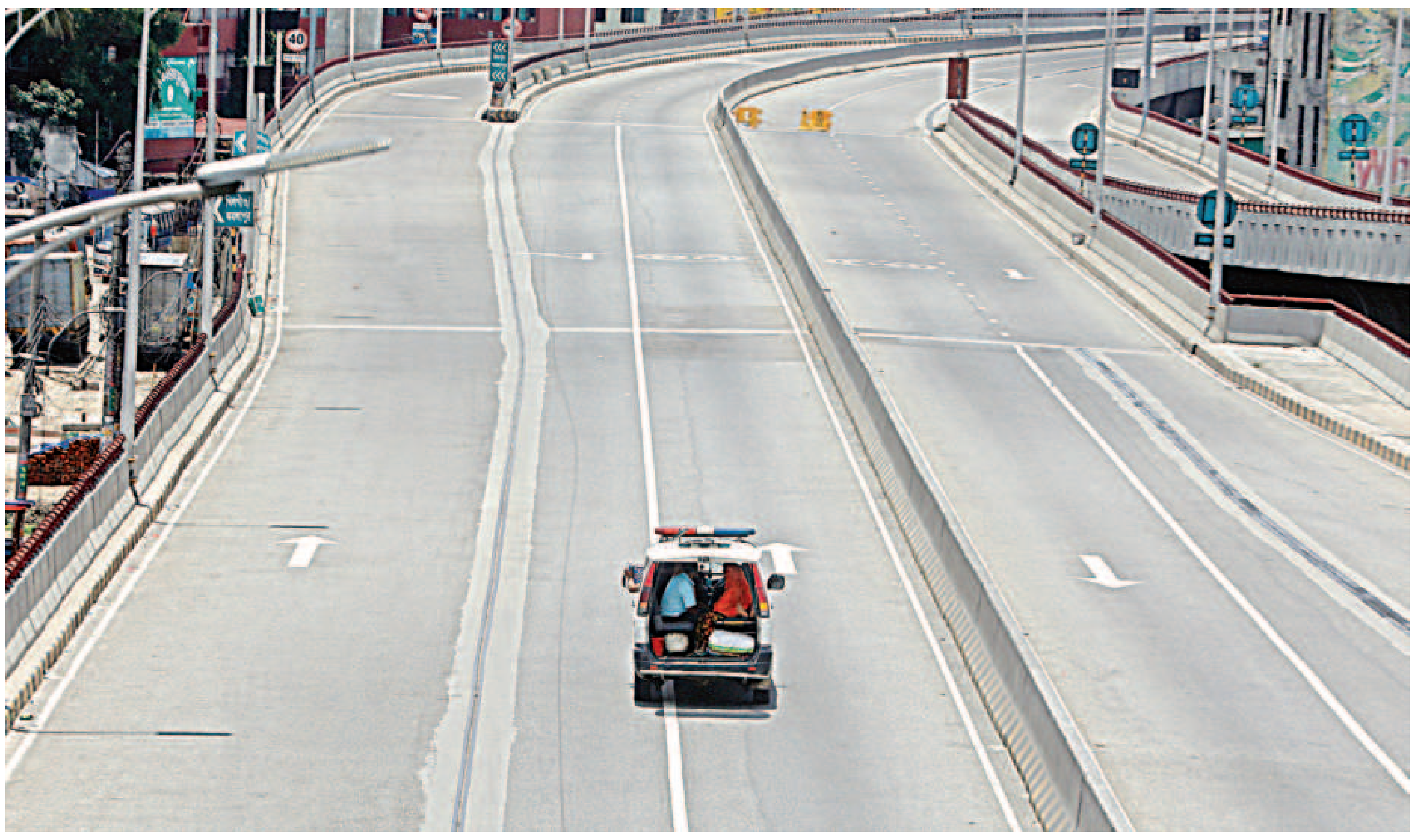
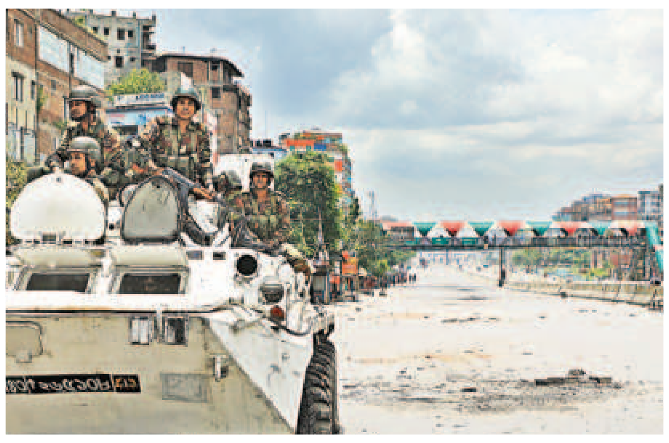


PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN**



A relatively calm Dhaka

People throng shops to restock essentials, pay power, gas bills on second day of curfew

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

After days of endless violence, parts of Dhaka were relatively calm yesterday, the second day of the ongoing curfew.

Many ventured out of their homes to buy groceries, essentials and restock supplies.

Although the curfew was lifted for two hours, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm, people started coming out early in the morning to finish incomplete business or run errands.

Most of them thronged kitchen markets, grocery stores, or utility offices.

People had to wait in long queues to compete purchases at grocery stores and markets.

A grocery customer, Rubaya Islam, said, "The price of each product was higher than the previous day... Consumers are still willing to pay the extra buck. However, due to dwindling supply, there is no guarantee that the product would be available when a customer reaches the end of the queue. I feel like I am living in a city under siege."

The shopkeepers, however, blamed supply shortage for the price hike.

Md Anwar Hossain, a grocery store owner at Mohammadpur Town Hall market, said, "We could not replenish our stock in the last six days. Many of my fellow shop owners could not even open their shops as their supplies have run out."

"Whenever we open our shop, hundreds of customers come to us and buy whatever they can at whatever the price we ask for. There is no time for bargaining. My stock will also run out in the next two days, if new supplies do not arrive by this time," he added.

Due to the internet shutdown, prepaid consumers who usually recharge their power and gas meter cards either via MFS, such as bKash or Nagad, or recharge vendors, had to wait in long queues instead for several hours at gas and power offices.

This was the scenario in front of DPDC and Titas Gas offices.

Shahriar Khan, a resident of Gopibagh area, said, "My prepaid electricity and prepaid gas will run out of balance soon. If I don't pay the bills today, there will be no electricity and gas in my house tomorrow. As there is no internet connection, I could not pay via apps."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Veggie prices skyrocket amid curfew

Green chilli now as high as Tk 800 per kg

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of vegetables including potatoes, onions, and green chillies have increased significantly in Dhaka markets due to a supply shortage amid the countrywide curfew.

Price of green chillies increased to Tk 600 per kg yesterday from Tk 300 per kilogram on Friday .

Onion was sold for Tk 120 per kg yesterday compared to Tk 110 .

As usual, the customers are feeling the pinch.

In Nakhal Para Kitchen market, Tuhin Shubhra, a private service holder, asked a trader how much 250gm of green chillies cost.

After doing some calculation, the trader replied, "It's Tk 150."

" I couldn't believe what I was hearing," said Tuhin. Then he bought 100gm of green chillies for Tk 60.

Nilotpaul Datta, bought eight pieces of green chillies from Hatirpool Kitchen market for Tk 20.

He also bought 250gm of tomatoes for Tk 70 from the same place.

Some traders were charging more than Tk 600 for a kg of green chilli in some markets.

"I was in utter disbelief when the traders said the cost of one kg green chilli is Tk 800. Then, I bought 250gm of green chillies for Tk 200," said Wasim Hasan, who shopped at Shukrabad kitchen market.

Supply of most vegetable items declined by two to three times in the past two nights, said Saifur Rahman Chowdhury Sujan, general secretary of Karwan Bazar Arot Malik Byabshayi Samity.

However, carrying food items does not violate curfew rules.

Still, some truckers were demanding double the normal fare to transport vegetables, claimed Saifur.

In a normal night at Karwan Bazar, unloading of vegetables from trucks coming from various parts of the country start at 10:00pm and continue till 2:00am.

Wholesale selling of vegetables start at the same time and continue till dawn.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

CANCELLATION OF FLIGHTS

Saudi-bound migrants in a bind

RASHIDUL HASAN

Uncertainty looms over the fate of hundreds of Saudi-bound Bangladeshi migrant workers as Saudia airlines cancelled multiple flights following the countrywide internet shutdown since Thursday night.

Saudia, national flag carrier of KSA, cancelled around 10 flights since early Friday.

Amid the situation, the stranded migrants are uncertain regarding them being able to go back to their workplace, as many of their visas are set to expire within two-three days.

"I was supposed to fly for Saudi at 3:00am on Saturday. But after arriving at the airport, the Saudia authorities informed us that the flight has been cancelled," Abdullah Al Mamun who came back to the country on a three-month leave, told The Daily Star.

"My visa will expire within three days. I will lose my job if I cannot return on time," Mamun from Cumilla added.

After failing to return to the KSA, an anxious Mamun and hundreds of other migrants yesterday thronged the head office of Saudia at the capital's Sonargaon intersection.

Saudi-bound Bangladeshi migrant workers throng the head office of Saudia at the city's Sonargaon intersection yesterday.
PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

They conveyed their anxiety and grievances to Saudia officials, as many were afraid they wouldn't be able to return to KSA before their visa expires.

Rajib Ahmed of Keraniganj said, "I came to Bangladesh on a six-month leave. My flight was on early Saturday, but when I arrived at the airport, I came to know the flight was cancelled due to the internet outage."

The officials of Saudia noted down our names, flight dates, and dates of visa expiry, said Rajib, who has been working in Saudi Arabia for seven years.

Rajib said his visa will be expired after seven days.

A Saudia official, wishing anonymity, said they are arranging a special flight for those whose visa will be expired within one or two days.

"We have noted down the names and other necessary information of the passengers and will try to arrange flights accordingly so that nobody is affected," he also said.

Saudia officials hoped that the internet situation will become normal soon and they will be able to start flight operations normally.

Like Saudia, passengers of some other foreign carriers have also been facing problems due to flights being cancelled or delayed due to the blackout.

Several hundred incoming and outgoing passengers at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka faced severe troubles in this connection.

Many of the passengers got stranded at the airport or had to stay outside the airport, as the international flights were either delayed or cancelled due to technical glitch related to global Microsoft flight data and lack of passengers amid road blocks by the demonstrators in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country over the last three days.

Sources at the HSIA said 16 international flights were either delayed or cancelled in the 72 hours until 6:00pm yesterday.

Apologise for all deaths

33 eminent citizens ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must apologise unconditionally to citizens for all the deaths of protesters since July 16, said 33 eminent citizens in a statement yesterday.

They added that law enforcers must engage cautiously and non-violently with students and all citizens.

The statement reads that Bangladesh has become a "death valley" since July 16, when miscreants launched vicious attacks to suppress the quota reform protests in Dhaka University. When students and citizens from all walks of life took to the streets protesting that vicious attack, Abu Sayed, a student in Rangpur, was shot in the chest and murdered in cold blood, it added.

Afterwards, many people like Sayed have been killed by the police, BGB, APBN or by the criminals unleased by the ruling party, as per the statement.

The statement also said, "The helicopters are throwing sound grenades and tear shells from above, which have also injured many people. The ruling party thugs are even creating obstacles for wounded people to get treatment."

Law enforcers must engage cautiously and non-violently with students and all citizens.

Such an inhuman and catastrophic situation is unprecedented in Bangladesh, it added.

The signatories include Shahidul Alam, renowned photographer and founder of Drik, Professor Salimullah Khan, Professor Tanzim Uddin Khan, Barrister Rashna Imam and retired Justice Abdul Matin.

Army personnel stand guard on a road in the capital's Mohammadpur area yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Why did they target his eyes?'

Asks mother of Imran who suffered pellet injuries during clash; DMCH, Ophthalmology Institute filled with patients with similar eye wounds

AHMED DEEPTO

Eighteen-year old Md Imran joined the quota reform protest in Uttara on Thursday when police fired shotgun pellets, teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse protesters.

Several pellets pierced through different parts of his body, including his eyes and head.

Now, he is fighting for his life at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, as his mother keeps weeping beside him.

Even after surgery, he has lost vision in one of his eyes, while doctors are waiting for him to get stable before surgically removing the pellets stuck inside his head.

"My only son is barely alive. I have watched as he lost vision in one of his eyes. The condition of his other eye is not good either. Meanwhile, there are pellets still stuck in his head," said his mother Parvin Begum.

"Why did they shoot my boy? Why did they target his head and eyes? What was his fault? Was participating in a just movement his fault?" Parvin said, with a mixture of rage, despair and disbelief in her voice.

"Even if he recovers, he won't see with an eye again. His life will never be the same," she said.

Imran is not alone.

DMCH sources said at least 118 persons have received treatment with eye injuries, mostly from pellet wounds, in the last four days since the violence escalated.

At least 67 such patients are still undergoing treatment at DMCH's Ophthalmology Department.

Two doctors of the department said over 50 persons have either lost their vision in both eyes or one.

A similar situation persists in National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital.

Till yesterday, the institute had conducted surgeries on at least 227 patients who came to the facility with eye injuries, mostly sustained from shotgun pellets.

Golam Mostafa, director of the facility, said most of the injured might lose vision completely.

PHOTO: DIPAN NANDY

Day Labourer Mujibur Rahman, 35, suffered pellet injuries to his left eye during a clash between law enforcers and protesters in Bangshal on Friday. He is now receiving treatment at DMCH.

RECENT DEATHS

Probe body holds first meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, chief of the judicial probe commission investigating the deaths and violence during the recent quota protests, yesterday held a meeting with Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain.

The meeting was held at the Supreme Court conference room at 4:00pm to devise the work plan for the inquiry, said Md Shafiqul Islam, public relations officer of the SC.

On July 18, the government formed the one-member inquiry commission.

General holiday for SC today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan declared general holiday for the Supreme Court today.

On Friday, the chief justice declared general holiday for subordinate courts across the country yesterday and today in line with the government announced holiday, SC sources said.

PRISON BREAK

Tk 50,000 announced for info on looted arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

A Tk 50,000 bounty has been announced for anyone who will be able to provide information on the arms and ammunition looted from Narsingdi District Jail.

Narsingdi SP Mostafizur Rahman made the announcement yesterday.

On Friday, some 826 convicts fled from the district jail when the prison came under an attack, while 85 rifles, 7,000 bullets, and 19 shotguns were looted, among other stuff.

'CUSTODIAL TORTURE' IN CTG

Bruised, student shares ordeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

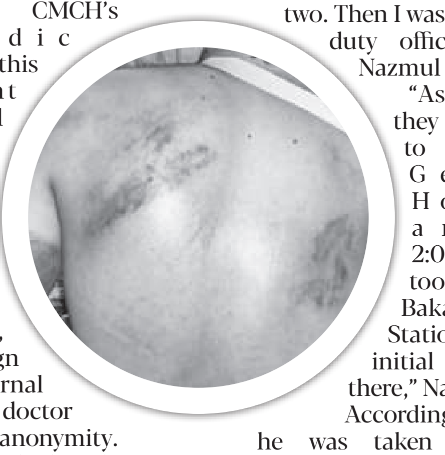
Family members of quota reform protester Nazmul Hosen, a student of Chattogram Govt City College, couldn't trace him for a day after police detained him on Thursday.

They only learned about his whereabouts after a nurse of a local hospital informed them that Nazmul was taking treatment there.

Nazmul is now admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital with bruises all over his body after allegedly being tortured in police custody.

Visiting CMCH's orthopedic department, this correspondent saw Nazmul in pain with injuries to his back, hand, thighs and knees.

"Blood is coming out of his rectum, which is a sign of severe internal bleeding," said a doctor there requesting anonymity.



Nazmul alleged that he was tortured twice -- first at Shah Amanat Bridge police box and then at Kotwali Police Station.

Nazmul claimed that police tortured him to make him confess about his involvement with Shibir, a pro-Jamaat student group. They increased the torture when he refused to comply with their order.

On the hospital bed, Nazmul said, "Police detained me from the petrol pump after a clash. They shoved me to the ground and started kicking me. At one stage, as I told them that I am a student, some senior officers intervened and told their subordinates to stop the beating."

"Still, some police men took me inside a police box and used sticks to beat me. They wanted me confess that I was a Shibir activist," Nazmul continued.

Nazmul said, at one stage of the torture, he lost consciousness. "I discovered myself at Kotwali Police Station when I regained my senses," he added.

But his ordeal didn't stop there.

"Two policemen again tortured me [at Kotwali Police Station]. I was screaming and crying in pain. After some time, others [police men] intervened and refrained the two. Then I was taken to the duty officer's room," Nazmul added.

"As I fell sick, they took me to Anderkillah General Hospital around 2:00pm. They took me to Bakalia Police Station after initial treatment there," Nazmul said.

According to Nazmul, he was taken to CMCH around 10:30pm as his condition deteriorated.

Nazmul's brother Nazrul Islam said he first came to know about Nazmul's whereabouts on July 19 when a nurse of the Anderkillah hospital called him.

"Before that, we couldn't trace Nazmul. I called him on Thursday and asked him to come to my residence amid the ongoing unrest," he added.

Kotwali Police Station's OC Obadul denied the allegation of torture. He said Nazmul sustained injuries during clash.

Bakalia Police Station OC Aftab Hossain echoed the same.

INTERNET SHUTDOWN

Small entrepreneurs in big trouble

NILIMA JAHAN

The nationwide shutdown of internet services has had far reaching impacts, affecting a variety of groups.

Take the example of Israt Jahan Banani, a homemade dry food and pickle seller from Dohar, who owns the Facebook page "Fusion Food".

Her business has already been closed for four days. According to Banani, if this continues for a few more days, then she will likely incur a loss of Tk 60,000.

"Besides, I had a stock of halwa worth Tk 17,000, which has now gone rotten," she shared.

Such is the case for many women entrepreneurs operating small businesses through Facebook and other apps. For many of them, this is the sole source of income in their households and is currently closed due to the internet outage.

Noorjahan Kabir, owner of Pure Promise by Noor, an organic oil shop based on Facebook, said she usually purchases her stock on credit from suppliers and pays them after selling the products.

"Over the last seven days, delivery agents were not being able to deliver my products due to the protest. I don't know how I will manage... My supplier is also demanding their dues, but my hands are totally empty. Besides, I was also supposed to get payment from a delivery company I work with. However, they failed to pay me as internet banking is not working," Noorjahan Kabir said.

Mirpur resident Moriom Sultana Chadni, owner of Chadni's Cake and Fastfood Shop, said she runs the page alongside her husband, which is the sole source of their household income.

"We could not deliver the orders we received and prepared, while the ingredients also got rotten in the past four days," Moriom Sultana told this correspondent yesterday.

Uttara resident Asma Akter Kanta, owner of Dhobol on Facebook, said, "This shutdown means I will incur a loss. Meanwhile, I have to pay my 10 female staffers, who are solely dependent on my business."

Nasima Akter Nisha, general secretary of E-CAB, said these Facebook based small entrepreneurs live on their daily sales.

"I have talked to many of them in the past few days and I am very sad hearing their current situations. If everything is not fixed soon, they will face difficulties," she told The Daily Star.

"We urge the government to give a speedy solution to this ongoing crisis," she added.

> **This shutdown means I will incur a loss. Meanwhile, I have to pay my 10 female staff, who are solely dependent on my business.**
>
> **ASMA AKTER KANTA**
> Owner of Dhobol on Facebook

> **We urge the government to give a speedy solution to this ongoing crisis.**
>
> **NASIMA AKTER NISHA**
> General Secretary of E-CAB

Step down and give people relief

FROM PAGE 3

"The government is making evil efforts to shift its fault onto others. Stop all these foul plays and create a proper academic atmosphere immediately by accepting the just demands of students," he said.

The BNP leader also called upon the country's people to support the justified movement of the students.

"Had the government resolved this problem through the court at the beginning, so many innocent students wouldn't have been killed and the bloodletting situation wouldn't have been created," he said regarding the apex court verdict on quota system.

He also said Awami League General Secretary Obaidur Quader urged the ruling party activists to resist the student movement and the prime minister made derogatory comments against the students, contributing to creating the dreadful situation all across the country.

The BNP leader also said the government has stopped communication with the entire world by shutting down the internet.

This situation has led to a colossal loss for the country's economy, said Fakhrul.

He also urged all to support the students' just movement.

Two boys playing football on an empty road on the second day of the ongoing curfew yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

A relatively calm Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3

"Defying the curfew, I had to search for DPDC and gas offices for more than two hours and now I'm waiting to pay the bills. I was afraid of being fined or arrested... but I had no other alternatives," he added.

Like the previous day, many could not recharge their phones as well.

On the second day, military men, mounted on trucks and armoured personnel carriers (APCs), were patrolling Dhaka roads. They also stood guard in front of important government buildings.

They frequently stopped pedestrians and vehicles to question them regarding movement during curfew.

In front of Bijay Sarani, police and army stopped several vehicles and motorcycles and asked them to return home.

A police officer on duty, said, "Many people don't know about what they can do and what they cannot do during a curfew. So, when we stop them, we brief them about it and warn them of the consequences."

Veggie prices

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, at Ibrahimpur kitchen market, trader Harun Mia said green chillies were sold at Tk 600 per kg yesterday instead of Tk 300 per kg two days ago.

Meanwhile, prices of several other vegetables including brinjal and bitter gourd increased by Tk 20 to Tk 50 per kg at some of the retail kitchen markets since the curfew was imposed.

A retail vegetable trader at Ibrahimpur also cited transportation crisis as a reason behind price hike.

Even when a rickshaw-van driver agrees to carry goods, they are charging double the usual fare, he alleged.

It's a victory

FROM PAGE 3

met in the verdict," he said, adding, "Seeds of discrimination are still there. The verdict does not reflect the movement to eradicate discrimination."

The government's political stance was to keep freedom fighters quota, so it was a victory for the government, not students.

GM Quader said he will come up with formal reaction after going through the copy of the full verdict.

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered a major reformation in the quota system in the jobs of government, semi-government and autonomous organisations, curtailing quotas to seven percent from the 56 percent.

The apex court, which scrapped a High Court judgement that reinstated quotas in government jobs, said 93 percent of the jobs are to be given based on merit.

It also fixed five percent quota for the children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters, and Biranganas, one percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for physically challenged and third-gender candidates in the services.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 22

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAT	4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

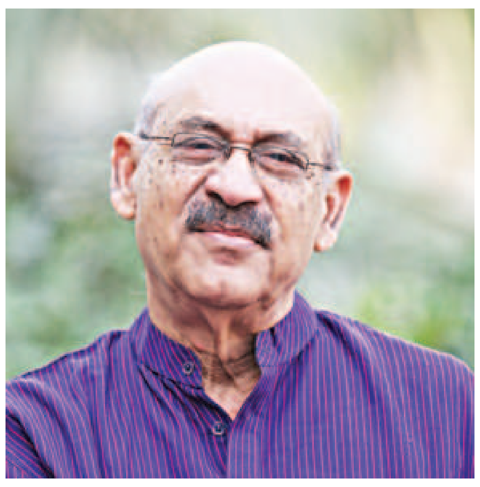
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Sohel Rana

Ramendu Majumdar

Nasir Uddin Yousuff

Raisul Islam Asad



Abul Hayat

'A huge triumph for our students'

Cultural personalities discuss Supreme Court verdict

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Much to the triumph of quota-reform activists, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday overturned the High Court verdict that reinstated the quota system in government jobs. As many had lost their lives in violent clashes that upended the entire nation, cultural personalities welcomed the verdict that looks to re-establish peace across the country. The Daily Star reached out to some of the seniormost cultural figures in Bangladesh yesterday.

Sohel Rana

This is a historic verdict, and a huge triumph for the students. I feel like this is a big win for them, as they have gotten what they had wanted since the beginning of this movement. I did think that they would keep the freedom fighter quota at 10 percent, but 5 percent is not entirely illogical. I also welcome the fact that they did not keep quota for women, since I feel that women today are no less than men in talent and capability. I hope that the government also pays attention to their 8-point demand, as I wholeheartedly support the petition to compensate the victims' families and provide a government job to at least one in their immediate family. For now, I urge the students to go back to class.

Ramendu Majumdar

I am happy with this verdict – I believe that now, talent will take centre-stage at determining who gets more opportunities. I feel like at this point, the students should postpone their movement, and discuss their further concerns with the government bilaterally. I am very disturbed by how many lives were lost due to these violent clashes, who will take the blame for this? I urge the government to investigate the matter and sentence those responsible. Although I support this verdict, I do feel like omitting the quota for women is a misstep.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Nasir Uddin Yousuff

I accept this verdict wholeheartedly, as it means that all the lives lost due to these violent clashes are not for nothing. However, I am very disappointed that the quota for women was omitted. Those who chanted slogans on the roads yesterday (July 21) that there is no need for female quotas, are blissfully unaware of the scenario in rural areas. Women need to be given an opportunity to prosper, as they have to regularly fight against sexist biases – at least 5 percent quotas should have been reserved for them.

Raisul Islam Asad

It must be noted that the children of freedom fighters were highly deprived from proper educational facilities after our liberation war. We also know that after the assassination of Bangabandhu till '96, a certain group tried to erase the actual history of our liberation war, so children of freedom fighters suffered a lot. This is why I believe that the heirs of freedom fighters should receive some form of quota, which the verdict did keep – so I welcome it. I do have a question – why did these students, along with their other demands, not ask for the punishment of whomever caused the destruction of national property? I must say that the ones who participated in destructive activities are enemies of the country.

Abul Hayat

Logical demands have won, and I am sure that along with me, the entire country supports this verdict. Also, freedom fighters were in no way disrespected, as they will still have 5 percent reserved for their families. I wish that the students' demands were fulfilled much earlier, we could have avoided so much unnecessary bloodshed!

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At least 7 killed on 2nd day of curfew

FROM PAGE 1

Two deaths were reported in Narayanganj and Narshingdi, doctors said.

Of the six people who succumbed to their injuries yesterday, three died at DMCH, said Bachchu Mia.

A doctor at Savar Enam Medical College Hospital requesting anonymity said a fish trader who was wounded during a clash in Savar on Saturday died at Savar Enam Medical College Hospital.

Besides, police recovered two bodies from the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and sent those to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medial College morgue for autopsies, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

They were injured in earlier clashes in Uttara or Gazipur and were being treated at a hospital in Uttara before being taken to NICVD, he added.

With yesterday's deaths, at least 140 lives have been lost since Tuesday, when six people were killed in violence. On Thursday, at least 29 people died in clashes between protesters and law enforcers, aided by ruling party activists. Another victim injured in Wednesday's violence also died on Thursday. On Friday, at least 66 people were killed across the country. On Saturday, at least 25 people died including four who were injured in earlier clashes.

The overall death toll and that from yesterday's violence may rise, as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved-ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families. The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Yesterday's clashes broke out between law enforcers and protesters in Sign Board, Chittagong Road, Shanarpar and Dhania areas when members of police and Rab tried to clear the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Witnesses said the law enforcers fired indiscriminately at protesters.

Clashes were also reported in the Bashundhara area of the city. Witnesses said the clashes took place in phases between police and a few hundred agitators at the Bashundhara Main gate near Pragati Sarani.

The clashes ensued after agitators threw brickbats at police, who retaliated by firing shotgun pellets and teargas canisters.

Around 8:45pm, two residents of Bashundhara's Block A told this newspaper over the phone that they were hearing gunshots. Choppers were hovering overhead, they said.

Violence in Jatrabari

Around 10:00pm, agitators in Jatrabari area, which has seen daily protests since the violence erupted on Wednesday, blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway and took positions in the neighbouring areas.

As law enforcers moved to remove the road blocks in Rayerbag, Sign Board, Chittagong Road, Shanarpar and Dhania areas, the agitators pelted brick chips at the law enforcers prompting them to fire numerous tear gas shells and bullets, witnesses said.

The clash continued till the evening. Around 5:00pm members of the joint forces managed to remove the roadblocks and open the highway.

DMCH duty doctors confirmed that five bodies were brought to DMCH from the areas.

More than 70 injured people, many of them in critical condition, from those areas were also admitted to DMCH yesterday. Most of them had bullet injuries, they added.

A large number of police were guarding different parts of the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway till filing of this report.

Of the five victims who were brought to DMCH, three were shot at Signboard area, said Bachchu Mia quoting family members.

He said Imran, 16, a tailoring shop worker, was shot around 2:00pm. Ashraf Hossain Akash, 18, footpath vendor, and Rakib, 18, a garments worker, were shot around the same time.

The other two victims -- Md Amin, 16, a factory worker, and Md Jashim, 45 -- were shot at Boalbari intersection in the evening, he added.

Meanwhile, three people -- Mohammad Zahid, 32, from Uttara, Toufique Ul Islam, 35, from Badda and Mohammad Shohagh, 25, from Gopibagh Railgate area -- died at DMCH yesterday.

The inspector said Zahid and Shohagh were injured by bullet on June 20. Toufique, a water pump technician, was shot on June 19.

In Mirpur, a group of agitators vandalised four vehicles of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited at Mirpur-10 around 3:30pm. Around 15 people attacked the vehicles when the officials were inspecting the damages of Metro rail station at Mirpur 10.

Besides, at least two people were killed and 22 were injured yesterday in clashes between agitators and law enforcers in Narayanganj and Narsingdi.

In Narayanganj, a bullet-hit youth, who couldn't be identified, was brought dead at Narayanganj 300-Bed Hospital yesterday morning, said Dr Abul Basar, superintendent of the hospital.

He said 11 bullet-hit people were admitted to the hospital since morning.

Besides, seven bullet-hit people, including a 16-year-old, were admitted to a private hospital in the district's Signboard area yesterday. The teen was in a critical condition, said a hospital source requesting anonymity.

Sporadic, day-long clashes were also reported form Jhalkuri to Signboard intersection areas and from Signboard to Kanchapur.

In Narsingdi, an unidentified man, aged around 18, was brought dead to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital in the afternoon, said Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, residential medical officer of the hospital.

"The man might have been hit by rubber bullets," he added.

Around 2:00pm, law enforcers clashed with a group of miscreants who tried to vandalise a local union parishad building at Meherpara area of Sadar upazila, said police.

Mizanur Rahman, director of Narsingdi 100-bed Hospital, said, "Four bullet-hit people came for treatment at our hospital around 3:30pm."

Meanwhile, a fish trader, who suffered bullet injury on Saturday evening in Savar, died at Enam Medical College Hospital.

The deceased is Nobi Noor, 45, a resident of Bonpukur area in Savar.

Meanwhile, law enforcers yesterday foiled repeated attempts by agitators to block the Dhaka-Aricha Highway at several points between Radio Colony and Genda area.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to the report]

Shutdown

FROM PAGE 1

considering the present situation. Criminals are taking advantage in many ways, he told reporters. The press briefing was aired by Channel 24.

"We will announce our next programme after observing these 48 hours and during this time, we will sort out the confusion regarding the eight and nine-point demands," he said.

"We have suspended our compete shutdown programme and we want the government to also withdraw the curfew," Sarjis told The Daily Star, quoting from a statement given to reporters at the hospital.

Earlier, Hasnat Abdullah, one of the three coordinators who placed an eight-point demand late Friday night following a meeting with three ministers, told The Daily Star, "We are viewing the verdict positively. But our demand was for a logical reform to the quota system in every grade of government jobs."

Nahid was not among the three who met the ministers and placed the eight demands.

Meanwhile, Numan Ahmed Chowdhury, assistant coordinator of the protests, told The Daily Star that they are still pressing on with their nine-point demand.

He said they have watched the announcement made on TV but they believe the three are being influenced by the government. Nahid had been picked up and some other protest organisers are missing, he said.

Numan said an attempt is being made to foil the movement by having the statement issued under duress.

The Daily Star failed to contact other coordinators of the protest but earlier in the day 59 coordinators and assistant coordinators issued a press release sticking to their "complete shutdown" programme and their nine-point demand.

Abdul Kader, a coordinator of the demonstrations who placed the nine-point demand on Friday night, said the Supreme Court judgement was unclear and "left room for confusion".

The press release was sent via text messages from Kader's phone number.

The Daily Star spoke to two coordinators Umama Fatima, Nazmul Hasan, and assistant coordinator Abdullah Salehin Ayon. They said they endorse the text.

The press release said, "There is no specific solution [in the verdict] ... There is a scope for the government to increase the quota percentage at will in future."

The coordinators demanded a special session of the Jatiya Sangsad within a week for enacting a law in this regard.

With such a "vague verdict", the government cannot avoid the responsibility for killing students and people, read the press release.

In the release, Kader, a student of social welfare at Dhaka University, called for a nationwide gayebana namaz-e-janaza after Johr prayers today.

He said the internet service across the country has been suspended for the last two days to suppress the demonstrations and to cover up the real situation.

The nine-point demand includes an apology from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over the deaths of students; resignation of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader from the cabinet and AL; and termination of the deputy inspectors general of police, the police commissioner and superintendents of police of the areas where students were killed.

UN human rights chief, EU, UK voice concern

FROM PAGE 12

the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The government should take necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of the students participating in peaceful protests, and to guarantee the right to freedom of assembly and expression without fear of attacks against their lives and physical integrity or other forms of repression.

Bangladesh's political leaders must work with the country's young population to find solutions to the ongoing challenges and focus on the country's growth and development, Turk said.

"Dialogue is the best and only way forward."

The internet shutdown is also of concern as it disproportionately restricts the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information -- particularly in the midst of a crisis.

"We urge the authorities to restore internet access without further delay," Turk added.

Also on the same day, the EU issued a statement on the ongoing violence in Bangladesh.

"The EU is deeply concerned by the violence and tragic loss of life that has occurred in the context of the protests in Bangladesh. It is vital that further violence is averted and that a peaceful resolution to the situation is found as swiftly as possible, underpinned by the rule of law and democratic freedoms," the statement said.

Catherine West, the British parliamentary under-secretary of state at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, also gave out a statement.

"The UK government is deeply concerned by the violence following protests in Bangladesh. The UK supports fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights, including the right to protest and peaceful assembly. We urge all sides to end the violence and find a peaceful way forward," the statement read.

The ongoing violence was also addressed at weekly briefing of India's Ministry of External Affairs on Friday.

"As you are aware, there are ongoing protests in Bangladesh. We see this as an internal matter of the country," said MEA spokesman Randhir Jaiswal.

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar himself is following the matter closely in the context of safety of the Indians, he said.

"We are aware of the measures taken by the local authorities in view of the protests. Our High Commission remains in touch with local authorities for the safety of our nationals."

Total Indian nationals in Bangladesh are estimated to be around 15,000, which includes around 8,500 students, Jaiswal added.

The following day, US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on her official X page posted on the issue, sharing the link of a Reuters post on the issue.

"Dozens of protestors have been killed by Bangladeshi authorities in recent days. My constituents cannot reach their loved ones due to a government implemented communications blackout. I call for an end to the blackout and de-escalation of violence against protestors," she posted.

Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the US House of Representatives representing a district in Queens, New York City, home to a sizeable Bangladeshi diaspora.

On July 20, British member of parliament Rupa Huq also posted on her official X page.

"Incredibly disturbing... students in Bangladesh demonstrating against corruption: Thirteen killed in protests over job quotas," she posted with a Reuters link titled 'Bangladesh quota protesters call for nationwide shutdown amid clashes'.

The next day, Huq's fellow MP Rushanara Ali also posted.

"The Bangladesh government has imposed a curfew across the country and there has been widespread violence resulting in deaths. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office now advises against all but essential travel to the whole of Bangladesh at this time," she posted on her official X page.

She said in the post that she is in contact with the FCDO and keeping abreast of developments in the country.

The UK supports fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights, including the right to protest and peaceful assembly, Ali said

"Like many of my constituents, I have family and friends in Bangladesh, and I am very concerned about the situation there," she said.

Normalcy to return in a short time

FROM PAGE 12

heads of international aid agencies, including US Ambassador Peter Haas, Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen, Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma, Canadian High Commissioner Lilly Nichols, and acting Australian high commissioner Nardia Simpson, were present.

The foreign ministry also screened a documentary on the violence and the destruction of public properties. Over 100 people were killed, and hundreds of others injured in the violence.

On Friday night, the government declared curfew and deployed army personnel across the country in aid to the civil administration to maintain law and order.

Yesterday, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court annulled the judgement of the High Court and set 93 percent recruitment in public service on merit and 5 percent quota for children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters, and Biranghans, 1 percent quota each for ethnic minorities, and physically challenged and third gender.

At the briefing, some diplomats condemned the violence and expressed concern over the blackout of internet, said a diplomatic source.

On Saturday, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong expressed deep concern over the escalating civil unrest and violence in Bangladesh.

"We call on all parties to cease violence and resolve differences peacefully. Australia supports universal human rights, including the right to freedom of assembly and peaceful protest," she said in X.

In a statement, Catherine West, parliamentary under secretary of the state at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, said the UK government is deeply concerned by the violence following the protests in Bangladesh.

"The UK supports fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights, including the right to protest and peaceful assembly. We urge all sides to end the violence and find a peaceful way forward," she said in a statement yesterday.

Other countries, including the US, UK, and Canada, also issued statements.

Hasan said the government made it clear from the outset of the protest that its own position on the reform was mostly aligned with that of the demonstrators and assured them of due actions once the Supreme Court delivered judgement on the matter.

The government made room for peaceful assembly and protests, but the anti-liberation, anti-state elements and religious extremists, including BNP-Jamaat-Shibir clique, took advantage of the situation by infiltrating the protest and turning it extremely violent and destructive, he said.

Unfortunately, nothing proved enough to stop the spread of violence as the BNP-Jamaat took over the protest from the innocent students and resorted to their old tactics of killing, arson, and vandalism, he added.

Hundreds of law enforcement agency members were injured, and some died from their indiscriminate attacks during clashes. Even journalists were not spared, he added.

The pattern of the destructions indicates that the criminals systematically targeted some important public infrastructure, Hasan said.

"The government hopes that the judgement of the Appellate Division will end the quota-related dispute," he said.

He said mindful of the host country's obligations under the Vienna Convention, the government is committed to ensuring safety and security of the diplomatic and consular premises and persons.

The foreign ministry yesterday arranged the issuance of curfew passes to the mission officials.

Users suffer amid internet outage

FROM PAGE 12

Like him, many consumers braved the scorching heat to recharge their prepaid cards yesterday.

A shopkeeper told Safina Hoque of Lalmatia that he could not recharge her prepaid card. Her home had been without power since yesterday morning.

Desperate, Safina went to DPDC's Lalmatia office.

"I stood in line but later learned that the DPDC won't recharge my card, but will only extend the existing negative balance of my meter to Tk 1,000," she said around noon.

She said the extension of her negative balance would last her only days.

Meanwhile, people have been running out of credit on their gas meters as well.

Anik Hasan of Nakhalpara told The Daily Star that their gas meter went out of credit on Saturday morning.

"We used our neighbour's kitchen for cooking on Saturday. That night, we just had flattened rice. The next day, we got food from a restaurant."

"We can't go on like this."

Visiting the Titas Gas office at Karwan Bazar in the capital, this newspaper found the office padlocked. The people who were arriving for a top-up, were soon returning disappointed.

Al Amin, public relations officer at Titas, said the prepaid meters have facilities to provide emergency balance which should be enough for a small family to cook 10 to 15 days.

"For now, there is no other way to top-up prepaid gas meters. We're trying to find an alternative," he said.

The company also asked its users to call 16496 if they face any difficulties in getting the emergency balance.

The ordeal was same for consumers using prepaid gas and electricity meters in different parts of the country, including Chattogram and Cumilla.

"My home went dark on Saturday evening," said 45-year-old Kohinoor Begum at Bangladesh Power Development Board's (PDB's) Khulshi office in Chattogram yesterday.

She managed to top-up her card after waiting there for four hours.

Around 8.5 lakh PDB users in Chattogram use prepaid meters.

The chief engineer of PDB in the port city, Humayun Kabir Mazumder, said they were trying to mitigate the sufferings by increasing manpower.

In Cumilla, people were seen rushing to nearby PDB offices in different parts of the city.

There are around 50,000 subscribers who use prepaid meters there.

State minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday visited different electricity suppliers' offices in the capital.

"It is disheartening that the distributors have no other option now other than people coming to the offices for recharging prepaid meters. They have limited machines to provide the emergency support," he said while briefing reporters.

[Nazrul Islam and Sifayet Ullah from Chattogram, Khalid Bin Nazrul from Cumilla also contributed to this report]

Israel strikes Gaza

FROM PAGE 12

Detailing the first strikes claimed by Israel in Yemen, Gallant warned of further operations if the Houthis "dare to attack us" after a rebel drone strike killed one in Tel Aviv on Friday.

In Hodeida, three people were killed and 87 wounded, health officials said in a statement carried by Houthi media.

The trio of militant groups has vowed to keep up attacks on Israel until a truce ends the violence in Gaza, which lies in ruins, with most residents forced to flee their homes.

According to the Gaza health ministry, more than 38,983 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7. The toll incudes 64 deaths in 24 hours.

The offensive has also unleashed hunger and health crises in Gaza, with Israel and the United Nations trading blame for vital aid supplies failing to reach those in need.

After the detection of poliovirus in Gaza sewage, the World Health Organization (WHO) said there were "monumental" constraints to mounting a timely response.

WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier said Friday the agency believes many more diseases are "spreading out of control" inside Gaza.

The Israeli prime minister is due to address US lawmakers Wednesday in Washington, where he will be under pressure to reach a ceasefire with Hamas.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday a truce was within reach. "I believe we're... driving toward the goal line in getting an agreement that would produce a ceasefire, get the hostages home, and put us on a better track to trying to build lasting peace and stability," he said.

Internet unlikely

FROM PAGE 12

internet services in the country as soon as possible.

However, the state minister did not mention exactly when the services would resume.

The country has been under complete internet blackout since Thursday after sources said the transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers (ISPs) and carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data service.

Referring to the attacks on communication infrastructures, industry insiders, wishing anonymity, said this could disrupt at best 30 percent of the connections and that most of the internet connections could be restored immediately if the government gave the greenlight.

They added that the government had ordered international terrestrial cable and international internet gateway companies to stop supplying bandwidth to the ISPs and local carriers to shut down mobile data service.

US issues travel alert for its citizens

FROM PAGE 2

UK CITIZENS ADVISED TO EXCERSISE CAUTION

UK Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) has advised British citizens residing in Bangladesh to refrain from travelling unless absolutely necessary, citing the recent incidents of violence across the country.

Referring to the ongoing nationwide curfew, it also urged UK citizens to take shelter in a safe place and follow the advise of local authorities.

The FCDO statement mentioned that communications have been severely disrupted across Bangladesh due to the complete internet blackout.

Railway services in the country have also been suspended until further notice, it added.

Foreign students returning home

Following the recent incidents of violence, at least 978 Indian students studying in Bangladesh have returned to their country, according to a statement by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued on Saturday.

Indian High Commission in Dhaka and other assistant high commissions in Chattogram, Rajshahi, Sylhet, and Khulna are in regular contact with more than 4,000 students who are still in Bangladesh and are providing them with necessary assistance.

They are assisting other Indian nationals to return home as well.

"We have also helped students from Nepal and Bhutan to cross into India on request," it said.

150 arrested

FROM PAGE 12

ARRESTEES DEMANDED

A Dhaka court yesterday placed BNP leaders Amir Khashru Mahmud, Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, Abdus Salam, Kazi Sayedul Alam Babul, supporter Mahamudus Salehin and Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Parower on five-day remand in a case filed over vandalising a BTV building in the capital and setting it on fire, reports our court correspondent.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Sheikh Sadi also placed BNP leaders Nipun Roy and Aminul Haq on three-day remand in the same case. Police had sought 10-day remand for each of the accused.

The same court placed former Ducsu VP Nurul Haq Nur on five-day remand in another case filed with Banani Police Station over setting fire to Setu Bhaban in capital's Banani.

8 trade bodies

FROM PAGE 12

The business and trade platforms hoped formation of a judicial investigation commission by the government and the Appellate Division's decision on the issue will lead to a logical solution to the issue.

They expressed condolences for those families who lost their loved ones in the violence and wished prompt recovery of the injured.

DHAKA MONDAY JULY 22, 2024, SRABAN 7, 1431 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Star BUSINESS

Transport operators sitting idle, counting losses

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The violence centring the quota reform protests and associated curfew are preventing trucks and covered vans from plying the roads and highways, leading to losses for their operators alongside businesses dependent on them.

"We have been totally shut for the last three days," lamented Moqbul Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Covered Van, Truck Panya Paribahan Mailk Samity, an association of transporters.

Ahmed said they mainly transport exports and imports to and from the Chattogram port, which handles around 90 percent of the country's trade.

Given the present situation, garment factory owners are reluctant to dispatch exports fearing attacks on the roads, he said.

At the same time, goods are not being loaded from the Chattogram port due to an internet blackout since July 18, which has impacted the assessment and clearance of imported goods, he said.

There are around 15.5 lakh trucks and covered vans registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority. Of them, around 3.5 lakh ply the roads and highways on any given day.

The Dhaka-Chattogram highway alone sees roughly 2,000 covered vans daily, Ahmed estimated.

However, he was hopeful that they would be able to operate normally after the curfew was lifted.

Khandker Anayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owner's Association, said owners do not want to risk damage to their vehicles despite incurring huge losses.

As the vehicles have been lying idle for the last couple of days, overall losses of the truckers would amount to at least Tk 175 crore per day if Tk 5,000 is considered as the minimum loss, according to Anayet.

Some vehicles, transporting perishables such as fresh vegetables and fruits, are plying the roads but operators are demanding higher fares as risk premium, he said.

"The fare to transport vegetables has increased by around Tk 10,000 per truck due to the threat of attacks," said Saifur Rahman Chowdhury Sujan, general secretary of Karwan Bazar Wholesale Owner Association.

He informed that it costs around Tk 15,000 to Tk 16,000 to rent a truck to carry vegetables in a normal situation. But it has shot up to Tk 26,000 to Tk 27,000 per truck amid the ongoing curfew and violence.

In the case of mangoes, the fare has gone up to Tk 32,000 per truck from Tk 22,000, fruit and vegetable traders said.

Anayet added that the price of transport services tends to increase when the situation is risky and sometimes trucks are always needed to transport essential goods.

However, RN Paul, managing director of Pran-RFL Group, said big companies were largely unaffected by the price hike.

"As we can meet 80 percent of our needs through our own transport, our costs have not increased. Logistics suppliers meet the remaining 20 percent but corporate clients, who have long-term contracts, are not being charged higher fares," he said.

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Flatbed trucks used for carrying containers remain parked along the road in Chowchala area in Chattogram city yesterday. For a fourth day straight, the delivery of imports from the country's premier port remained suspended due to violence centring the quota reform movement, a nationwide curfew and the internet blackout. The photo was taken around 11:00am.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

Business takes a hit from acute port congestion

DWIPAYAN BARUA *and* **MOHAMMAD SUMAN**

Operational activities at the Chattogram port moved at a snail's pace on the fourth day of an unprecedented disruption due to the government's imposition of a curfew and countrywide violence over the quota reform movement, hitting business and economy hard.

Import and export activities as well as cargo and container delivery were also seriously disrupted at the country's largest seaport due to a nationwide internet blackout since July 18.

As deliveries from the port dropped to rock bottom, an acute container congestion was created, hampering handling operations inside port yards.

A total of 7,367 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of import containers were unloaded from ships at the port over the past two days till Sunday morning. However, only 926 TEUs could be transferred outside.

Even then, berth operators said that most of the transferred containers were in fact transported to private inland container depots (ICDs).

Deliveries to consignees were nominal, with the port authority confirming that not a single import container could be delivered to consignees in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

As a result, port yards were choked with 40,898 TEUs containers as of 8:00am yesterday, exceeding 76 percent of the total capacity of 53,518T EUs, according to data from the traffic department of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

Nazmul Haque, executive director of Saif Powertec, which operates two terminals of the port, said the scarcity of space at the port yards had severely hindered operations.

"About 40 percent of the space needs to be free to ensure smooth operations. The internet blackout has made our jobs tougher because we don't have the scope to see the yard on the monitors now. So, staff of berth operators are trying to physically detect free spaces and accommodate containers," he said.

If the situation does not improve over the next couple of days, it will be difficult to maintain operational activities, he added.

Mohammad Saidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Custom House, Chattogram added that assessment of almost all import and export consignments was halted since the internet blackout prevented them from calculating duties, collecting revenue, and logging data entries of examinations.

"We are permitting the release of some imported perishable goods, essential commodities and fuel oil upon receiving an undertaking from importers.

"Similarly, a portion of export consignments that had previously completed the assessment process are being allowed to be shipped," he added.

Port officials said four vessels were scheduled to leave the port jetties yesterday. However, as containers could not be sent to the port on time, two vessels had to extend their stay while the remaining two departed with sparse cargo on board.

Singapore-bound vessel MV Sinarsaba was supposed to receive 380 TEUs of export containers but had to extend its stay after failing to receive even a single container from ICDs.

Similarly, Colombo-bound HR Shahare was booked to ship 250 TEUs of export containers but had to extend its stay by a day as no containers reached the port till the early hours of yesterday.

Kamrul Islam Mazumder, chief operating officer of Ispahani Summit Alliance Terminal at Kattoli, said they planned to send 132 TEUs of export containers to these two vessels by Saturday night but failed to do so because of a disruption in transportation.

Likewise, KDS Logistics failed to send 90 TEUs to the ships as drivers of container-carrying vehicles were unwilling to operate, said a senior official of the ICD.

Additionally, two vessels namely Maersk Port Klang and Anderson Dragon, sailed from the port yesterday with only a fraction of the containers they were booked to carry.

Maersk Port Klang sailed with only 120 TEUs of empty containers against a booking of 1,000 TEUs of empty containers while Anderson Dragon left with 178 TEUs against a booking of 230 TEUs.

The transport of export containers from the 21 ICDs to the port also dropped significantly as very few trucks and covered vans loaded with export cargo arrived at the ICDs over the past four days, said Ruhul Amin Sikder, secretary general of Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association.

Export activities at ICDs dropped by 80 to 85 percent due to the unavailability of export cargo from factories, he added.

Syed M Tanvir, managing director of leading denim exporter Pacific Jeans, said losses would be disastrous, adding that it may take two months to recover.

Mentioning that the country's export figure has declined in the last two years, he said such a blow to exports at the very beginning of the fiscal year would definitely have a negative impact on annual export figures.

"We hope the government can bring stability as soon as possible. If possible, normalcy should come back within tomorrow since Monday is very crucial for us as it is the first working day following the weekend in countries where our buyers are from.

"If we cannot resume production or communicate with the buyers by Monday, it will be a very wrong message to them."

Khairul Alam Suzan, vice-president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association, told The Daily Star that this crisis had damaged the country in two ways.

Firstly, it presented Bangladesh in a bad light in the global arena and secondly the economy was dealt a big blow as almost all activities have been paused due to the internet blackout.

Informal workers struggling to make ends meet

SUKANTA HALDER *and* **MD ABU TALHA SARKER**

"I can't get you to understand how I managed to pay for meals over the past four days," a dejected labourer, Muzahid Hossain, said yesterday.

His livelihood involves engaging in manual work for which he gets paid at the end of the day. So, if work is not available even for a single day, there is practically no way to make up for it when trying to make ends meet.

Talking to The Daily Star in front of Mukto Bangla Shopping Complex in Mirpur-1, he said he has been arriving there very early in the morning as usual but no one was there to hire labourers over the past four days.

His financial situation has been in dire straits as he had to borrow Tk 2,000 from a neighbour with interest just to get by.

Day labourers in Dhaka are among those who are suffering the most due to the ongoing unrest along with the curfew imposed by the government to stem the violence.

Although wage growth in Bangladesh has been slowly climbing since July 2021, it has remained below the inflation rate for the past two and a half years.

Wages of low-paid and unskilled workers grew 7.95 percent in June, which was 1.77 percentage points below the inflation rate of 9.72 percent in the same month, showed the wage index of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

This trend has been continuing for the past 29 months, as per BBS data.

The annual average price spike in Bangladesh surged to its highest level in 12 years in the just concluded fiscal year despite easing in June, reflecting the persistent erosion of real income and the deterioration of the living standards of the lower-income groups.

LEFT IN THE LURCH

- Income of day labourers has fallen drastically
- Number of rickshaw passengers has come down
- Many day labourers are using their savings to make ends meet
- Many workers are borrowing money at high interest

This is forcing low-income and unskilled workers to cut consumption amid falling real incomes.

The ongoing unrest has added to their woes.

Anis Bhuiyan, a rickshaw puller residing with his four-member family in Muslim Bazar area of Mirpur, said he can usually keep Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 for himself after paying the Tk 350 daily rent to the vehicle owner.

Now he was hardly able to earn even half, reasoning that he was unable to go long distances using the main roads.

"Schools and colleges remain shut. General people don't come out except for urgent needs. As a result, rickshaw pullers like me are not getting a sufficient number of passengers, which has reduced earnings," he said.

"It is very tough for me to survive in Dhaka with a family. If the situation continues, I will be forced to leave the city," he added.

Construction worker Azizul Islam has been sitting idle for the last couple of days as the project site where he had been employed had suspended works.

"When the prices of everything are rising, sitting idle feels suffocating. I have almost used up my meagre savings," said Islam, who lives with his five-member family at Mirpur 11.

Nurul Alam, a 22-year-old man, recently joined mason Maruful Haque as an apprentice working at a site in Sangbadik Abasik Elaka in Mirpur, working round the day pulling off old plaster from bathrooms to set tiles.

"I dropped my studies and left home to make a living because of my family's financial insolvency," said Alam, who hails from Barishal sadar upazila and now lives with his maternal uncle near Kalshi Bazar in Dhaka.

"Initially I was running a battery-run rickshaw for hire but stopped doing so since last week as the number of passengers drastically decreased for all the educational institutions being shut down," he said.

"Now I am stuck in a new crisis. What is there for me to do when the country has come to a standstill? It is really tough for newcomers to survive in this condition," he said.

Meanwhile, Selim Reza, a porter working at Karwan Bazar, one of the largest kitchen markets in the capital, also saw his daily earnings fall drastically.

He usually earns Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 a day but amidst the unrest, he can manage at best Tk 200 to Tk 250. This has forced him to take a loan of Tk 10,000 from his neighbour with interest.

Let factories run, restore internet

Demand garment exporters

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment exporters yesterday demanded that the government keep the sector out of the purview of the ongoing curfew and fast restore internet services for the resumption of production as soon as possible.

Production and shipments are dependent on strict lead times set by international clothing retailers and brands, yet the factories have had to be kept shut for the past three days, they said.

The sector's direct losses for the production suspension during this period amount to around $48 million, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The sector is facing the losses at a time when the country's exports have been falling over the last three years.

Leaders of the garment and textile sectors held a meeting at a hotel in the capital's Gulshan and afterwards placed their demands on meeting the principal secretary to the prime minister.

"If necessary, we will meet the prime minister with our demand," said SM Mannan Kochi, the BGMEA president, after the meeting on the overall situation in the sector and way forward.

Former BGMEA presidents, leaders of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) were present.

BKMEA Executive President Mohammad Hatem said import and export of goods remain suspended for the internet blackout, for which communicating with international retailers and brands was proving troublesome.

This has also left the factory managements unable to send inspection and status reports to retailers and brands, he said.

Moreover, many trucks could not take goods from the factories to the Chattogram port but it is not possible to inform buyers of this development, he added.

There are bigger indirect losses for delays such as buyers either cancelling work orders or shifting those to other countries or seeking discounts or air shipments, he said.

"Factories will remain shut tomorrow (Monday)," he said.

When international retailers and brands lose confidence in a garment manufacturer, it is a major loss for the sector, said Abdullah Hil Rakib, vice-president of the BGMEA.

There are a lot of uncertainties over the production and shipment of goods because of the unrest and curfew, he said.

Correction

In a story headlined "Garment sector's losses piling up as factories remain shut" published yesterday, it was mentioned that the sector was losing over $500 million a day due to the closure of factories. However, exporters yesterday said the sector's direct losses in the last three days amounted to $48 million.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

A timely verdict

Court grants 93 percent quota for talent-based recruitment

We welcome the Appellate Division's decision on Sunday to guide quota reforms by reserving 93 percent of quota for merit-based recruitment in civil service, overturning the High Court verdict on retaining the quota system as it was before the 2018 annulment. The decision from a full bench of the court, sitting under extraordinary circumstances with a nationwide curfew in place, ends weeks of speculations in this regard. It also comes against a backdrop of unprecedented violence that really needed the highest court of the country to intervene judiciously, and we congratulate it for doing just that. While the legal implications of the judgement will be discussed in depth in the coming days, we feel certain issues need to be highlighted.

Beside the 93 percent quota for general candidates, the court stipulates 5 percent for children of freedom fighters and biranganas (women tortured and raped by Pakistani army during the 1971 Liberation War), one percent for ethnic minorities, and one for persons with disabilities and those belonging to third gender. While the court's provision of quotas may be amended by the government in future, if needed, we feel the ruling should be implemented soonest. We are told that a circular based on the judgement may be published as early as Tuesday. The law minister has clarified to the press that the government will follow the directives of the court in full. Without the official circular, it will not be clear as to how the government will implement those directives.

That said, the quota reform, as things stand, is but part of the demands forwarded by the protesting students to the government recently. Those remaining issues also need to be resolved quickly. Students are right to demand answers and accountability for what happened during the last few days of their movement. And without a proper response, their confidence in the sincerity of government efforts will not be restored. In its observation, the court stressed the importance of students returning to classrooms. Now that the legal hurdle has been cleared, students too should be motivated to ensure their swift return—and the country's—to normalcy.

Finally, what happened over the last few days, with the death toll from violent clashes reaching 127 as confirmed by this paper as of Saturday, has left a deep mark in the minds of the public, not just the students. The wounds that have been afflicted would need healing and resolving, too. Once the dust is settled and quieter times return, we will need to start reflecting on those unresolved issues and grievances that found a potent expression under the shadow of the quota movement, effectively plunging the whole country into an unbelievable crisis.

Nation under curfew

Sufferings of mass people are becoming dire

As the nationwide curfew continued onto its second day, the immense socioeconomic cost it caused the ordinary citizens, businesses, and the nation in general, is deeply concerning. Some of the damage could have been mitigated had the government not shut down the nationwide internet service for such a prolonged period. Businesses, for example, could have continued their operations online and with their foreign counterparts; citizens could have availed medical services or purchased essentials online. Media outlets have not been able to publish news through their online platforms since Thursday night. And the uncertainty that comes from not receiving timely information on what's happening across the country—and from being cut off from the rest of the world—imposes its own psychological toll.

While we acknowledge the necessity of a curfew to prevent violence, the harm being done to the economy as a result cannot be emphasised enough. According to a report in this daily, consumers are suffering immensely as prices of essentials—which were already skyrocketing, with inflation hitting a record 12-year high earlier—have shot through the roof. With the transportation of perishable commodities to the capital remaining scarce, and supply chains being disrupted across the country, traders are hiking prices of nearly all goods. And yet, some consumers are still having to return home empty-handed, with markets and stores closing early having run out of supplies. The impact of all these on the poor and low-income groups will be devastating. Even before tensions escalated across the country, the ongoing economic crisis was creating scores of new poor and forcing many to cut back on their meals and nutritional intake. What will happen to them now, we simply shudder to ask.

Meanwhile, emergency services across the country, including at hospitals, have collapsed, as many services that are dependent on the internet have become non-functional, and the number of injured patients flooding in remain high.

Reportedly, at least 24 people were killed on Saturday and hundreds more were injured in clashes with security forces, whose use of excessive force we strongly condemn. For how long can such violence and curfews continue? And who will answer for the massive damage all these are doing to the nation? The government needs to be more aware of the ground realities and sufferings that the general public are having to endure, and pursue a path of de-escalation. It needs to answer for the use of excessive force against citizens by security forces, investigate all such incidents, and ensure they are not repeated. Moreover, it needs to urgently restore the internet service so that people can avail some essential services online, and look for a way to withdraw the curfew without further violence breaking out, so that some semblance of normalcy can return to the lives of ordinary people.

Did we have to pay such a heavy price for this verdict?

THE SOUND & THE FURY

Sushmita S Preetha
is the op-ed editor at The Daily Star.

SUSHMITA S PREETHA

The verdict is in. The Appellate Division through its observations has recommended that quotas be restricted to seven percent: five percent for freedom fighters' descendants, one percent for ethnic minorities, and one percent for people with disabilities.

For all practical purposes, it is a win for the protesters. Or so it would have been, had the morgues not been brimming with dead bodies, hospitals inundated with those critically injured, and public establishments set on fire around the country. Everyone is anxious, afraid, angry, and agitated—a state of despair exacerbated manifold by the internet blackout imposed by the government to control the free flow of information. How many will be picked up, how many tortured, how many killed, how many maimed for life before all this is over?

Each new day has brought with it ever-more shocking revelations of the cruelty of state apparatuses. The events of Tuesday (when BCL cadres viciously attacked protesters) and Wednesday (when law enforcement agencies stormed the public universities to drive off students from the campuses) already seem like distant memories. And talk as we must about the brutality in the days since, it's worth revisiting why law enforcers would have the right or the audacity to march into campuses of autonomous institutions, firing shotguns and sound grenades aimed at students in their late teens and early 20s. What does it say about our university authorities, VCs and provosts, except what we have known all along—that they are mere puppets to the whims of the ruling party? What mockery they have all made of the sanctity of the university campus(es), whose walls are witness to some of the biggest uprisings against injustice in our history! If the students are now asking for the resignation of the VCs and provosts, it is the least they can demand for being betrayed time and time again.

What law and whose order can justify the use of lethal weapons to disperse protesters, some not even old enough to vote?
FILE PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

The violence unleashed on students over the past week cannot be so easily erased from public memory.
FILE PHOTO: **KHALID NAZRUL**

Then came Thursday, which brought with it state-sponsored violence, the scale of which none of us were prepared for, despite living through the brutal squashing of the road safety movement in 2018 and every dissenting movement since. Areas in Dhaka turned into zones of unimaginable violence, with law enforcers charging upon and firing on students armed at most with sticks and brickbats, without provocation in most cases. The clips shared by countless students on social media, followed by eye-witness reports in the media, provide chilling accounts of the atrocities conducted by the police and BGB in the name of maintaining law and order. What law and whose order can justify the use of lethal weapons to disperse protesters, some not even old enough to vote? At least 25 people were killed, 11 of them students, including a 17-year-old, and over 3,000 were injured—that we know of. Predictably, the government's heavy-handedness only served to amplify the anger of the masses, and we began to see protesters—or motivated elements infiltrating the movement—turn to increasingly destructive measures to resist.

What did the government really think—that they could shoot the young students into submission after their trusted helmet *bahini* had failed to get the job done? That they could dangle the carrot of dialogue and concession, all the while opening fire upon the students, including those from private universities who had taken to the streets simply to express solidarity with their public university counterparts? The movement might have started on the issue of the reform of quota system, but underneath simmered discontent accumulated over the years about the culture of repression, conduct of law enforcement and actions of the ruling party's student wing. The outpouring on the streets over the past week is the manifestation of a long and deeply felt sense of injustice that has only been fanned by virulent rhetoric and violent tactics of the powers that be. By resorting to its tried-and-tested strategy, the government once again proved that it is too arrogant to listen to citizens' legitimate and peaceful demands for policy reforms. And in the process, it has done itself the biggest disservice.

Now, the country is in the throes of chaos. From toll booths to offices of Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority (BTRA) offices, from flyovers to metro rail stations, numerous public establishments have been set ablaze or vandalised over the past few days. As per a report in this daily, miscreants wreaked havoc inside the Mirpur 10 and Kazipara metro rail stations, smashing vending machines, ticket counters, close circuit cameras and everything else on sight. We condemn such mindless destruction in no uncertain terms. And while the government can blame third party political elements all it wants now for the anarchy that we have witnessed over the past few days, it cannot evade responsibility for creating the conditions under which such chaos could breed and spread.

If it could declare redistribution of quotas on Thursday night, and the hearing of the Appellate Division could be fast-tracked to Sunday, why could it not do so the week before? Why did it insist that its hands were tied, when the court itself had clarified that should the government want, it could simply issue a new circular? Why did government high-ups vilify the protesters and resort to their age-old strategy of "othering" to justify unlawful attacks by the student wing? Why did it unleash the BCL on protesting students, and then, when the protesters fought back and drove them out of the campuses, close down all educational institutions and halls? And most infuriatingly, why did it pour fuel in the fire by shooting young students and civilians? Why did it fail so miserably at containing the situation without resorting to lethal means? Why did it serve chaos on a platter for the so-called *durbrittokaris* to take advantage of?

The death toll has continued to rise, with at least 66 killed on Friday alone—that we could confirm—and at least 21 on Saturday, even amid a curfew. In only four days, the death toll has crossed 127, as per data collected directly from the hospitals as of Saturday (the real count could be much higher), and includes law enforcers, journalists, pedestrians, rickshaw pullers and even children. It is truly inconceivable that so many lives have needlessly been lost, simply because the government was too obstinate to "give in" to the students' demands. And that political elements are now trying to create anarchy using the momentum of the movement will only endanger further the lives of ordinary students who are fighting for their dignity. The last thing we want is for the students to become pawns in a wider battle for power.

Even if the protests are ultimately called off, what lies ahead for those who engaged in the protests, particularly those who were in leadership positions? Nahid Islam, a key organiser of the anti-discrimination student movement, was picked up by "plainclothes persons" in the early morning yesterday, allegedly because he refused to agree with the government's proposal for a dialogue ahead of the Supreme Court's hearing. Nahid has since been found by his family and taken to the hospital to tend to injuries allegedly inflicted during the hours he was "missing." After the quota reform and road safety movements of 2018, we saw how students were tracked down, detained, arrested, surveilled upon and threatened, and their lives irrevocably altered, with the state showing no mercy for those who had dared challenge it.

The verdict may be in, but the bloodshed cannot be so easily erased from public memory. At the very least, the government should declare a general amnesty for student protesters as a gesture of goodwill. It should restore internet connection, which will bring some semblance of normalcy back to the country and help assuage people's anxieties and dispel the rumours going around.

The verdict may be in, but the bloodshed cannot be so easily erased from public memory. At the very least, the government should declare a general amnesty for student protesters as a gesture of goodwill. It should restore internet connection, which will bring some semblance of normalcy back to the country and help assuage people's anxieties and dispel the rumours going around. If the government is capable of learning any lesson at all, it should be that it can no longer afford to be so arrogant, so impervious to people's simmering frustrations and so ruthless in their handling of mass movements. After all, there is nothing more dangerous than a people who have nothing left to lose.

The outpouring on the streets over the past week is the manifestation of a long and deeply felt sense of injustice. This photo was taken in Sylhet on July 18, 2024.
FILE PHOTO: **SHEIKH NASIR**

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
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Bring those who ordered the excessive use of force to account

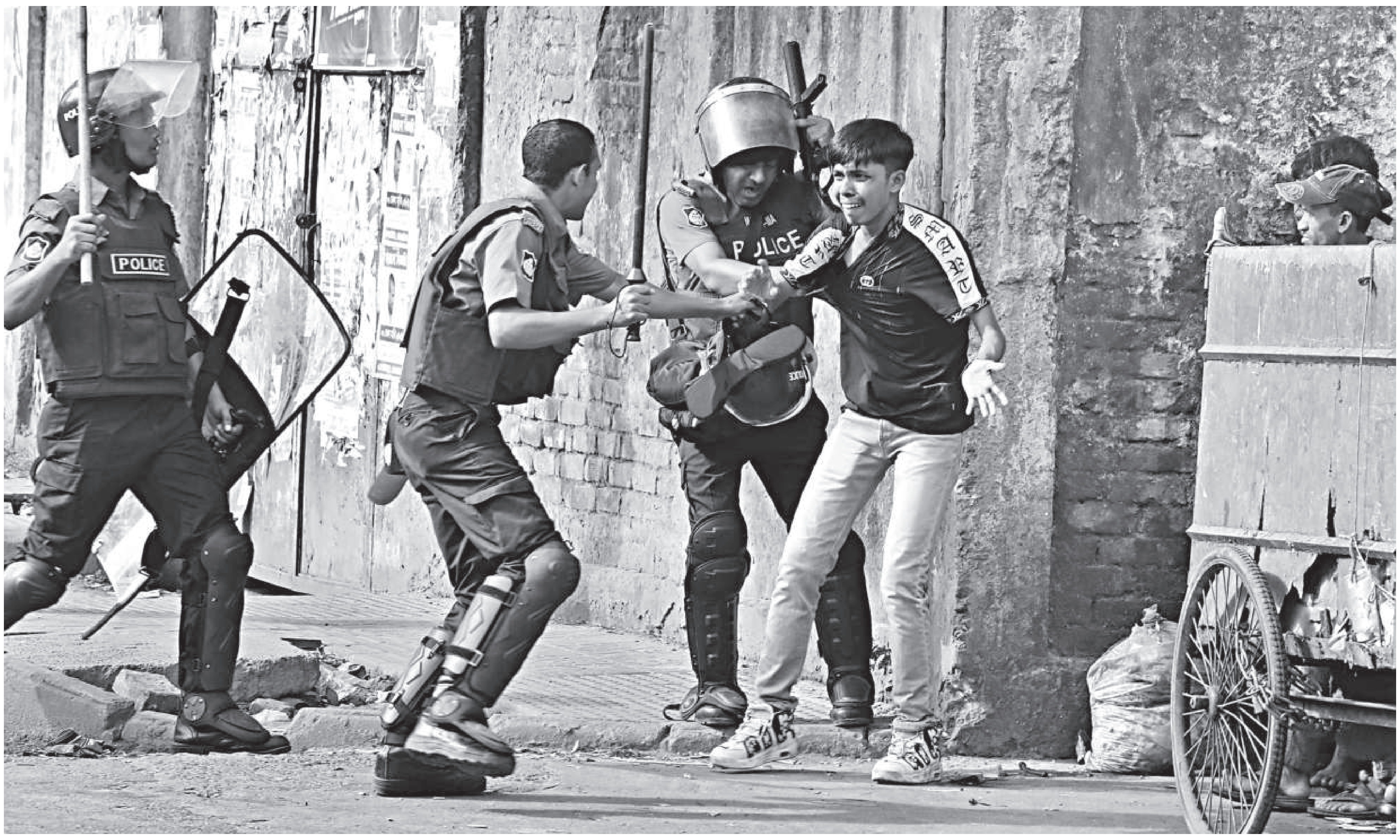
Barrister Sara Hossain
is a Supreme Court lawyer and the honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST).

SARA HOSSAIN

The student protesters' demand for the reform of the existing quota system in government job recruitment is logical, in my opinion. Quota is a temporary special arrangement, which can be enforced in hopes of achieving equality. Our constitution says the same; the preamble mentions creating equal opportunities.

In the preamble as well as Article 8, it is stated that the goal of our state is to create a just economic and social system. In articles 28 and 29, there is a mandate for the state that allows it to take special initiatives in this regard. Article 28 (4) says that for the advancement of women, children and the backward sections of society, the state can take special initiatives. And Article 29 (3) says that for any appointments in the service of the republic or a republic office, there can be reservations for the backward sections. So there is a constitutional mandate that quotas can be created to achieve equality.

> **I think quotas should be determined because we need quotas in order to ensure progress towards equality for those who are historically disadvantaged in our society. And that includes certain communities including Indigenous people, people with disabilities, etc—people who have been held back because of their cast, ethnicity or other characteristics.**



What we have seen in terms of the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters is unconscionable.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Now the question is, how will the quota be used, and for whom? The quota reform seekers have raised this concern: through which process the quota system is being implemented, and whom it is serving. Are the existing quotas helping us achieve equality, as per the constitutional mandate, or are they the doing the opposite, creating a situation where some groups are getting advantages over others, further creating discrimination? This is why the protesters have labelled themselves as the Students' Movement against Discrimination.

In the verdict we received from the Appellate Division today (yesterday), the court suggested five percent quota for freedom fighters, one percent for differently abled population and the third gender, and one percent for the Indigenous people. The women's quota was not mentioned. I see today's verdict as a suggestion, because how the quotas will be determined is entirely to be decided by the executive branch, as only it has the power to do so according to the constitution. The court also observed that the government can change or reform the quota system as it deems necessary. The court also mentioned a circular to be issued in this regard.

I think quotas should be determined because we need quotas in order to ensure progress towards equality for those who are historically disadvantaged in our society. And that includes certain communities including Indigenous people, people with disabilities, etc—people who have been held back because of their cast, ethnicity or other characteristics. But the process of determining these quotas should be based on evidence. There's already a lot of decisions from our courts and from other courts in the region and indeed elsewhere, that when you make quotas, they can't create further discrimination as a result. These principles have to be borne in mind when the quotas are determined. I think it's important that all these issues should be taken into account when the government does make a decision regarding quotas, that they should be aimed at serving equality for those who are disadvantaged. And this has to be based on exercising constitutional powers and the mandate.

Secondly, about the movement by the young men and women who are students in our public and private universities for the reform of quotas, I understand it to be for ensuring equal opportunities for everyone in our society, to obtain representation in government service. They have always talked about ensuring quota reform so that the system is fair and representative, and that it doesn't unfairly advantage any particular group. They want the quotas to not be imposed in a way that the majority of the aspirants for positions in government offices are blocked out from that opportunity.

What we have seen in the past week in terms of the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters, I think that is unconscionable. We are hearing reports even today that there are firings going on. It is essential that this violence stops. It is critical that there should be proper accounting for who authorised this kind of use of force, which has been excessive and disproportionate. Almost everyone in the country has witnessed, either in person or through the media, the kind of assaults that have been carried out against the peaceful protesters. This has to be brought to account through a process that is independent, impartial, and effective. We need to see not only those who shot directly on the protesters and others, but also those who ordered the firing to be brought to account. The last two days we had a curfew, and we have been told that there is a shoot-at-sight order. What was the order in place before the curfew was imposed? Under whose authority did those shootings happen that led to more than a 100 deaths, as far as we know, or maybe more? How did this take place and how do we hold these people to account? I think this is the most urging question before us now.

An independent Bangladesh is enough for me

Tamanna Khan
is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

TAMANNA KHAN

> **While I never had to use any preferential treatment as a freedom fighter's grandchild, today I feel if I had to, I would have felt ashamed to use it especially after so many deaths surrounding this issue. Like I said, my Nana's contribution to the Liberation War has given me a country to call home. A 45-year-old like me in Palestine does not have that privilege. How well I use this gift depends on my own capability. For my descendants, the last thing I want is preferential treatment for their ancestors' legacy.**

I am a grandchild of a freedom fighter. My Nana did not fight the Pakistan Army in the battlefront, but as a railway official in 1971, he used train coaches to transport arms and ammunition to freedom fighters. When the Pakistani authorities learnt of his actions, Nana had to spend months as a fugitive, which took a toll on him both mentally and physically. His contribution was recognised by the Bangladesh government. He got promoted after the war, and also received a plot in Dhaka. Though he did not live long enough to build a house there and reside in it, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are reaping the benefits of that reward: a place to call our nanabari/dadabari. But, in my opinion, the biggest reward that my cousins and I and our children received, thanks to my Nana and thousand others like him, was Bangladesh—a independent nation, where, I believe, we enjoy much more privilege than our parents did growing up in East Pakistan.

Bangladesh was under Pakistani rule for more than two decades. I don't know how much change my parents witnessed during that time, but in my lifetime, in independent Bangladesh, two decades meant a huge transformation. I will give a tiny example. My earliest memory of travelling to our village in the Narsingdi district in the 80s was crossing a river on a ferry and parking our car at the house of a local influential politician. We had to walk the rest of way to my dadabari on an earthen road. By 2000, there was no need for a ferry to cross the river anymore, and our car could drive right up to the gate of our village home. The serene landscape of green rice fields one could see after crossing the Shitalakkhya Bridge all the way to our village also disappeared gradually, being replaced by numerous factories and mills.

VISUAL: MANAN MORSHED

In the 80s, poor young men and women from our village would come to Dhaka looking for employment opportunities often as domestic help or for other low-skilled jobs. That changed at the turn of the century, so much so that it became difficult to find even agriculture labourers in our village anymore. That happened largely because of the factories that grew on the outskirts of Dhaka.

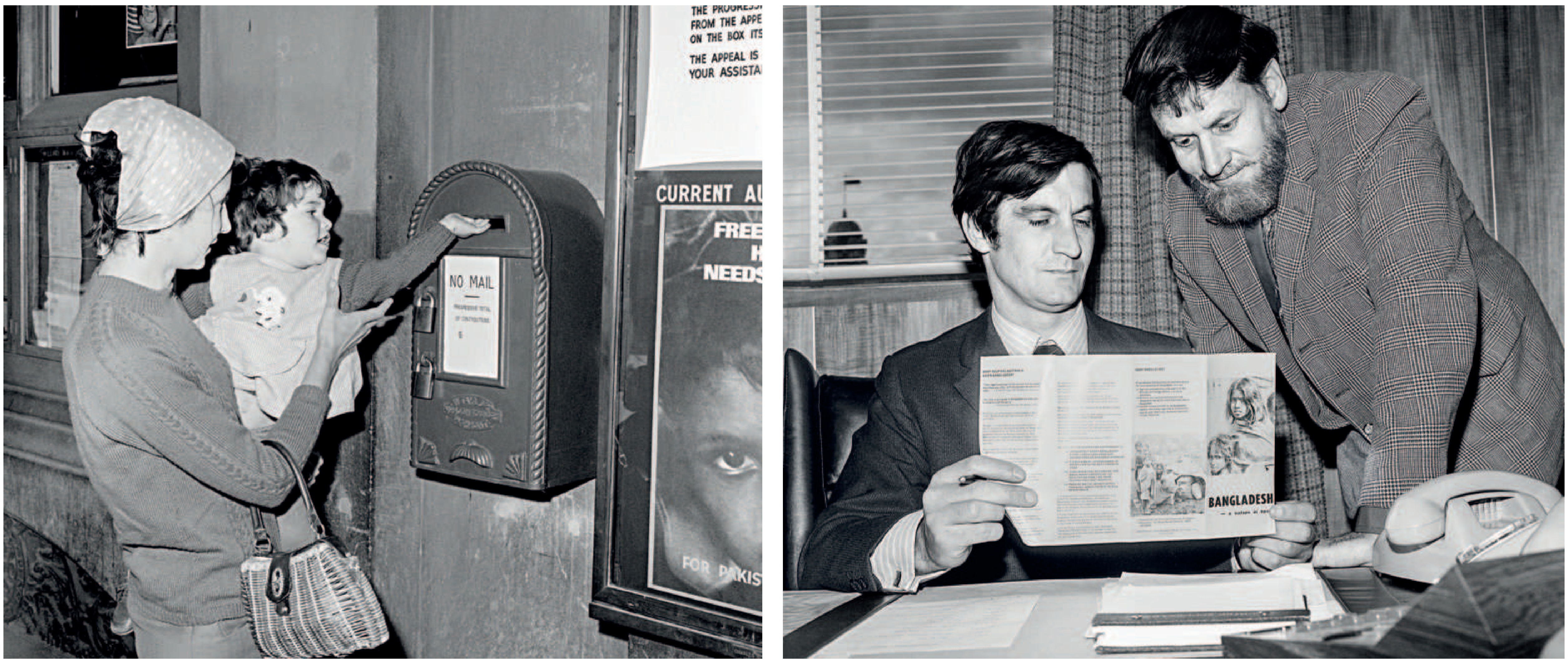
Some may argue that the change Bangladesh experienced can also be attributed to the global advancement of technology and economy. But is it not true that, after independence, whatever we produced in this country were spent in the development of this country and not some distance land to the west? And it is us, the post-independent generations, who are the beneficiaries of that development.

At a personal level, I believe the change Bangladesh went through helped me and my cousins attain good education and subsequently get jobs, which may not pay enough to buy a goat worth Tk 15 lakh, but help us get by and put food on our plates at least three times a day. None of us hold a government job. Whether we were talented enough to even try for a government job is a different question. Most of us never actually took the BCS exams or the recruitment tests in Bangladesh Railway. I don't think getting a government job was ever our dream—not mine, at least. Growing up in the 80s and 90s, we were attracted to private jobs because the remuneration was way better than any government job. The only government job that sounded "cool" was that in foreign service and our relatives who worked in that government wing scored the highest marks in their public examinations throughout. Mind you that was a different era and only one or two persons could stand first in the public examinations among thousands of students in the entire country. So foreign service remained an unattainable dream, which was not even worth trying for.

One reason why my cousins and I were able to live a more or less privileged life in independent Bangladesh is our parents' hard work. They, too, had an advantage over others. They were educated, and were able to cultivate that privilege so they never needed to rely on any quota system to get jobs. In fact, three of my four uncles worked in the private sector, and my eldest uncle who worked in a government bank had secured the job before 1971. It can be argued that, unlike my uncles, descendants of many freedom fighters might never have had the privilege of a good education to start with. Mere recognition would not have helped improve their situation. Whatever little the state offered them to make their situation better right after liberation was much-needed. In fact, the state could have done more. The political instability the country went through in the mid-70s and 80s denied many freedom fighters and their heirs their rights to access those state benefits. But did things not change in the 90s? Were the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters not able to use the preferential system in the 90s when the Awami League was in power? That should have helped many, who were deprived before, to change their fate by securing government jobs.

The point I am trying to make is, people have had five decades in independent Bangladesh to make their lives better. During that time, at least two generations must have grown into adulthood, and despite all the corruption and crimes in the country, their lives must have been impacted to some positive extent by the country's economic development. If that did not happen, then it is a total governance failure. It is the failure of all the governments Bangladesh has had that the country's progress only touched a privileged few, created opportunities only for a handful, so much so that many want to rely on preferential treatment rather than on their own merit to attain some kind of job stability in their lives. It is also a failure of our policymakers and industrialists that they could not create enough employment opportunities in the private sector in 53 years so that young people, like their Western counterparts, would aspire for jobs in private enterprises or want to be entrepreneurs themselves.

While I never had to use any preferential treatment as a freedom fighter's grandchild, today I feel if I had to, I would have felt ashamed to use it especially after so many deaths surrounding this issue. Like I said, my Nana's contribution to the Liberation War has given me a country to call home. A 45-year-old like me in Palestine does not have that privilege. How well I use this gift depends on my own capability. For my descendants, the last thing I want is preferential treatment for their ancestors' legacy. They should undoubtedly be proud of and thankful for their ancestors' achievement, but also should have the dignity to make their own names on their own merit.



(L) A mother and her young daughter placing money in a collection tin in Sydney. (R) Two workers at the Freedom from Hunger Campaign office deliberating on how best to solicit public donations from a brochure.

Australian involvement in the Bangladesh Liberation War

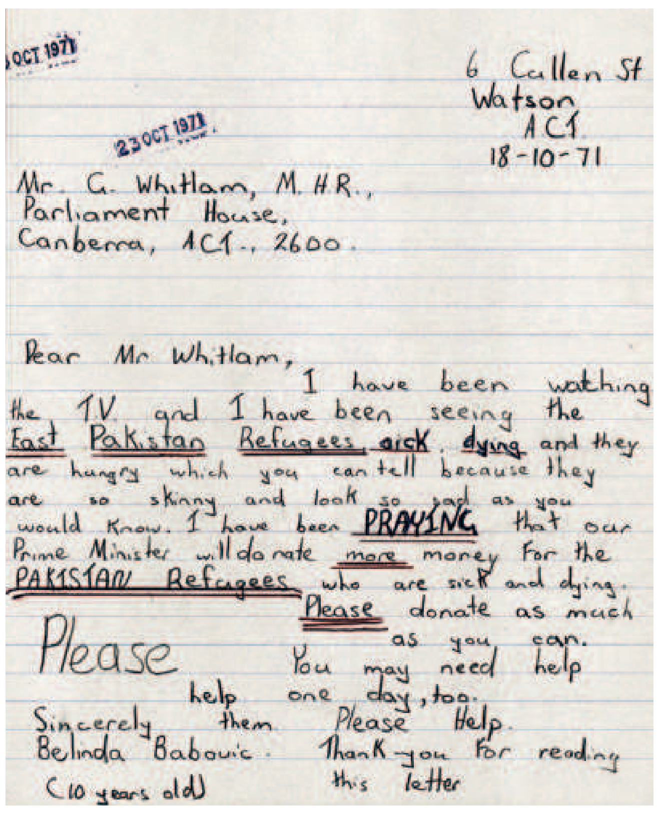
Within the space of 10 months, Australian government policy moved from declared neutrality to supporting openly Bangladeshi independence, even if that meant attracting retaliation from Pakistan and the ire of America.

RACHEL STEVENS

If you think about the international reaction to the Bangladesh Liberation War, you most likely would consider the United States government openly siding with Pakistan. The People's Republic of China, Sri Lanka, and the Arab world also aligned that country. Many western nations – such as the United Kingdom – remained neutral in what they considered a civil conflict rather than a war of secession.

Apart from India and the USSR, it seemed that the Bangladesh liberation movement had few allies. My recently published book, *Citizen-Driven Humanitarianism and the Bangladesh Liberation War: Australian Aid during the 1971 Refugee Crisis*, presents a different picture. In this book I show that when we look beyond the official stance of the Australian government and consider the perspectives of ordinary citizens, we find a populace deeply affected by Bangladeshis' struggle for freedom.

Moira Dynon outside her home counting cans of donated condensed milk before dispatch to India.



OCT 1971

23 OCT 1971

6 Callen St
Watson
ACT
18-10-71

Mr. G. Whitlam, M.H.R.,
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT., 2600.

Dear Mr Whitlam,
I have been watching the T.V. and I have been seeing the East Pakistan Refugees sick, dying and they are hungry which you can tell because they are so skinny and look so sad as you would know. I have been PRAYING that our Prime Minister will donate more money for the PAKISTAN Refugees who are sick and dying. Please donate as much as you can. You may need help one day, too. Please help them. Please Help. Thank-you for reading this letter

Please

Sincerely
Belinda Babovic.
(10 years old)

It was not just affluent Australians who expressed concern about the plight of Bangladeshi refugees. In this example, 10-year-old Belinda Babovic wrote to Opposition Leader (and later Prime Minister) Gough Whitlam from a working-class suburb in Canberra, the nation's capital. In the letter, Belinda wrote in pencil and sparsely used pen for emphasis on particular words.

When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh 53 years ago, Australian newspapers immediately ran front page articles on the declaration. From the beginning, Australian newspapers described in detail the violence of the Pakistani army and the repressive nature of West Pakistani rule.

On 29 March 1971, broadsheet The Age (Australia's newspaper of record), reported on the brutality of the early days of the war, repeating the claim by the Press Trust of India that the Pakistani military had killed more than 10,000 people, including civilians, in just two days. By reporting the war in such terms, Australian journalists laid the groundwork for Australian citizens to understand the conflict through the frame of Pakistani suppression of Bangladeshi demands for independence.

In its 29 March editorial, The Age stated that East Pakistan was a 'besieged province', 'confronted by military forces far stronger' than its own, and therefore had no choice but to declare independence and abandon its legitimate claims for greater regional autonomy. Interestingly, The Age foreshadowed the unlikelihood of a political solution to the conflict. The editor wrote: 'A nation cannot be held together indefinitely by the military repression of a hostile majority of people. To the existing differences of race, custom, language and geography will be added an insuperable barrier of hatred and resentment.'

Within days of the onset of hostilities then, Australians were informed not only of the tragic events unfolding in Bangladesh but also understood the origins of the conflict and why Bangladeshis wanted their freedom.

AUSTRALIAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES

My research explores how and why Australian citizens provided humanitarian relief to Bangladeshi refugees in India. While the responses of governments are important, they can never tell the whole story. Indeed, Australian aid to Bangladeshi refugees is an example of civil society leading government action. Typically, one would assume that governments lead the people. During the 1971 Liberation War, the opposite was true as citizens influenced government policies, not just on aid but also on the formal recognition of Bangladesh as an independent state.

In essence, my book is about how citizens and non-government organisations (NGOs) mobilised, fundraised, and distributed aid in a region far from their homes and to individuals with whom they had little in common. Through my research, I found Australians from a cross-section of society who were outraged at the extent of human suffering in the refugee camps, appalled by the injustice of Yahya's military rule and believed that poverty was completely avoidable, if states chose to alleviate it.

My book includes chapters on the aid activities of an array of humanitarian agencies. Chapters cover the activities of the international Red Cross, transnational Christian agencies, and grassroots organisations such as the Freedom from Hunger Campaign.

It is important to note that in 1971, the Australian humanitarian NGO landscape was an over-crowded market. Each organisation competed for brand recognition, prestige, access to political power, and of course, donor dollars. We naturally think of humanitarian NGOs as benign actors. However, my book shows the extent of competition within the sector as they attempted to gain market dominance and outdo one another.

CITIZEN HUMANITARIANISM: AN UNTOLD HISTORY

The final chapter of my book explores humanitarian actions of individuals. This includes a comprehensive analysis of over 2,500 letters written by Australian citizen to their politicians urging the government to give more aid. These letters are a rare find in the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and provide valuable new insights into how Australians of all backgrounds understood the conflict in Bangladesh and how they thought they could help. I found myself particularly moved by letters written by children, even though they were ineligible to vote.

Here are two examples:

Less than one month into the conflict, 11-year-old Vicki O'Meara from a middle-class suburb in Melbourne wrote:

> Dear Sir,
> I know A$10,000,000 [US$85 million in today's money] is a lot of money but I think you could spare it for the poor Pakistan refugees. If all the people in Australia were starving, then I don't think you'd have much trouble in finding the $10,000,000. It's just that they are a long way away from us and it is hard for us to imagine what it would be like. Please hurry and send the $10,000,000 quickly before it is too late and there will not be any cause because the refugees will all be dead.

What I value in the letters penned by children is that they avoid clichés, are blunt, and usually show a sophisticated understanding of global issues well beyond their years.

In this second example, 10-year-old Belinda Babovic wrote to Opposition Leader (and later Prime Minister) Gough Whitlam from a working-class suburb in Canberra, the nation's capital. In the letter, Belinda wrote in pencil and sparsely used pen for emphasis on particular words. Here, Belinda reveals the importance of television and visual imagery in helping her understand the scale of the refugee crisis. She also discloses that she has been praying for the Australian prime minister to donate more money. The role of news media and religious conviction were repeatedly cited by many Australians in their letters to political leaders.

HUNGER STRIKES

Aside from writing to politicians, citizens also engaged in public performances that inspired onlookers to learn more about the Bangladesh liberation movement in general and the suffering of refugees in particular. For example, Indonesian-born poet Paul Poernomo staged an extended hunger strike on the steps of the Melbourne General Post Office to draw attention to the starvation faced by Bangladeshi refugees. As the weeks rolled on, passers-by gave coins to his donation tin, money that was then forwarded on to the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, which had aid distribution staff working in the West Bengal refugee camps.

The 36-year-old Poernomo took his hunger strike (along with a ragtag of followers) to Canberra. Poernomo fasted for two weeks, this time on the steps of Parliament House. He attracted the attention of politicians and journalists, both of whom promoted and broadcast Poernomo's cause to the nation at large.

After a short stint in hospital due to extreme dehydration, Poernomo continued his fasting tour around the country. He staged his final hunger strike outside the Sydney General Post Office. As in Melbourne, passers-by donated money to support refugee relief activities.

The impacts of Poernomo's hunger strike were far-reaching. At a minimum, Poernomo single-handedly raised A$50,000 for the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, making 1971 its most successful year to date. Beyond donations, Poernomo inspired thousands of citizens to lobby their political representatives, urging the Australian government to do more for Bangladeshi refugees and officially support Bangladeshi independence.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVISM

Paul Poernomo was not the only example of an Australian going to extreme lengths to help Bangladeshis. Melbourne upper-class housewife and Catholic humanitarian, Moira Dynon, had a long history of donating powdered and condensed milk to India throughout the 1960s. When the Bhola cyclone hit in 1970, she turned her attention to East Pakistan. Her humanitarian activities increased again when war broke out in 1971. Unlike large, international NGOs, Dynon was an advocate of person-to-person humanitarianism. By focusing on friendship, goodwill and cooperation, Dynon stressed the importance of personal relationships. She believed that every individual could, and should, make a difference to ease avoidable suffering.

Dynon also proved to be a tireless worker, willing to travel great distances to spread her message. Throughout 1971, Dynon engaged in a speaking tour across Australia, educating Australians on the history and politics of Bangladesh, and why its people demanded independence from Pakistan. She urged her audience to donate money and goods to her small aid agency, which was then forwarded to the West Bengal Council of Women for distribution in the refugee camps.

BROADER SIGNIFICANCE

The examples listed above may seem insignificant on their own. But what they shows is that collectively individual actions can shape public opinion, which then has the capacity to change government policy. In the case of Australia during the Bangladesh Liberation War, the actions of individuals helped push risk-averse politicians to take a moral stand that was at odds with its main ally, the United States. Within the space of 10 months, Australian government policy moved from declared neutrality to supporting openly Bangladeshi independence, even if that meant attracting retaliation from Pakistan and the ire of America. Australian government aid was also increased on five occasions, again in response to public pressure. It is important to note that private aid (that is, donations from Australian citizens) far outstripped government assistance.

From the Australian perspective, the lessons of this event in history are two-fold: one, it provides a rare example of people leading the government, rather than the other way around. It is an inspiring tale of individuals taking action, which had ripple effects throughout Australian society. Two, it shows that Australians educated themselves on the events unfolding in Bangladesh, rather than blindly following the Cold War logic of the United States, which pitted capitalist Pakistan against socialist Bangladesh. This episode reveals Australians as deeply engaged with their Indian Ocean neighbours and committed to creating a just world free from persecution and oppression. I can only hope that Australians and Bangladeshis will remain good neighbours as they confront the complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

Rachel Stevens *is a Lecturer in History at the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, Australian Catholic University in Melbourne.*

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What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Women's Asia Cup
Sri Lanka vs Malaysia
Live from 2:30 pm
Bangladesh vs Thailand
Live from 7:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
England vs West Indies
Second Test, Day 5
Live from 4:00 pm

Sabina sees ties against improving Bhutan as opportunity

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team captain Sabina Khatun is looking forward to some much-needed change of environment as the team flies off to Thimphu today for two friendly matches against Bhutan.

The team will play the two matches at the Changlimithang Stadium in the capital on July 24 and 27, with the aim of some match-practice ahead of October's SAFF Women's Championship.

Bangladesh had last played two friendlies against Chinese Taipei at home in June, losing by 4-0 and 1-0 margins, under new coach Peter Butler. While Bhutan are a weaker side compared to Chinese Taipei, Sabina believes the two matches against the Himalayan nation can provide Bangladesh with some physical and mental boost before their SAFF title defence.

"We have been inside the BFF camp for a long time. So I believe this tour will freshen us up for future competitions," Sabina said prior to the team's departure, adding that Bhutan are no longer pushovers in women's football like they used to be.

The captain, however, believes the team will need to play stronger opponents in the next FIFA window in order to properly prepare for the regional tournament.

In the first match against Chinese Taipei, coach Butler played a 3-5-2 formation with a high line defence, something that the players were not used to. The 4-0 defeat in that game, which was the British coach's first match as the head coach of the women in red and green, he was forced to go back to a 4-4-2 formation in the following game.

The team gave a much better account of themselves in that game, and buoyed by that performance, Sabina believes they should have a convincing series against the Bhutanese women.

"We played defensively against Chinese Taipei, but I feel we should play more attacking football against Bhutan and play for victories," said Sabina, the all-time leading scorer for the country.

The team will miss the services of first-team players like Shaheda Akter Ripa, Shamsunnahar Jr. Afeida Khondokar and Tohura Khatun due to exams while striker Krishna Rani Sarkar is still recovering from injury.

Sabina, the poster girl of Bangladesh football, however, is not quite sure of Bangladesh's chances of defending the seven-nation SAFF Women's Championship as she feels, ''the departure of stalwarts like Sirat Jahan Swapna, Akhi Khatun and the injury to Krishna could be crucial to their chances in Kathmandu."

BCB HP look to avoid defeat against Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) High Performance (HP) unit are looking to avoid defeat, having reached 20 without loss at the end of day three after being set a target of 429 runs in their second innings by Pakistan Shaheens in the first four-day game at DXC Arena Ground in Darwin yesterday.

Having won the toss on Friday, BCB HP elected to bowl but bowlers failed to trouble Pakistan batters in both innings.

Pakistan put on 468 for three in the first innings, courtesy of Mohammad Hunaira's 218 and Kamran Golam's unbeaten 100. BCB HP pacer Ripon Mondol bagged two wickets in the innings.

The HP unit were bundled out for 266 with Pakistan's right-arm pacer Khurram Shahadat bagging six for 72. Opener Shadman Islam struck 88 in the first innings while Aich Molla and Shahadat Hossain Dipu contributed with 70 and 36, respectively.

Pakistan piled on further 226 runs for three wickets in the second innings to take a 428-run lead as Omar Bin Yousaf hit 100 not out. HP pacers Ripon, Mukidul Islam and Rejaur Rahman Raja bagged a wicket each.

On their multi-format tour of Australia, BCB HP are scheduled to play the second four-dayer from July 26 before taking on Northern Territory on August 1 in a three-nation bilateral one-day tournament, also involving Pakistan Shaheens.

India post their highest WT20I total in UAE rout

SPORTS REPORTER

India registered their highest ever total in Women's T20Is in a 78-run victory over the UAE in a Group A fixture of the ongoing ACC Women's Asia Cup at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Dambulla yesterday.

In a dominating batting display, India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh smashed blistering half-centuries after opener Shafali Verma hit the ground running with an 18-ball 37. Kaur scored a 47-ball 66 while Ghosh took only 29 deliveries for her 64 to propel India to 201 for five.

UAE's Kanisha Kumari scalped two wickets but had little say in keeping a lid on the proceedings along with the rest of the bowling line-up.

Kumari also managed to contribute with the bat as she managed a 32-ball 40, UAE's highest individual score, and Eosha Oza scored a steady 36-ball 38 but could never pose a serious challenge to India's daunting total.

India's Deepti Sharma was the pick of the bowlers with two scalps as the UAE were restricted to 123 for seven.

With a second victory in the bag, India are on the brink of the semifinals and will have the opportunity to progress as unbeaten group-winners when they take on Nepal in their final Group A fixture on Tuesday.

'Management must take responsibility for continuous batting failure'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's side slumped to a seven-wicket defeat against Sri Lanka in their ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup opener in Dambulla on Saturday, once again bringing the team's batting frailties to the fore.

Bangladesh batting collapsed early, three wickets going down for eight runs on what appeared to be a decent batting wicket. After they slumped further to 49 for five, some rearguard effort from skipper Nigar Sultana Joty and middle-order batter Shorna Akter saw Bangladesh reach 111 for 8.

Sri Lanka batters flourished in the flat batting track and reached the target in 17.1 overs.

It was another dismal effort from the Tigresses and Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who closely monitors women's cricket as its wing development manager, felt that the current state of the batting unit is unbelievable.

"It was unbelievable. The players who are playing now are either new or have returned after having received some chances before. I saw no dependability in the batting unit. I am doubtful if the management were able to make the players see how competent they are technically or how courageous they could be."

Joty struck an unbeaten 59-ball 48 to see Bangladesh cross the 100-run mark. A 14-ball 25 from Shorna got some wind in Bangladesh's sail and it further highlighted the ineffectiveness of the batting order.

Shorna, who used to bat higher up the order, has not been banked upon to take the game on as she was sent in at lower middle-order. Meanwhile veteran batter Rumana Ahmed was not picked despite the coach and the skipper saying that her experience could have had a big effect on the side.

"Shorna has been with the side for a while and I don't understand why we still haven't found a settled place for her in the side. Why is she batting at number eight?" Fahim asked.

"The team did not trust her. But if she can bat like that at number eight, she would definitely play a lot better further up the order. At one time, she was batting at five or six. Rabeya [Khan] has potential but why she isn't improving isn't clear either.

"Rumana not playing means that players better than her are playing. But that didn't seem to be the case. Rumana knows how to bat in the middle-order and she does not get scared of the task from what I have seen. I can understand Jahanara [Alam] not playing due to team combination but the decision on Rumana surprised me," he added.

Fahim feels that the team management needs to take responsibility for the constant batting failures.

"Not only those playing the game but those in charge of the batting unit and coached them must be held accountable too. We can't only blame the players. In the Premier League [WPDL], I saw many playing well but when they go to international matches, they can't perform. So I am not sure whether the players are being able to play their natural game," Fahim analyses.

"The responsibility to create the environment which brings out their natural game, lies with the management. You can't just tell a player to play as she wants. They have failed consistently and the management must take responsibility," he said.

Bangladesh play Thailand in their second Group B game but with questions over batting and the team's current morale, it remains to be seen whether the Tigresses can bounce back.

Marquez replaces Stimac as India coach

AFP, *New Delhi*

Manolo Marquez has been appointed the coach of the India men's football team, over a month after Igor Stimac's acrimonious exit.

Spaniard Marquez, 55, has been coaching league teams in India since 2020 and will take on the role for the national team "effective immediately", the All India Football Federation said in a statement on Saturday.

"We are delighted to welcome Mr Marquez to this important role," AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said, adding the federation was looking forward to working with the new coach "in the years ahead".

Marquez, who has more than two decades of international experience in football management, had been the coach of FC Goa since June last year and said he was "grateful" to AIFF for the opportunity as he considers India "my second home".

"I want to do my best to bring success to the millions of fans we have," he said.

Former West Ham and Croatia defender Stimac was sacked in June following India team's poor performance in World Cup qualifiers.

Stimac's five-year tenure ended controversially, with India's federation accusing him of using astrology to pick his teams.

Stimac, who played a World Cup semifinal for Croatia in 1998, became India coach in 2019 and they briefly broke into the top 100 of FIFA's world rankings for only the second time in nearly three decades.

Once called "a sleeping giant" of the sport by former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, India are currently ranked 124th.

'Bickering' and 'cold sweat' as Paris built its Games

AFP, *Paris*

The seven-year odyssey of the Paris Olympics should reach shore after a spectacular but hopefully serene opening cruise down the Seine on Friday at the end of a voyage that has survived rocky political moments.

Following the horse-trading to win the Games, came the French infighting over how to host them.

Paris was not sure it wanted to risk another rebuff after losing its 2005 bid for the 2012 Games to a London bid that the French believed inferior.

After the 2015 terror attacks on the French capital, Anne Hidalgo, elected Paris mayor in 2014, decided the city needed to act to rebound from the trauma.

Just after his election as president in 2017, Emmanuel Macron promoted France's case to the International Olympic Committee.

Since 2005, France had built a national velodrome and a canoe-kayak venue near Paris.

"By missing the Games, we built all the facilities," said a former elected official.

After Los Angeles agreed to go for the 2028 Games, France was awarded the 2024 Games in September 2017.

France would host a "sober" Games, using existing facilities and temporary arenas in postcard Paris: the Eiffel Tower, the Invalides, Place de la Concorde. After testing the water with a cautious toe, it added politically-charged swimming in the Seine.

Hidalgo, a Socialist, dredged up an old and unfulfilled promise by Gaullist Jacques Chirac, when he was mayor, that Parisians that would be able to swim in their river.

On July 17, ten days before the Games, Hidalgo took a dip in front of a battery of cameras.

Behind the scenes, the waters were sometimes murky as the national government, local elected officials, and the organizing committee (COJO) bickered.

Deep down, we are pains in the ass," said one former elected official to describe the relationship with COJO.

There was a race to complete all the work, with finishing touches still being applied days before the start.

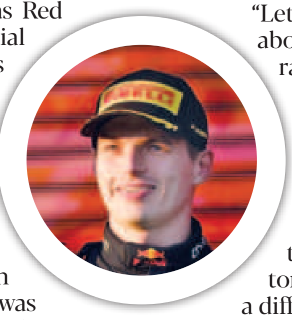
Nicolas Ferrand, in charge of the construction of the athletes' village, said he was in a "cold sweat" after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, fearing shortage of materials.

Whatever happens, "two weeks before everyone will say that 'it's a disaster' and in fact it's not," said a close friend of mayor Hidalgo.

Verstappen says he is no longer leader of the pack

AFP, *Hungary*

Max Verstappen conceded he is no longer leading the pack and feels as if he and Red Bull are "chasing" after he qualified third for the Hungarian Grand Prix behind McLaren duo Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri.



The three-time world champions and series leader has claimed only one pole position in six Grand Prix as Red Bull's grip on a substantial performance advantage has disintegrated and rival teams have drawn level or passed them.

Verstappen has taken 40 pole positions in his career, but only one-in Austria-since dominating the early season races by taking seven in succession before his spell was broken by Ferrari's Charles Leclerc at the Monaco Grand Prix.

"I love competition," he said on Saturday. "But I like being on top of the competition. At the moment, I feel like we are chasing and having a few more difficult weekends. I don't back out of a fight, but it's just a tricky situation I guess."

In spite of his declining fortunes in qualifying, he has managed-without tangible support from struggling teammate Sergio Perez-to remain a strong contender in races and starts Sunday's contest with an 84-point lead ahead of Norris in the drivers' title race.

However, Red Bull have begun to appear increasingly stretched and desperate in a bid to defend their titles as their performance superiority ebbs away, as the Dutchman admitted when he welcomed the team's major upgrade package this weekend.

"Let's see," he said, when asked about his prospects in the race. "The last few races, the McLaren especially has been really good in the race even compared to qualifying.

"Today was a lot colder than expected, I guess, with the clouds and the rain and tomorrow is going to be quite a different day so I just hope that will help us."

The changing weather conditions have influenced and affected recent results as Mercedes won in Austria and Britain, but struggling in the heat at the Hungaroring where Mc Laren shone on Saturday.

"I tried," said Verstappen. "The whole weekend we have been a little bit behind and I think that was also the case in qualifying. I tried to make it as close as possible, but unfortunately just not enough. "

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Normalcy to return in a short time

Foreign minister tells diplomats about protests

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday assured foreign diplomats that the situation arising out of students' quota reform protest will normalise within a short time.

At a briefing at state guesthouse Jamuna, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told them that the government regrets the disruption to daily life caused by the recent incidents of violence.

He said anti-liberation, anti-state elements, and religious extremists perpetrated the violence infiltrating into the peaceful student protest for quota reforms in government jobs.

"The government understands the anxiety and concerns that might have surfaced among the diplomatic community and the inconvenience caused by interruption to internet connectivity and temporary movement disruption," he said.

Some 60 foreign diplomats and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

People queue up in front of the DPDC sub-station office on Satmasjid Road yesterday to recharge their prepaid electricity meter cards. Consumers have been suffering for the last three days as they cannot recharge the cards due to the internet outage. PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

ONGOING VIOLENCE

UN human rights chief, EU, UK voice concern

STAR REPORT

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk has expressed deep concern over the ongoing violence in Bangladesh and called for accountability and dialogue.

"The attacks on student protesters are particularly shocking and unacceptable. There must be impartial, prompt and exhaustive investigations into these attacks, and those responsible held to account," he said in a statement on Friday.

He urged all sides to exercise restraint and called on the security forces to ensure that any use of force is strictly in line with the requirements of international human rights law.

"I am also very worried by reports about the deployment of paramilitary police units such as the Border Guard Bangladesh and the Rapid Action Battalion, which have long track records of violations," said the statement issued by the Office of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

8 trade bodies throw weight behind govt

Denounce recent acts of vandalism, arson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight major business and trade organisations, including the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), have expressed their support for the government's steps to fight the criminals and evil forces that destroyed state properties.

The other organisations are Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knit Manufactures and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and Saarc Chamber of Bangladesh.

In a joint press release issued yesterday, the organisations expressed concern over the losses caused to the economy over the last few days due to the violence.

They feared that if the violence continued, it will further harm the economy, industrialisation, and job creation.

"In this situation, the business community fully supports the government for its steps against the criminals who destroyed state properties."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

PREPAID GAS, ELECTRICITY

Users suffer amid internet outage

MD ABBAS *and* **ASIFUR RAHMAN**

Thousands of consumers across the nation are facing immense difficulties in getting their cards for prepaid electricity and gas meters recharged amid the ongoing internet outage and the curfew.

People were seen standing in queues for hours on end at power and gas supply offices yesterday. And after failing to recharge their cards, many returned to a home without power or gas or both.

> **"We used our neighbour's kitchen for cooking on Saturday. That night, we just had flattened rice. The next day, we got food from a restaurant. We can't go on like this."**
>
> **Anik Hasan** of Nakhalpara

Around 2.5 crore electricity consumers use prepaid meters across the country.

The owner of Rofrof Telecom, a shop on Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur that provides prepaid card recharge services, said there are two types of machines used for recharging prepaid electricity and gas meters. One requires internet and the other does not.

He said they are now having to resort to using only the top-up machine that does not require the internet.

Other vendors complained of having insufficient balance on their top-up machines as DPDC's designated agents could not provide them with credit for the past few days amid the extended bank holidays.

Abdullah Noman, managing director of the Dhaka Power Distribution Company, claimed that they were providing recharge services from 26 zonal offices since Friday.

"As a huge number of people are rushing to the offices, they're having to wait longer. Besides, we've increased our emergency balance by Tk 3,000 to Tk 5,000 based on usage, which should be enough for a good number of days for most people," he said.

"We hope the internet services will resume by this time and if not, we will take further necessary measures," he added.

Md Hasib of Tajmahal Road had Tk 120 left in his meter on Thursday morning. He was going to recharge his card that evening but the internet outage happened before he could do so.

"I started feeling sick after standing in line in front of DPDC's Lalmatia office for two and a half hours today [yesterday]. Luckily, I found a shop on my way home from where I could top-up my prepaid card."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Internet unlikely to be restored anytime soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday said they were working to restore the internet communication across the country but could not specify when the services would resume.

A number of communication infrastructures, including public and private data centres, came under attack during the violence surrounding the quota reform protests between Wednesday and Friday, said Zunaid Ahmad Palak, state minister for Posts, Telecommunications and ICT.

"Our engineers are now conducting repair works on the damaged equipment and internet services can resume after the repairs are done."

He made the remarks while speaking at a press briefing at the head office of Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

Palak apologised for the temporary disruption and said the authorities were trying their best to restore

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

150 arrested over recent violence

Several BNP, Jamaat leaders among them; Amir Khashru, Jamaat secy gen remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 150 people, including leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat, were arrested in Dhaka and Gazipur yesterday in connection with recent violence.

The BNP claimed that at least five party leaders were held in the capital.

Law enforcers arrested BNP executive committee member Abdus Salam, adviser to party chairperson Amanullah Aman, International Affairs Secretary Nasir Uddin, Publicity Affairs Secretary Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and Organising Secretary Kazi Sayedul Alam Babul, said BNP media cell member Shamsuddin Didar.

"Many other BNP leaders have been arrested across the country," he told The Daily Star.

Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday arrested 74 leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami from different areas of the capital, DB chief Harun-Or-Rashid told reporters.

He said more suspects for the violence will be arrested soon.

Gazipur police arrested 77 people from different areas of the district over attacking police stations and violence.

Nanda Lal, inspector (investigation) of Gacha Police Station, said police arrested 59 people from different areas in Gazipur over attacking the police station on Saturday.

Rafiul Karim, OC of Gazipur Sadar Police Station, said they held 13 people in connection with the recent violence.

Konabari Police Station OC AB Siddique said they held five over the recent violence.

In Savar, families of two BNP men alleged that police yesterday raided and ransacked their homes in Naybari and Chayabithi areas.

However, Dhaka Additional Superintendent of Police Abdullah Kafi denied the allegation.

Police in Pirojpur yesterday arrested Kaukhali upazila Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary GeneralNazrul Islam in Biraljhuri area around 3:30pm.

Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Kaukhali Police Station, said Nazrul was arrested in a sabotage case filed previously.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Chiefs of three services meet prime minister

UNB, *Dhaka*

Chiefs of three services met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday to discuss the current situation of the country.

The meeting started around 4:00pm at the Gono Bhaban.

The prime minister gave them necessary directives during the meeting, said PM's Deputy Press secretary KM Shakhawat Moon.

Chiefs of different law enforcement agencies and the PM's security adviser were also present.

The meeting took place at a time when the country is passing a tense time over violence centring the quota protests. Students of different universities and colleges have been demonstrating for around three weeks, demanding reforms to the quota system in government jobs.

Military vehicles manoeuvre inside Gaza as seen from Israel. Palestinians said a major Israeli operation was underway in the Saudi district of Rafah in the south. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Israel strikes Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon

64 more Palestinians killed in the Palestinian enclave; major Israeli operation underway in south of Rafah

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

The Middle East was reeling from deadly violence yesterday with Israel bombing Gaza, Lebanon and Yemen in quick succession in response to attacks from Iran-backed militant groups.

The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile from Yemen, as it pressed on with its offensive in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Dozens have been killed since Saturday across the Gaza Strip, the civil defence agency said, including in strikes on homes in the central Nuseirat and Bureij areas and displaced people near southern Khan Yunis.

Residents said a major operation was underway in the Saudi district of Rafah in the south, reporting heavy artillery and clashes.

The deadly strikes in Gaza came hours after Hezbollah and its ally Hamas said they fired at Israeli positions from south Lebanon, while Yemen's Houthi rebels vowed to respond to Israeli warplanes hitting a key port.

The fire left raging by the strikes on rebel-held Hodeida port "is seen across the Middle East and the significance is clear," Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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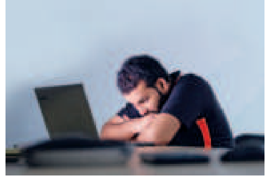
DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 23, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 180 | SRABAN 8, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 16, 1446 HIJRI | 12 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : TK 15.00

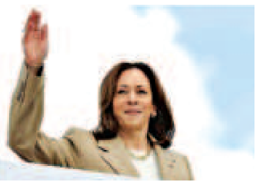
Preparations hampered as practice match postponed

P11



Freelancers in trouble amid internet blackout

P10



A historic decision, but can Harris beat Trump?

P9

Move away from blame game and confrontational power politics

P8

Won't spare BNP-Jamaat this time: PM

Businesses urge quick restoration of normalcy

STAR REPORT

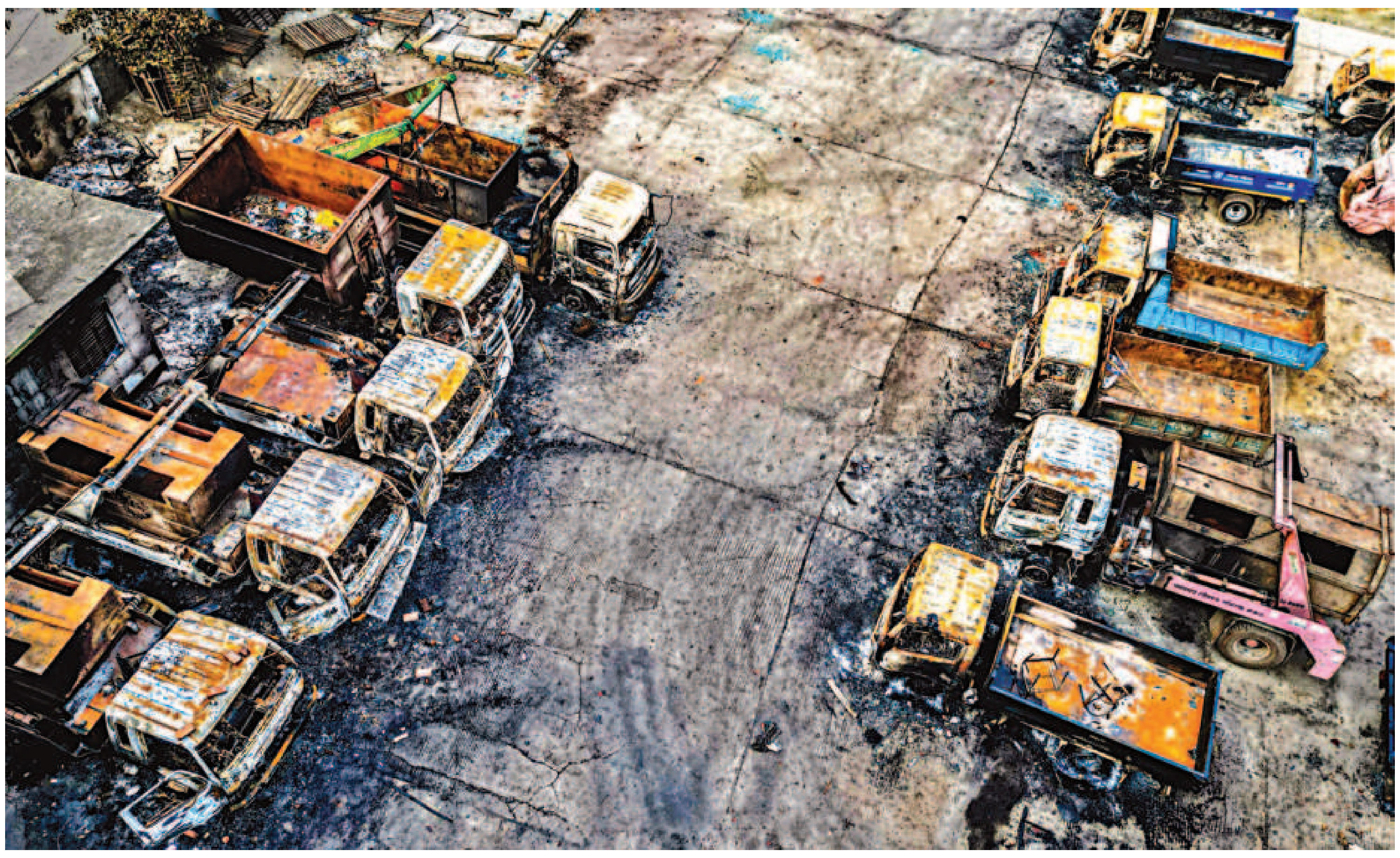
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned that the government will not spare the "BNP-Jamaat clique" this time so easily like in the past, reports UNB.

"They are trying to carry out terrorist activities during the curfew. Who are these people? They are not unknown faces. You saw BNP extended its support, and convicted criminal Tarique Rahman who tried to kill me through grenade attack gave the order [to carry out violence]," she said.

Branding Islami Chhatra Shibir as a militant organisation, she accused it of being involved in destruction in a planned way.

The PM made the remarks during a meeting with leading businesspeople at her office.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



The burnt wreckage of 30 garbage trucks and other vehicles parked at the DNCC zone-4 office in the capital's Mirpur-10. The vehicles and the office were torched on July 18 and since then, garbage has been piling up on many city streets.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

4hr break in curfew from 1pm in Dhaka, 4 other dists

General holiday today as well

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to continue the nationwide curfew until further notice and to give a four-hour break from 1:00pm today in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Sylhet.

In Barishal, the curfew will be relaxed from 11:00am to 5:00pm, and in Chattogram, the break will be from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

In other districts and metroplitan areas, magistrates and police commisioners will decide on the curfew breaks.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal made the announcements at a press conference at his Dhanmondi residence last night.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'Normalcy to return soon'

The army chief urges cooperation from all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Waker-Uz-Zaman

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday said normalcy will return to the country soon with everyone's help.

"We think the situation has started to improve within 48 hours of the deployment [of the armed forces]," he told journalists in front of Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex after inspecting various places across the city.

"If we can work together, we will be able to improve the situation further," he said thanking the media for their objective coverage.

"We want your cooperation," he added.

Noting that the destruction of public property is beyond description, General Waker said it could take a few more days to return to the normal way of life.

"I don't know how much longer it will take to recover from the losses. I cannot

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Quota reforms on PM's table for final nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The public administration ministry yesterday afternoon sent a proposal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for making 93 percent recruitments in the civil service on merit and the rest from quotas.

The ministry also recommended that the reformed quota system be applicable to recruitments for 9-20 grades in government, semi-government, and autonomous bodies, said Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain.

He told The Daily Star that the reformed quota system would be applicable to appointments that require recruitment tests.

Public administration ministry officials, however, said the PM would decide whether the new quota system would be applicable to recruitments for grade 9-20 or grade 1-20.

Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain last night aborted a press briefing twice, held a meeting with ministry officials, and then deferred announcement on circular until today.

The appointments in grade 9 to 20 are made through recruitment tests.

There are 20 grades in government jobs. The quota system was applicable to grade 13-20, following a 2018 government circular that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

6 more hurt in previous days' clashes die

At least 146 dead so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six more people, who were injured during the previous days' clashes between agitators and law enforcers, died yesterday, said police and hospital authorities.

Four died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital having suffered either bullet or shotgun pellet injuries, according to the hospital's death register and police.

Three of the four deceased were identified as Rasel, 20, Azizul Mia, and Razu, 36. The other person who died at DMCH was an unidentified person, aged around 35.

Besides, police received two bodies from the National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital and sent those to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsies, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

They were injured in clashes that broke out in Uttara and Gulshan areas in the previous few days, he said.

With yesterday's deaths, at least 146 lives have been lost since last Tuesday, when six people were killed in violence.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Parts of Dhaka left charred

MD ABBAS *and* SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The six burnt cars that lie at the entrance to the Department of Disaster Management at Mohakhali can hardly give a sense of the scale of destruction inside the 11-storey building.

In the parking space alone, there were 50 other private cars and microbuses -- all burnt to the skeleton. The acrid smell of the charred vehicles and other objects wafted through the air in the small space. A sub-station, an emergency response coordination centre and a resting room for Ansar members on the ground floor too were burnt down.

Lifts; transmitters used for making contact during natural calamities; television screens; computers; air conditioners -- nothing was spared.

The entire building, now enveloped in darkness, came under attack on July 18.

"Nothing was left untouched by the fire," said Mahbub Rahman, a DMD staffer who saw it all first-hand, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The organisers of the [quota reform] movement have vehemently denied any protesting student's involvement in the destruction.

He said around 200 miscreants, carrying sticks, suddenly appeared around 4:00pm that day and started throwing brick chunks at the building. Those at the front of the line, he said, appeared to be aged under 18.

"Within a minute, they started vandalising the cars, and poured petrol on them and set them on fire. Three on-duty Ansar members stationed there were helpless. The mindless destruction went on for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BUSINESS

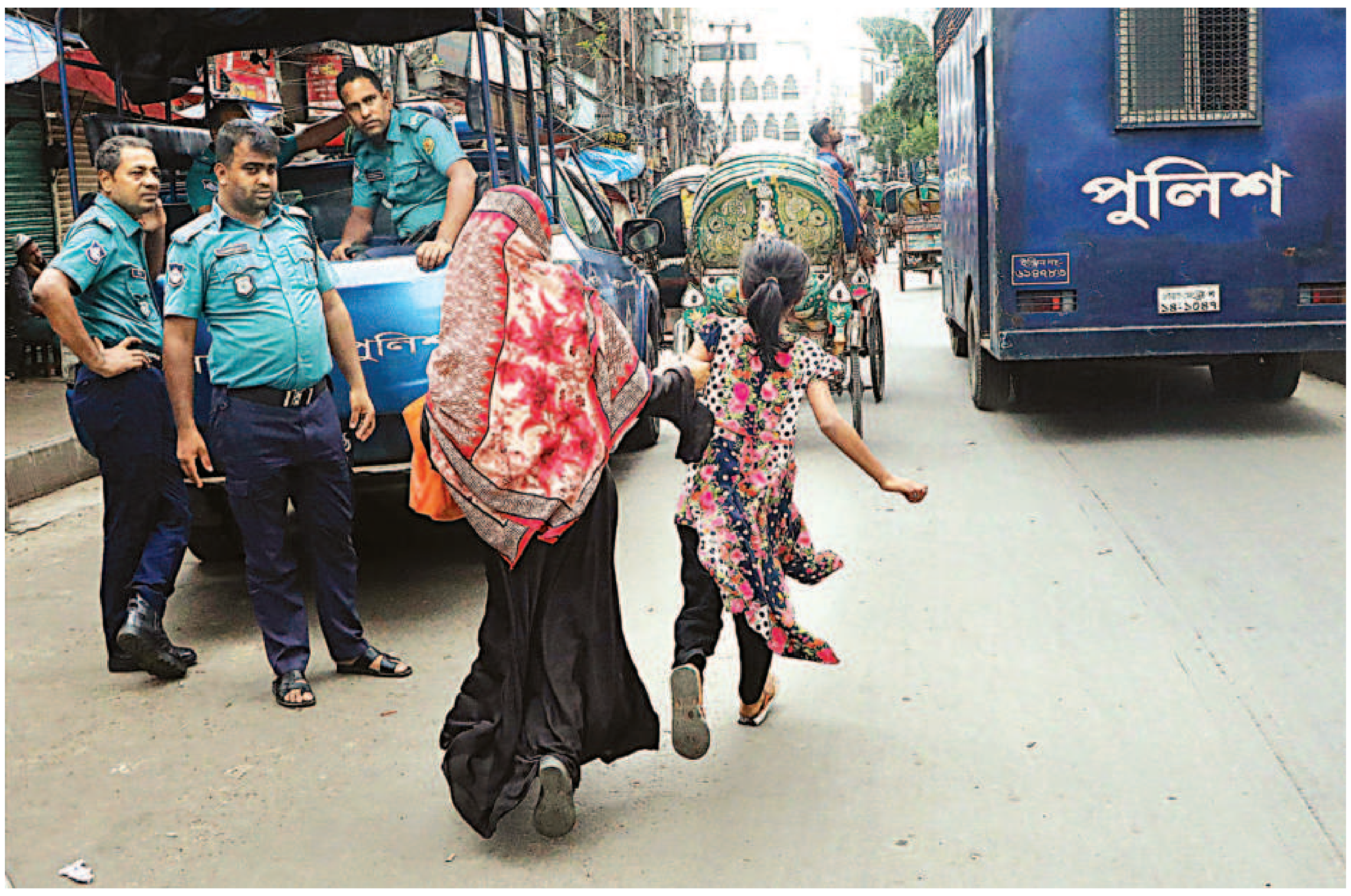
Pharma production disrupted

Production and distribution of medicines have been disrupted for the last four days due to violence centring the quota reform movement and the curfew imposed by the government, drug makers said yesterday.

Industry operators said they were unable to receive imported raw materials from Chattogram port and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as customs assessment and clearance was suspended for the ongoing internet blackout.

This may subsequently affect drug exports too, they added.

STORY ON PAGE 7



DON'T TAKE BABA AWAY! … Little Tayeba runs after the prison van that is carrying her father to jail, while her mother, Mona, tries to stop her. Mizan, a CNG driver, was arrested from their home in the capital's Jatrabari in a violence case on Sunday night. He was produced before the CMM court, which sent him to jail yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ONGOING VIOLENCE

More than 1,400 arrested in three days

Scores of BNP, Jamaat men among them; raids going on in Dhaka, elsewhere

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers have arrested 1,427 people across the country over the last three days in connection with the recent violence.

Of them, 692 were held in the capital alone and the rest in 16 districts.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has been conducting block raids since Sunday to arrest suspects, said DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman.

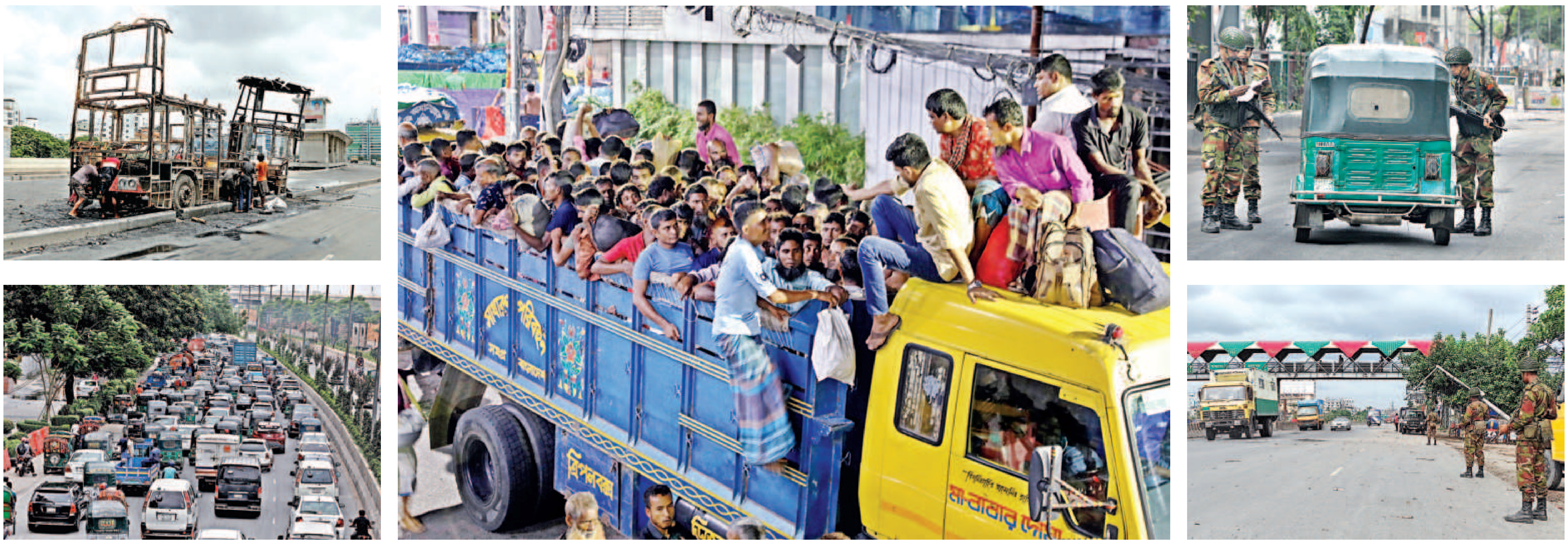
"We are looking for conspirators and criminals hiding in nearby places," the DMP chief told journalists while visiting the capital's Jatrabari yesterday.

Around 50 cases were filed with different police stations in the capital in the last few days accusing 20,000 unidentified people of resorting to violence, Habibur said.

Police said 735 people were arrested in 16 districts over the last three days. They were accused in 43 cases filed over violence.

Of them, 98 were held in Chattogram, 50 in Dhaka district, 35 in Sylhet, 10 in Patuakhali, 120 in Narayanganj, 42 in Kushtia, 33 in Barishal, 104 in Tangail, 59 in Khulna, 10 in Jamalpur, 33 in Mymensingh, nine in Pirojpur, 47

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Labourers board a Rangpur-bound truck in the capital's Karwan Bazar area around 1:00am yesterday. They are leaving Dhaka as they cannot earn due to the curfew. *Top left*, the wreckage of a burnt double-decker on the flyover for the BRT corridor in the capital's Abdullahpur. *Bottom left*, a gridlock on the Airport Road in the capital's Khilkhet during the curfew pause around 2:30pm yesterday. *Top right*, army personnel checking the documents of one of the passengers of a three-wheeler near the BTV Bhaban in Rampura. *Bottom right*, soldiers on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Narayanganj's Mouchak.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN, SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM**

6 more hurt in previous days' clashes die

FROM PAGE 1

On Thursday, at least 29 people died in clashes between agitators and law enforcers and ruling party activists.

Another victim injured in Wednesday's violence also died on Thursday. On Friday, at least 66 people were killed across the country. On Saturday, at least 25 people died including four who were injured in earlier clashes.

On Sunday, at least seven were killed in the clashes, and six others who were injured in previous days' clashes died.

The overall death toll from the violence centring quota demonstrations may rise as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved-ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

The forensic departments at DMCH, Suhrawardy Medical College and Mitford Hospital so far conducted autopsies on 84 bodies and they have nine pending.

Meanwhile, none was reported killed yesterday as no major clash was reported across the county on the third day of nationwide curfew.

The curfew was declared and armed forces were deployed on Friday night to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and property. On Saturday night, the government extended the curfew till further notice.

This correspondent visited different areas in Dhaka, including Mohammadpur, Rampura, Badda, and Mirpur, that had turned battlefields at the height of the violence. There was an uneasy calm yesterday.

Members of the armed forces, police, and Rab were seen patrolling different points.

In another development, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said three police personnel were killed and 1,117 others were injured in clashes centring the quota protests across the country.

Over 200 are stated to be in critical condition and three of them are in the intensive care unit, he told reporters after visiting injured police personnel at Central Police Hospital in Dhaka.

More than 1,400 arrested in three days

FROM PAGE 1

in Pabna, 46 in Madaripur, and 44 in Kishoreganj and Netrakona.

A total of 15 cases were filed with six police stations of Chattogram city and district in the last one week accusing 30,000 named and unnamed people of resorting to violence, said police.

According to court documents, 799 people, including several BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka over the last six days following their arrests.

They were arrested in 68 cases lodged with 34 police stations in the capital on charges of attacking law enforcers and damaging and torching state properties. Some of the cases were filed under the Special Powers Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

The court sent many of the arrestees to jail.

On Sunday, 297 people, including BNP chairperson's adviser Zahir Uddin Swapan, former convener of Dhaka city (north) BNP Amanullah Aman, International Affairs Secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Wasim, and Jamaat Central Working Council member Samiul Haque Faruqui, were produced before the CMM court in a case filed over torching and damaging properties at Setu Bhaban.

The court placed Zahir Uddin, Nasiruddin, and Samiul on five-day remand after the Detective Branch of DMP produced them before it seeking 10-day remand for each.

Earlier, top BNP leader Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury and Dhaka District BNP General Secretary Nipun Roy Chowdhury, Publicity Affairs Secretary Sultan Salahuddin Tuku, Dhaka city (north) BNP member secretary Aminul Haque, Organising Secretary Kazi Sayedul Alam Babul and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar were arrested in a case filed over planning and financing attacks, and vandalising the BTV Bhaban in the capital's Rampura.

They were produced before a Dhaka court on Sunday.

DMP CHIEF'S COMMENTS

DMP Commissioner Habibur yesterday questioned if it was possible for students to attack metro rail stations, BTRC data centre, BTV Bhaban, and Setu Bhaban.

He said criminals had rented homes in the capital to stay long ago with the intent to carry out destructive activities.

Habibur urged the city dwellers to provide police with information about the new tenants.

Parts of Dhaka left charred

FROM PAGE 1

around half an hour," Mahbub said.

Mohibur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, said over Tk 500 crore worth of damage was done in the arson attack at the DMD office.

"A five-member probe committee, headed by a DMD Director Abdullah Al Noman, was formed to ascertain the exact amount of damage. It was asked to submit a report within seven days," he told reporters yesterday.

Meanwhile, he said, a case was filed with Banani Police Station on July 20 over the attack.

Other establishments that came under such attacks were the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) office; Setu Bhaban; BTV centre; the Mohakhali and Banani toll plazas; BRTA Bhaban; the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Police (Traffic) in Badda; Badda Ansar camp; Mirpur Indoor Stadium; Mirpur-10 police box and footbridge; and the Matsya Bhaban.

The destruction between July 18 and 19 were carried out during the unrest centring the quota reform movement.

So far, at least 146 people were killed in the clashes across the country.

The organisers of the quota movement have vehemently denied any protesting student's involvement in the destruction.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League has been pointing fingers at BNP-Jamaat men.

Visiting the DGHS yesterday, these correspondents found 22 vehicles vandalised and 19 others completely burnt in front of the directorate's old building.

Pieces of the shattered glass walls, doors, and windows at the MIS (Management Information System) and Old DGHS buildings were strewn all over the place.

Rezaul Karim, an Ansar member and a witness, said, "Some 200-300 people, armed with sharp weapons, entered the building chanting "capture DGHS [Dhor Shastho Odhidaptar]" around 4:15pm [on July 19]. They threatened the on-duty five Ansar members, and vandalised the parked vehicles and structures."

The attackers were carrying red and black bags from where they pulled out petrol, which they poured on the vehicles to set them ablaze, he added.

"We informed our bosses and they called the national emergency helpline-999, seeking help but they too expressed their helplessness."

The toll plazas of elevated expressway at Mohakhali and Banani-2, were also set on fire at 5:00pm and burned till 8:20pm on July 18. The correspondents saw the charred iron structures with ashes all around.

Md Sakib, a security guard of the Mohakhali toll plaza, said, "Several hundred people carrying machetes and sticks first vandalised the toll plaza. Before leaving, two of them set those on fire using petrol."

The toll plaza authorities too called police, whose response, yet again, came in the negative.

Sakib, who witnessed it, added that the attackers did not look like students.

Fazlul Haque, security supervisor of Banani-2 toll plaza, gave a similar description.

In front of Setu Bhaban in Banani, these correspondents saw two burnt cars still lying on the road. The glass front of the building was shattered.

Inside, five motorcycles and 48 cars were burnt while the ground and first floors of the 12-storey building were vandalised and burnt at places.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader's room was vandalised, while computers, laptops, televisions and other valuables were looted from the building.

Nearby, BRTA headquarters and the Roads and Highway's executive engineer's Dhaka office were also vandalised and two cars torched.

Bangladesh Television centre in Rampura was also vandalised and set on fire.

BTV Director General Jahangir Hossain said the design section was fully gutted, while the administrative and studio rooms, along with the auditorium, were torched. Cameras and laptops were stolen.

"The attackers also looted the vintage cameras from the BTV museum," he said, adding that 18 vehicles, including a telecast car, were burnt and nine others were vandalised.

In Badda, attackers torched the zonal office of Assistant Commissioner of Police (traffic) and the Ansar Camp office, where at least seven burnt cars were found.

At the Mirpur-10 roundabout, the traffic police box and footbridge were set ablaze, rendering them unusable.

Visiting Badda, Rampura, Mirpur and Banani areas, these correspondents found that at least five burnt cars lying on roads. Streel materials from the road dividers, lampposts, and signboards were also found broken.

Quota reforms on PM's table

FROM PAGE 1

abolished quotas for ninth to 13th grade recruitments.

A BCS cadre joins the civil service in the ninth grade.

Earlier yesterday, the public administration ministry official told journalists that a briefing would be held at the minister's residence at 5:30pm.

Around 6:30pm, the minister told reporters that they sent the summery of the proposal to the prime minister and they would issue the circular once the PM approves it.

The minister reappeared before the journalists around 9:45pm and said they had the PM's approval. He sat down for the press briefing but immediately left to receive a phone call. Some TV channels then reported that the circular had been issued.

Meanwhile, some top officials of the ministry had a meeting with the minister.

Farhad again sat for the press briefing around 10:45pm and once again left to pick up a phone call.

Half an hour later, he said they would hold a press conference on the circular during a curfew break today.

The government move to issue a circular came a day after a Supreme Court verdict set 93 percent jobs in the civil service on merit. There will be five percent quota for children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas, one percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for people with disabilities and of third gender.

This major reform to the quota system was made in the wake of a massive student protest.

At least 146 people were killed and several thousand injured since Tuesday last week after law enforcers and ruling party men clashed with protesters in Dhaka and elsewhere.

The sheer scale of violence prompted the government to impose a curfew and deploy the armed forces across the country.

In October 2018, the government, through a hastily issued circular, scrapped the quota system for recruitments in grade 9-13 following students' demonstrations for quota reforms.

But the students did not want the quota system to be abolished, they rather wanted it reformed.

At that time, there was 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren, 10 percent for districts that are lagging behind, 10 percent for women, five percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for physically challenged people.

The government decision to abolish the quota system was challenged in the High Court by seven children of freedom fighters. In response, the HC on June 5 declared the government circular illegal, essentially reinstating the 56 percent quota in government jobs.

The HC verdict sparked students' protests on public university campuses. Students from private universities, colleges, and in some cases from schools joined in.

The protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 declined to stay the HC verdict.

After three days of nationwide demonstrations, the SC issued a status quo on the HC verdict and set August 7 for a hearing. The decision did little to pacify the protesters.

As protests escalated and the death toll climbed, the government requested the top court to hold an early hearing.

The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division of the SC, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, on Sunday issued the order regarding reforms of the quota system.

Won't spare BNP-Jamaat this time: PM

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to past destructive activities like arson attacks by "BNP-Jamaat clique," including those in 2013-14, she said her government had taken steps as per the law, according to the UNB report.

"We ensured punishment for many of them, but after getting out of jail, they are showing their old face again. This time we will not spare them so easily like in the past," she said.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said the country will return to normal very soon with gradual relaxation of the ongoing curfew, imposed on Friday night in the wake of a massive nationwide unrest centring quota reform protests.

"I want to improve the situation quickly, and we have already been able to calm down the situation. The curfew will be relaxed more in the coming days."

The PM said the government was forced to impose curfew to save the lives and properties of the people.

According to The Daily Star count, at least 146 people have been killed across the country since Tuesday, although the death toll may rise. Also, dozens of public and private establishments, including BTV centre and two Metro stations, and scores of vehicles were vandalised or burned or both.

"Many people wanted to tell we have deployed army against the students. I am doing politics and I have come here after doing student politics. We have tried till the last moment to resolve the matter politically. After that we have been forced to deploy the army."

Students are the most sensitive subjects, and the government has to look after the students and their security, she said adding that the government had tried to provide them security by the police and other law enforcement agencies.

When destructive activities began, the students said they were not involved with those activities. They also condemned those activities, she said.

"Only then did we deploy the army. We did not deploy the army before that," the PM said, adding that she is worried about the trade and commerce of the country in the wake of the situation.

"I have invited you here and we need your support and cooperation to run trade and commerce," she told the businesspeople.

Talking about a rumour that she had left the country, she said, "Sheikh Hasina never flees."

She said that when she sits with businesspeople, she does see who is in favour of BNP or who is in favour of Jamaat. "I know everyone. I never identify businesspeople based on their party affiliations, because I love my country."

Regarding business communities' demand for opening mills and factories, she said the government will allow those to open once it is convinced that there is no risk in a particular area.

"You can also reopen your factories and mills if you want at your own peril. If anything happens, you will be responsible for that," she said.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam, BGMEA President Abdul Mannan Kochi, Banks Association of Bangladesh (BAB) President Nazrul Islam Majumder, Shop Owners Association President Helal Uddin, BKMEA leader Mohammad Hatem, Basundhara Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, Syed Nasim Manzur of Apex, and Pran Group Chairman Ahsan Khan Chowdhury also spoke.

A documentary on the recent carnage was screened at the programme.

After a halt to businesses activities due to violence and curfew, the businesses yesterday demanded a quick restoration of the normal business environment and internet services as losses pile up.

Goods transport, production, sales, financial transactions in banks and even in the financial mobile services remain halted.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam led the business delegation to place their demand.

After the meeting, FBCCI Senior Vice-President Md Amin Helaly said they mainly placed three demands to the PM -- restoration of normalcy in business, restoration of the internet service and normalcy in transport of essential goods.

Garment factory and textile mill owners demanded that the government allow them to open their units.

Nearly 450 heads or representatives of trade bodies, business chambers, individual businessman from the capital, divisions and districts joined the 2-hour meeting from 3:00pm.

BGMEA President SM Mannan Kochi said they are counting losses every day as their factories remain closed.

Nasim Manzur of Apex wanted to know at the meeting if the intelligence agencies gave any alert about the unrest.

"If not, it should be investigated why they have failed," he said.

'Normalcy to return soon'

FROM PAGE 1

even estimate how much more public money will have to be spent [for the recovery]."

Asked what is his message for those involved in the subversive activities, he said, "I have one message for them: anyone may have grievances, but what's the point in destroying public property?"

Terming the destruction "incomprehensible", the army chief said those properties did not belong to any individual, but to the public. "We the people are the sufferers. I don't know what would be gained from this."

He said the armed forces have been deployed to protect public property and they are committed to do so.

Replying to a query, General Waker said supply of essentials through Jatrabari, which was blocked for four to five days, has resumed already.

"Aviation fuel delivery to Dhaka airport from Narayanganj [through Jatrabari] has started," he said, adding that it might take a little time to normalise the flow.

"We will have to restore confidence among people. We will have to reassure the drivers. I think it will happen in a couple of days."

Asked when the situation will become normal, he said, "Give us a little time. We have been here for only 48 hours. I believe, if all of us work together, we will achieve that goal soon."

He said the air force, navy and police are playing an important role alongside the army. Together with Rab, BGB, and Ansar forces, we are working to improve the situation, he added.

"I am sure we are heading towards the right direction," said the army chief.

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Restore internet, withdraw curfew

Demands platform of university teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University Teachers Network (UTN) yesterday called upon the authorities concerned to immediately withdraw the countrywide curfew and resume internet services to end public sufferings.

Due to the disruption, people are struggling to get essential services, the platform of public university teaches said in a statement.

The government imposed the nationwide curfew from early Saturday and internet services were also shutdown as scores were killed and many government establishments were torched and vandalised amid the clashes between law enforcers and protesters.

"Mindless killing of people has to be stopped now and those who have gone missing should be traced immediately," reads the statement.

The platform called for proper and non-partisan inquiry into the killings by a neutral probe body to be formed in line with different global human rights instruments.

It called upon everyone to not "dehumanise" the protesters and refrain from using any offensive words against

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BNP-Jamaat behind attacks, sabotage: Arafat

UNB, *Dhaka*

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad A Arafat yesterday said BNP-Jamaat activists carried out attacks across the country as part of their well-thought and pre-designed blueprint to disconnect the country from the world and stop development efforts.

"Look at their dress-up, approach and attitude," he said, adding that even some of the attackers were drugged.

He was highlighting the extent of the destruction caused to the government properties at a views-exchange meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the country's business leaders.

Arafat said BNP-Jamaat cadres are responsible for staging sabotage in the country while the attackers targeted general people and key establishments.

He said a solution is being found through discussion with students while curfew was imposed to check the attackers.

The government said the ill motive of the perpetrators was exposed when the coordinators of the quota protests made public statements denying any involvement in the indiscriminate violence, vandalism and arsons and called on all quarters not to take evil political advantage from their apolitical movement.

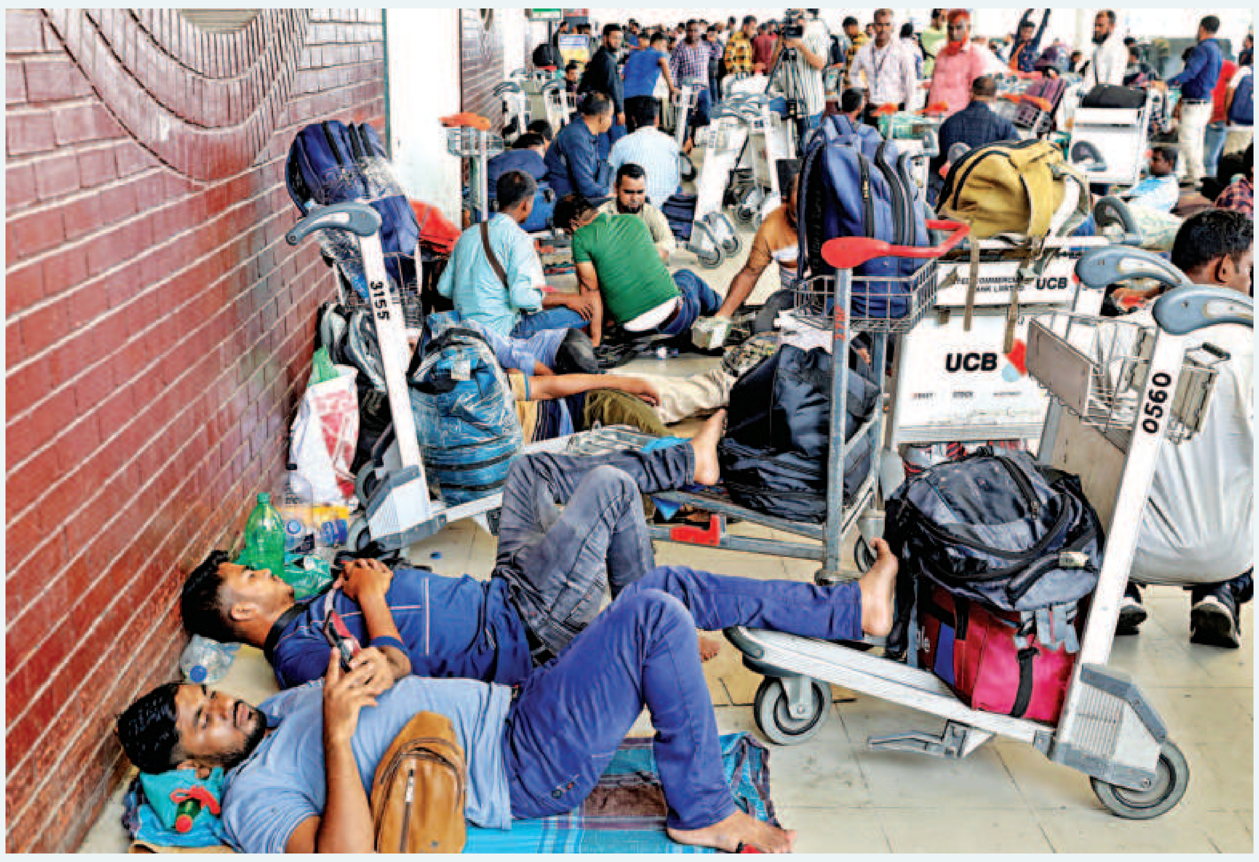


PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

SAUDI ARABIA-BOUND MIGRANTS

Stranded, they continue to suffer

RASHIDUL HASAN *and* **JAMIL MAHMUD**

Md Mahbul, a Saudi-bound migrant worker, was scheduled to fly for the KSA at 2:35am on July 19. However, his flight was cancelled due to technical issues caused by countrywide internet shutdown.

He was forced to stay overnight at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as there was no arrangement from the authorities concerned for accommodation and food for the stranded passengers.

Like Mahbul, several hundred migrant workers had to face massive troubles at the Dhaka Airport due to cancellation or delay of flights of different airlines including Saudia, Air Arabia and Emirates in the last three days since Friday.

Many of the passengers got stranded at the airport or had to stay outside the airport as international flights were either delayed or cancelled due to a technical glitch related to global Microsoft flight data and lack of passengers amid road blocks by demonstrators and the curfew.

Mahbul, who came to Dhaka from Pabna while suffering huge hassle on the road, said, "As there was unrest in different parts of the country, I didn't dare to go back to Pabna. Instead, I decided to stay in Dhaka as I was not sure when my flight will be rescheduled."

Saiful, another Saudi-bound migrant, whose flight also got cancelled on July 20, said, "We contribute to the country's economy with our hard-earned money. But the respective ministry or any other government authorities bothered little to look after us during this hard situation."

Sakibul Hasan of Bhola, another Saudi-bound migrant, said, "I have been at the airport for the last 16 hours to learn when my flight has been rescheduled. But neither the airlines authorities, nor airport authorities could give us any information."

"At the airport, I had to cross half a kilometre to get water and food while carrying my heavy luggage on my head, as there was no such arrangement at the waiting area outside the terminal," said a frustrated Sakibul.

Amid the sufferings of migrant workers, Aviation Minister Mohammad Faruk Khan on Saturday said for migrant workers, there were arrangements for food and accommodation at the Hajj Camp and the rest house of expatriates' welfare ministry at city's Ashkona.

But several migrant workers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

COUNTRYWIDE VIOLENCE

Power sector incurs loss of Tk 1,000cr, DNCC Tk 205cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power sector incurred a loss of at least Tk 1,000 crore during the violence centring the quota reform protest, said State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday.

He said the saboteurs were BNP-Jamaat men. The miscreants vandalised, looted or torched at least five power sub-stations in Dhaka and beyond.

Besides, Palli Bidyut offices in Narsingdi and Narayanganj were torched and vandalised.

When sufferings of people failing to recharge pre-paid meters without the internet were brought to his attention, he said the situation is improving.

"Zonal offices of the power distribution companies have been recharging the prepaid customers... They are working 24 hours... we have increased limit of the emergency balance," he added.

Meanwhile, Dhaka North City Corporation incurred a loss of around Tk 205 crore in the unrest centring the student protest on quota reform on Friday and Saturday.

The city corporation said one-fourth of DNCC vehicles tasked with garbage management had been set on fire.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam presented a primary estimation of their loss at a press conference held at Nagar Bhaban in Gulshan yesterday.

The mayor said most of the damages were reported from Mirpur-10, amounting to Tk 120 crore.

He said a footbridge at Mirpur-10 intersection, four garbage carrying compactors and 29 vehicles including 10 garbage carrying container careers had completely been burnt on Friday and Saturday.

DNCC faced a loss of around Tk 3.10 crore in zone-1 and zone-5, Tk 1.25 crore in zone-3 and around Tk 7 lakh in zone-6.

Besides, LED lights, road medians and similar structures were vandalised in areas under DNCC, amounting to Tk 65 crore in damages.

Also, a storm sewage pump was damaged in Rampura, disabling DNCC to pump out additional water from Hatirjheel now, the mayor said.

3RD DAY OF CURFEW IN DHAKA

Free from violence but far from normal

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

After nearly a week of chaos, no incidence of violence or clash was reported inside Dhaka on the third day of curfew. People were seen heading to kitchen markets, grocery stores and paying utility bills.

Nasrin Akhter, a resident in Dhanmondi area, moved out to dump the household garbage into a garbage can located a few hundred metres away from her home.

"Cleaners and garbage collectors from the city corporation could not come to our building for the last five days due to clashes. Many of these wastes started to rot and stink. So, I came out myself to dump it into the local garbage container."

Although there was no violence on the streets, the situation was still far from normal. Most of the shops, shopping malls, restaurants, public places and offices were closed throughout the city. Public transport was absent like the previous days. App-based ride sharing services were closed as the internet shutdown is still in effect.

Very few private vehicles were plying the roads and people were using mostly rickshaws and battery-powered auto-rickshaws to move about. They said rickshaw-pullers were asking for exorbitant fares taking advantage of the situation.

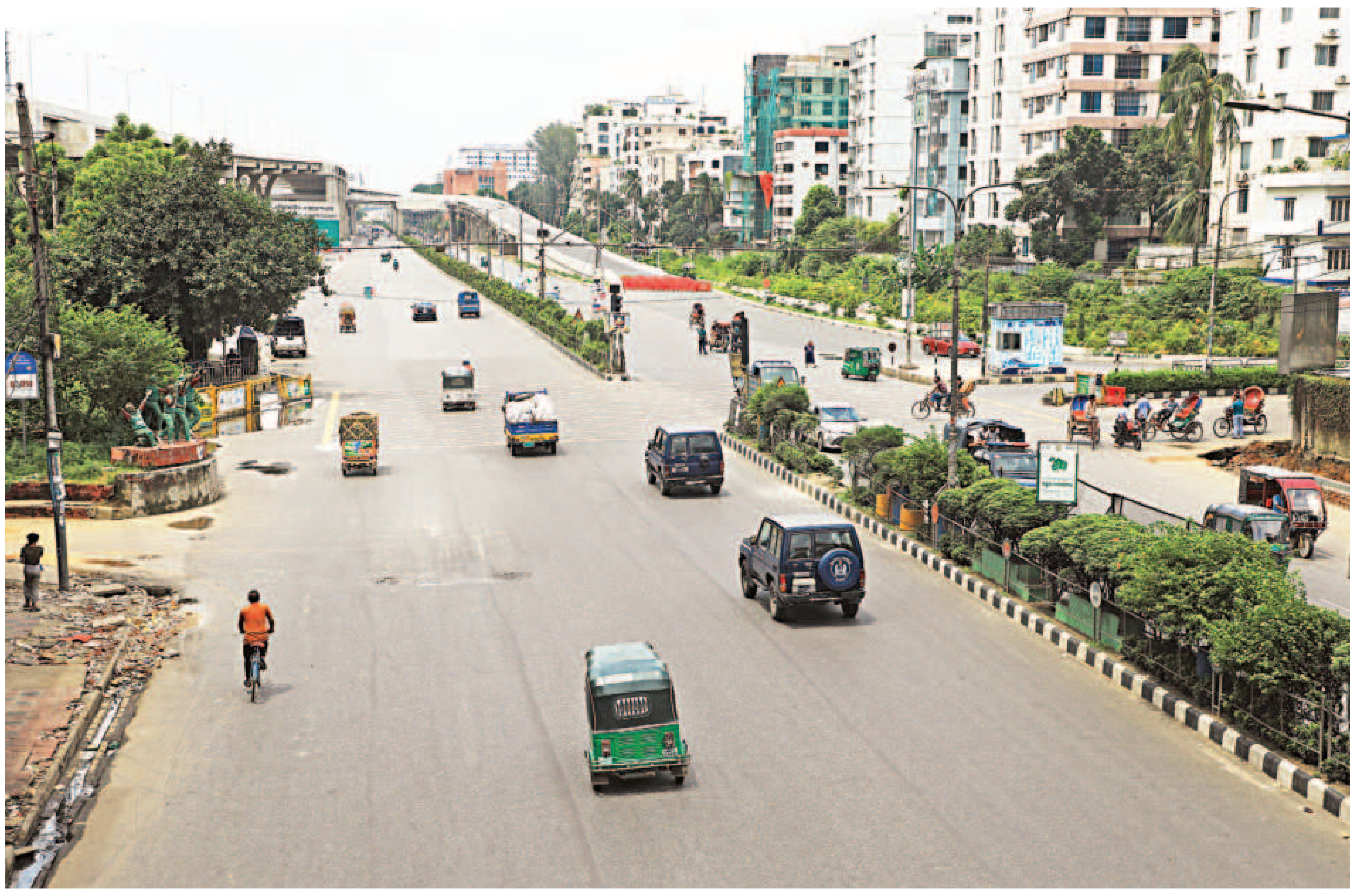
Naimur Rahman was trying to go to Farmgate from Mohammadpur but failed to find any rickshaw. He said, "The usual fare should be Tk 80. But, rickshaw-pullers are asking Tk 140-150."

Although there was no violence on the street yesterday, people are now in fear of getting arrested as news of mass arrests made rounds on mainstream media.

> **Cleaners and garbage collectors could not come to our building for the last five days due to clashes. All these wastes started to rot and stink.**
>
> **NASRIN AKHTER**
> A resident of Dhanmondi

Sadequr Rahman, a delivery man of an app-based company, said, "There are thousands of youth like me who are now sitting idle at home without any work due to curfew and internet shutdown. We have no income for a week and now we are passing days with extreme fear and anxiety as we are getting news of mass arrests."

Suraiya Akhter, a sales worker of a shopping mall in Farmgate, said, "The government should bring the country back into normalcy as soon as possible."



A relatively empty road in the capital's Banani yesterday. On the third day of the ongoing curfew, Dhaka saw more traffic as people head out to restock essentials.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

BOALKHALI, PATIYA

People suffer for power outage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Residents of Boalkhali and Patiya upazilas in Chattogram suffered a lot due to prolonged power outages following technical glitch in the supply line of Palli Bidyut yesterday.

Farzana Akter from Boalkhali said power went out at around 6:00am and came around 11:30am; later, it went out again around noon and didn't come till 6:00pm.

"We are suffering in the sweltering heat," she said, adding, "We cannot recharge our mobile phone sets and cannot communicate with others over phone for emergency purposes."

Mizanur Rahman, deputy general manager of Chattogram Palli Bidyut Samity-1, said as the technical glitch occurred in the breaker of supply grid, power outage started in those areas.

"A total of 72,000 clients are there in the zone under Palli Bidyut," he added.

Three children drown in ponds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Three children drowned in ponds in Jamalpur yesterday afternoon.

The incident took place at Kalkihara and Malirchor villages in Bokshiganj upazila, police quoted locals as saying.

At Kalkihara, Shoeb Hassan, 6, son of Gofur Badsha; and Robiul Miah, 8, son of Ayob Mia, drowned while they were bathing in a pond near their houses around 5:00pm, said Abdul Ahad Khan, officer-in-charge of Bokshiganj Police Station.

Meanwhile, Safa Aktar, 4, daughter of Raju Miah from Malirchor village, drowned in a pond, said the OC. The bodies were handed over to the families.

This roll of cable was burnt during the violence on July 18. DPDC was installing underground wires in Basila area of Mohammadpur, when miscreants set it on fire. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

NATIONWIDE CURFEW

7,500 tourists stuck in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 7,500 tourists have been trapped in Cox's Bazar amid the ongoing nationwide curfew.

Being anxious to return home, they are collecting curfew passes from deputy commissioner's office, so that they can have a safe passage.

They are also facing massive financial troubles due to the online banking system not working because of the nationwide internet shutdown.

Mohammad Yousuf, a tourist from Dhaka's Elephant Road, said he and his friend came to Cox's Bazar on July 17 for two days.

However, due to the curfew, they got trapped here, and they were already out of cash as they could not withdraw any money through mobile banking services, he said.

"We had to get our meals and stay at the hotel on credit. Later, we managed to pay our bills after we could withdraw some money from a distant ATM booth. Since we have been staying at the hotel due to an unfortunate circumstance, it would be nice if the hotel gave us a discount, but they didn't give any," said Yousuf.

Another tourist Morium said she came on a two-night trip with 50 of her colleagues four days ago, but still they have not been able to leave Cox's Bazar due to curfew.

The extended stay is hurting them financially, she added.

Masud Rana, an executive magistrate, said the district administration is arranging buses with regular fare for the trapped tourists to leave Cox's Bazar.

"Around 50 buses will leave Cox's Bazar tomorrow [today] morning with the trapped tourists," he added.

Around 4,000 curfew passes were issued to the tourists on Sunday and many others were being issued passes yesterday, Masud Rana told The Daily Star in the evening.

According to the District Tourist Police, around 7,500 tourists are trapped in the Cox's Bazar, he added.

Meanwhile, tourists complained that they are having to pay higher fares for both buses and airlines.

Sirajul Islam, a tourist from Narayanganj's Araihazar, said the same sleeper coach that carried them to Cox's Bazar for Tk 1,100 per seat, is now asking Tk 2,500 for the return ticket.

Iftekhar Mahmud, a businessman from Dhanmondi, said airline companies are asking Tk 8,000 to Tk 11,000 for return tickets, while the fare was Tk 5,500 when he was getting tickets to come to Cox's Bazar.

Tourists gathering at Cox's Bazar DC office for curfew passes and bus tickets yesterday.

PHOTO: **STAR**

'Reducing quota for indigenous people not logical'

Says Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reducing the quota for people from indigenous communities in government jobs from five percent to one percent is not logical, said Alik Mree, convenor of the Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad.

"Now it would be impossible for indigenous community members to attain higher growth through sustainable and inclusive development as pledged in the SDGs," he said in a text message.

Besides, the pledge to change the quality of living standard by reducing poverty and inequality among the marginalised communities will be also not viable, he also said.

The quota reduction will keep the indigenous communities lagging behind, which will in turn impede the building of "Smart Bangladesh" and attaining the SDGs, he remarked.

Mree urged the Supreme Court and the government to restore the five percent quota for indigenous communities in government jobs.

Pahari Chhatra Parishad in a statement yesterday demanded that the government restore the five percent quota for indigenous communities.

Surrender or face stern action

IGP warns convicts who fled Narsingdi jail; 64 out of 826 arrested so far

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun yesterday said police will take stern action against the convicts who fled from Narsingdi District Jail on July 19 unless they surrender immediately.

"We urge all the convicts, who have fled, to surrender. Otherwise, we will take stern action against them," he said.

Police have so far arrested 64 out of the total 826 convicts who fled from the jail, and recovered 21 of the 85 arms that were looted on the same day, the IGP said while briefing reporters in front of the Narsingdi jail premises yesterday.

The IGP also announced a reward of Tk 50,000 to anyone who will provide information or help to recover the looted arms.

Narsingdi Deputy Commissioner Badiul Alam and Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman were present among other senior officials at the briefing.

Contacted, Tanvir Hasan, officer-in-charge of Narsingdi Sadar Police Station, yesterday said few convicts have already surrendered to them. He, however, did not mention the number of convicts who surrendered.

On July 19, a total of 826 convicts fled from the jail, while 85 arms and 9,000 bullets were looted.

Meanwhile, two separate committees have been formed to investigate the incident.

Restore internet, withdraw

FROM PAGE 3

them, urging the authorities to publish identities of the murdered and injured ones.

The platform said the government has to withdraw "false and fabricated" cases against student protesters and other innocent people.

Besides, safety of all student coordinators has to be ensured, it added.

It said those who were injured should be provided with adequate treatment.

The platform condemned atrocities allegedly committed by police and other law enforcement agency members and demanded that the power of those who gave the orders should be curtailed and that they should be brought under an accountability framework.

It said before resuming classes across the country, an education-friendly environment has to be ensured.

It said a "delayed" but recent verdict from the country's apex court came as a positive development in regards to fulfilling demands of the students, however, their eight-point demand was still awaiting implementation.

Meanwhile, Gonoforum, in a statement, demanded prosecution of those who killed protesting students, a cease to the ongoing mass arrests and harassment, release of all political prisoners and re-opening of all educational institutions.

Social Resistance Committee, a platform of 66 women, human rights and development organisations, expressed deep concern over the latest verdict of the Appellate Division that eliminated the female quota.

"The SDG-5 clearly mentions equality of men and women and female quota is necessary to achieve that goal," said Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem, on behalf of the platform, in a statement.

Meanwhile, 25 female rights activists and teachers termed the Supreme Court's verdict on quota system "confusing, illogical and a farce", and demanded its withdrawal.

In a joint statement, they said the SC verdict was "a trap to confuse the ongoing just protests against the fascist government".

"The government has tried to blackout the information of killing at least 174 general people with internet shutdown and by imposing curfew," reads the statement sent through a text message.

Signatories of the statement include: Bangladesh Nari Mukti Kendra president Sima Dutta; rights activist Rehnuma Ahmed; Dhaka University teacher Samina Lutfa Nitra; Bangladesh Hill Women Federation president Niti Chakma; artist Sayan; and teacher Monira Sharmin.

Stranded, they continue

FROM PAGE 3

yesterday claimed the situation at Ashkona Hajj Camp and the rest house is not good at all.

Besides, the roads that lead to the two places are unable to be used as those are under repair, they said.

While visiting Dhaka airport yesterday afternoon, hundreds of exhausted migrant workers were found waiting for 8-12 hours for their flights.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC Migration Programme, said many migrant workers, both outbound and returnees, were affected due to the curfew and internet shutdown.

"There was fear and uncertainty among the migrants to catch their flights on time amid the situation. As a result, many reached the capital from different districts a day before and later found it difficult to spend the night," Shariful said.

BRAC has provided support to many migrants in distress, he said.

Hamidur Rahman, director general of Wage Earners' Welfare Board, said currently they provide accommodation facilities to both outbound and returnee migrants at the Bangabandhu Wage Earners' Centre at Khilkhet, where 50 people can reside at a time.

If required, migrants can use the facility as a short-time shelter, he said, adding that they also have ambulance service at the airport. Meanwhile, sources at HSIA said at least 12 international flights were cancelled and many others delayed in the last four days.

Internet

FROM PAGE 7

The CPA is also trying to adopt manual documentations as a part of its efforts to keep the port running, he said.

Transport of import and export-laden containers between the port and the private ICDs, however, improved a bit yesterday morning.

Four vessels departed from the port yesterday and they took almost all of the containers for which bookings had been placed on them.

Far East Group, a Gazipur-based garment factory, imported three containers of cotton and chemicals from China and India which were unloaded from a ship on July 17.

The assessment and payment of duties against these consignments were completed by July 19 but they could not be delivered until yesterday, said Kamruzzaman Sagar, proprietor of ABS Corporation, the clearing and forwarding agent.

Because of the internet blackout, the three containers could neither be traced nor be run through a final verification by customs in the last three days, he said, adding that it was difficult to carry out these activities manually.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 23

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAT	4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

The People's Republic of Bangladesh
National Board of Revenue
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1:
National Single Window Implementation and Strengthening Customs Modernization
IDEB Bhaban (10th floor),160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka

Memo no. 1(192) Active items/ Hardware /NSW/2024/2142. Date: 22.07.24

Subject: Addendum to bidding document for supply and Installation of Hardware and Infrastructure (network, communication, cabling etc.) and standard software for NSW solution; other network, communication equipment, structure, Hardware and cabling: Server & Storage and Network & Security components for NSW Server Room & DR. Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1: Request for Bids (RFB) No. NBR-GD2A.1.

Addendum No. 2

This is for the information of all Bidders concerned that the following amendments have been mad for the procurement mentioned in the subject above;

Ref	Existing Entry	Amended entry
Sl No. of 6, SPN ITP-23.1& 26.1	The deadline for Bid Submission is: Date: July 23,2024, Time :14.00 hours. Date & Time for Bid Opening July 23,2024, Time: 14:30 hours	The deadline for Bid Submission is: Date: August 13,2024, Time :14.00 hours. Date & Time for Bid Opening August 13, 2024, Time :14:30 hours

All the terms and conditions of bidding Documents (RFB) NBR-GD2A. 1 shall remain unchanged. This Addendum No. 2 shall be considered an integral part of the Bidding Documents and shall be binding on all Bidders who have obtained or will obtain the Bidding Documents from the Purchaser.

(Abul Bashar Md Shafiqur Rahman)
Project Director
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1:
National Single Window Implementation and strengthening Customs Modernization
Email: pdnsw.nbr@gmail.com

GD-64

Hall owners face huge losses, look to recoup with 'Toofan'

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

It seemed like silver-screen cinema was finally back, when 'Toofan' started breaking all records for a Bangladeshi film. However, the unforeseen situation has seemed to put a halt to that.

ZAHID AKBAR

Irrespective of whether it was on single-screens or multiplexes, Shakib Khan starrer ***Toofan*** was doing incredible business in cinema halls after its release this Eid-ul-Azha. The Raihan Rafi directorial was expected to run for the foreseeable future before the quota reform protests started. According to the producers, the film earned around Tk 25 crores, a rare feat for a Bangladeshi film. Even though some people did go see the film at the start of the movement, cinema halls had to close down after nationwide violence started, claiming the lives of many involved.

In the past few years, films like ***Hawa, Poran** and **Priyotoma*** showed that there is still promise for Bangladeshi films, and if done right, it can pull people to cinema halls despite the dominance of OTT.

Hall owners now are facing considerable losses during the current curfew, as noted by Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, senior manager at Star Cineplex, the country's biggest multiplex chain. "We were running 46 shows of ***Toofan,*** it was doing really well for us," he said. "However, we had to close down. It is unfortunate, as no film in recent memory made as many records as this film – and now, we are facing huge losses which will be hard to recoup if we have to keep the halls closed for a few more days."

Iftekhar Uddin Nawshad, owner of Madhumita Cinema, is distraught at the situation. "After a huge gap, we started seeing good business with ***Toofan*** – the timing of closure could not have been more unfortunate. I do understand that this is a national emergency, but so many lives depend on our business as well. What I can tell you is after the situation is better, we will run the film again to attract people to our halls.

Shyamoli Cinema's Ahsanullah also echoed the same sentiment, "We had to keep our hall closed from July 19 onwards, was it even possible to run films in this situation? Thanks to Shakib Khan, we finally started seeing profitable days, but that has been upended by the nationwide violence. We hope to keep ***Toofan*** running after the situation gets better."

'Sitting at home, hoping for normalcy'

Chanchal Chowdhury was in the USA when the quota reform movement started in Bangladesh. However, the actor had no idea that it would lead to so much violence. He is now at home, hoping for the situation to return to normal. "I am shocked at the amount of violence that has ensued, must there have been bloodshed?", he said. "I am now obeying the rules of the curfew, and I can only hope that we can once again see normalcy in our beloved country."

Chirkutt's Dhaka return delayed amidst protests

Known as Bangladesh's 'international' act, Chirkutt was on its Canada tour for the past month, and was supposed to return to Dhaka on July 20. However, the band's flight has been delayed, amidst continued violence. "We are horrified to learn about the situation in our beloved country," said Pavel, the band's drummer. "We are all praying that we can all get through this together." The band hopes to return as soon as it is safer to land in Dhaka.

PHOTO: **SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED**

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Trump, Vance heap scorn on Biden, Harris

AFP, *Washington*

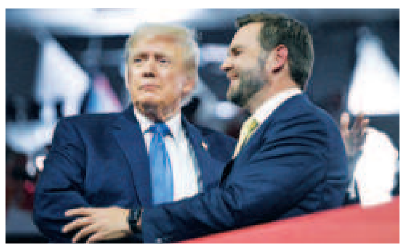
Donald Trump and running mate J D Vance on Sunday slammed the record of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, as the incumbent bowed out of the White House race and sought to pass the torch to his number two.

Biden's momentous decision to ditch his reelection bid was met with quick scorn from Republican presidential candidate Trump, in a series of posts on his Truth Social platform.

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve - And never was!" Trump wrote. "Whoever the Left puts up now will just be more of the same."

Then his campaign team piled on, lashing into the vice president after Biden endorsed her to take his place atop the Democratic Party's presidential ticket, saying she would be "even worse" than the outgoing leader.

"Harris will be even worse for the people of our nation than Joe Biden. Harris has been the Enabler in Chief for Crooked Joe this entire time. They own each other's records, and there is no distance between the two," the campaign said in a statement.



Later, it was Vance's turn to heap scorn on Biden and Harris.

"Joe Biden has been the worst President in my lifetime and Kamala Harris has been right there with him every step of the way," the Republican senator wrote on X, saying Harris had "lied for nearly four years about Biden's mental capacity."

"President Trump and I are ready to save America, whoever's at the top of the Democrat ticket. Bring it on," Vance concluded.

The Republican convention last week has put the party unity on display, in contrast to the divisions roiling Democrats. Trump's former top rivals for the nomination, former UN envoy Nikki Haley and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, offered strong endorsements of his candidacy despite their past criticisms.

Palestinians walk past destroyed buildings to refill containers with water from a nearby supply point in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE

What happens after Biden exit?

AFP, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden's decision Sunday to withdraw from the presidential race at such a late date -- just over 100 days until the November 5 election -- is unprecedented in modern US electoral history.

In the coming days, Biden's fellow Democrats "will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November," chairman Jaime Harrison said in a statement.

Here's a look at how replacing the 81-year-old could work.

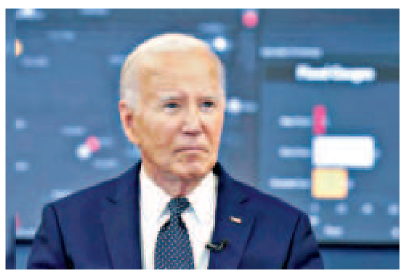
CHAOTIC CONVENTION?

To designate a formal nominee, delegates chosen from all 50 states, the US capital and overseas territories attend their party's summer nominating convention to officially anoint a candidate.

Biden overwhelmingly won the primary votes, and the party's roughly 3,900 delegates heading to the convention -- scheduled to begin August 19 in Chicago -- are pledged to back him.

Party leaders had previously planned to formally nominate Biden via a virtual roll call ahead of the convention, due to potential legal issues regarding Ohio.

With Biden exiting, it is unclear if or when that early meeting will occur, but naming his replacement will ultimately fall to the delegates.



"Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people," Harrison said, adding that the "process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the Party."

The last-minute change could bring US politics back to the old days, when party bosses jostled to pick a nominee through deal-making in smoke-filled back rooms and endless rounds of voting.

On March 31, 1968, then-president Lyndon Johnson made the shock announcement in the middle of the Vietnam War that he would not seek reelection.

The move -- though announced far earlier in the campaign than Biden's -- turned that year's convention, also in Chicago, into a political crisis, with protesters in the streets and left-leaning delegates angry at the pro-war stance of party-picked candidate Hubert Humphrey. Following that debacle, states more widely embraced primary process and conventions have become well-oiled affairs whose outcomes are effectively known in advance.

WHO MIGHT STEP IN?

A natural -- but not automatic -- pick to take Biden's place would be Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Biden quickly endorsed Sunday -- and who vowed to pick up the baton.

Otherwise, any of a number of strong Democratic politicians -- Governors Gavin Newsom of California, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania have been mentioned -- might be called on.

Ukrainian drone strikes spark fire at Russian oil refinery

AFP, *Kyiv*

A barrage of Ukrainian drones sparked a blaze overnight at an oil refinery and separately killed one person in southern Russia, officials in Russia and Ukraine said yesterday.

Kyiv and Moscow have intensified fatal cross-border missile and drone attacks over recent months with both sides primarily targeting energy infrastructure.

Authorities in the Russian Black Sea town of Tuapse in the Krasnodar region said debris from one downed drone sparked a fire at an oil refinery.

The governor of Russia's southern Belgorod region meanwhile said one person driving a tractor was killed by a Ukrainian drone and his wife had been injured. A source in the Ukrainian defence sector said drones linked to the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine were behind the oil refinery attack and that the facility was operated by Russian state energy giant Rosneft.

Taiwan remodels war games in the face of China's threats

AFP, *Taipei*

Taiwan launched annual war games yesterday aiming to more realistically simulate an attack from China, dropping drills deemed to be out-of-touch with the growing threat of conflict.

Self-ruled Taiwan's military has discarded exercises "that were more for demonstration purposes", such as live-fire drills laid on for the media on the main island, said new Defence Minister Wellington Koo.

Officials have said such drills will now be held on Taiwan's outlying islands, where Chinese vessels and warplanes have edged closer in recent months, and that troops would now take part in "impromptu" exercises.

The changes come as Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has increased its military presence in skies and waters around the island. "Nowadays the situation is more threatened than before, so this type of public relations exercise is useless," Ou Sifu of Taiwan's Institute of National Defense and Security Research said of previous drills.

IT, BPO firms

FROM PAGE 12

introduced so that the export-oriented firms can use internet to serve their global clients.

Apart from the daily financial losses of Tk 70-80 crore due to the internet outage, the country will face a long-term image crisis in the international market, said Rashad Kabir, managing director of software firm Dream71.

"The international buyers won't consider Bangladesh as an outsourcing destination in the future because commitment and timely delivery are most important for them."

There is a high chance that these buyers will shift to India, Vietnam, the Philippines and other competitor countries, according to Rashad.

3 bodies

FROM PAGE 12

bodies and informed police.

Police sent the bodies to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

The victims were Selim Mondol, 29, Abdul Salam, 27, of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila, and Md Sohel, 21, Sylhet's Beanibazar upazila.

Golam Mostofa Russel, superintendent of Narayanganj police, said the Shimrail highway police camp was on the 7th floor of the building. On July 20, some agitators threw stones at the camp and police opened fire.

At one point, the agitators set the building on fire. The trapped police personnel went to the roof and were rescued by a helicopter.

Judicial body

FROM PAGE 12

on July 16 and identify the persons responsible for the deaths and recent incidents of violence.

The commission was asked to submit its probe report to the government within 30 working days.

Meanwhile, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Sunday said it expects the commission to unearth the reasons behind the death of each and every student and the government to take necessary legal steps against those responsible as per the recommendations of the commission.

Biden exit offers scope, pitfalls for Democrats

FROM PAGE 12

in the strongest position to replace him and may be able to consolidate support in the coming days -- a coronation that would allow Democrats to turn their fire on Trump.

If that doesn't happen then a chaotic -- and potentially damaging -- fight for the votes of almost 4,000 delegates at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in just four weeks looks more likely.

The party's national chairman Jaime Harrison promised a "transparent and orderly process" to replace Biden, the first president since Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968 not to seek a second term.

His campaign began collapsing after his dismal debate performance against Trump last month prompted concerns over his advanced years and mental capacity.

Trump, who would be 82 at the end of a second term, appeared more robust -- but opposition from a younger candidate would turn the spotlight on his speeches and interviews, where he often appears incoherent and confuses names.

Several rising Democratic stars -- all younger than 60 -- have been floated as Biden alternatives, including governors Josh Shapiro, Gretchen Whitmer and Gavin Newsom.

Whitmer immediately appeared to suggest she would not be running and Newsom has previously said he would not challenge Harris, but neither explicitly ruled themselves out.

A campaign led by Harris and backed up by a moderate mid-western running mate could present the best chance for Democrats -- helping turn out more women, who historically vote in greater numbers than men and are a weakness for Trump.

Harris would also give Democrats a chance to redefine the race at their convention as a clash of cultures between a former prosecutor and a convicted felon.

"While she has largely been in the shadows for the last four years it is time for Kamala the prosecutor... to make her comeback," said Sara Sadhwani, an assistant professor of politics at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

A new survey from Democratic polling firm Public Policy Polling released Thursday found that Harris -- with the right running mate -- could defeat Trump and Vance in Pennsylvania and Michigan, two of the three "Blue Wall" states seen as critical to electing a Democratic president.

Ryan Waite, a political marketing expert from Brigham Young University-Idaho, told AFP a contested nomination might actually benefit Democrats by depriving Trump of headlines for several months.

"A new Democrat candidate will benefit from a short vetting window and significant earned media impact right before the election," he told AFP. "The story is now who will it be and that will take the air out of the room through their convention."

2024 decisive to ending AIDS as health threat: UN

AFP, *Geneva*

Decisions political leaders take this year will be decisive whether a target to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 can be reached, the United Nations said yesterday.

Figures from 2023 show a global improvement in the number of new infections, the treatment of HIV-positive patients and a fall in the number of fatalities, but UNAIDS warned such progress remains fragile.

Nearly 40 million people are living with HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS, the new UN report said.

Around 1.3 million new infections were recorded last year, an increase of 100,000 compared to 2022 but a significant fall since a peak of 3.3 million in 1995.

But the long-term trend is still way off a UNAIDS target of 330,000 new infections next year.

Figures for AIDS-related deaths are also down, from 670,000 in 2022 to 630,000 last year, according to the report.

Access to antiretroviral medication is a major issue, with 30.7 million patients receiving such treatment compared to just 7.7 million in 2010. But the figure falls far short of a target of 34 million set for 2025.

Eastern and southern Africa remain the most-affected regions, with 20.8 people living with HIV, 450,000 infected last year and 260,000 fatalities.

While recognising the progress, UNAIDS chief Winnie Byanyima said the world is not on the right track to reaching the agency's 2030 objectives.

"The inequalities that drive the HIV pandemic are not being addressed sufficiently," Byanyima said in the report.

"A person dies from AIDS-related causes every minute," she added.

Stigma, discrimination and sometimes criminalisation affects certain groups, resulting in much higher infection rates because people are unable to seek help and treatment without danger.

Globally, the prevalence of AIDS among people aged 15 to 49 is 0.8 percent, but 1.3 percent among prisoners and 2.3 percent among women and girls aged 15 to 24 in eastern and southern Africa.

Infection rates rise further among sex workers (three percent), people who inject drugs (five percent), gay people and men who have sex with men (7.7 percent) and transgender people (9.2 percent).

In an AFP interview, Byanyima criticised a "well-coordinated, well-resourced pushback" against LGBTQ rights, reproductive rights and gender equality.

While some countries of sub-Saharan Africa have seen new infections fall by more than half since 2010, Byanyima noted "we also have regions such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Latin America where we see new infections moving in the wrong direction and rising," with stigma pushing people away from services.

4hr break in curfew

FROM PAGE 1

He also said the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, considered the country's lifeline, is now under the control of law enforcers and could be operational during the curfew break.

"Everything is now under the control of the law enforcement agencies. After the Supreme Court's verdict, we believe they [the quota reform protesters] have accepted it and those who wanted to take advantage of the movement for their own vested interests will no longer be able to do so."

Meanwhile, the public administration ministry in a gazette notification extended the general holiday for all government and non-government offices for today. Emergency services will be out of the purview.

Philippines 'to assert rights' after China sea deal

AFP, *Manila*

Manila insisted yesterday it will continue to "assert our rights" over a hotspot South China Sea reef, after reaching a deal with Beijing for resupplying Filipino troops stationed on a grounded warship.

The Philippine foreign ministry also rejected suggestions by China that the "provisional arrangement" announced Sunday required Manila to give Beijing "prior notification" and verification of deliveries to the BRP Sierra Madre on Second Thomas Shoal.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, including Second Thomas Shoal, which lies about 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the western Philippine island of Palawan and more than 1,000 kilometres from China's nearest major landmass, Hainan island.

Trial starts for Vietnam tycoon in $146m graft case

AFP, *Hanoi*

A former Vietnamese property and aviation tycoon charged with $146 million in fraud and stock market manipulation went on trial in Hanoi yesterday, the latest corruption case targeting the communist country's business elite.

Trinh Van Quyet, who owned the FLC empire of luxury resorts, golf courses, and the budget Bamboo Airways, had nearly $2 billion in stock market wealth before his arrest, according to state media estimates.

But yesterday, the 48-year-old -- handcuffed and dressed in a white shirt -- was led into court by police officers.

The trial comes just days after the death of former Communist Party of Vietnam leader Nguyen Phu Trong, who is credited with spearheading a crackdown on graft at the highest levels.

Trong, 80, died on Friday at a military hospital in Hanoi "due to old age and serious illness", the party said, a day after announcing he was standing down to seek medical care.

Tycoon Quyet is accused of illegally pocketing more than $146 million between 2017 and 2022.

Following his arrest in March 2022, 49 other alleged accomplices were picked up -- including his two sisters and the former chairman of the Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange and its chief executive officer.

According to the prosecution indictment, Quyet set up several stock market brokerages and registered dozens of family members to, ostensibly, trade shares.

Tigresses

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka thrashed Malaysia by 144 runs in the first match of the day to secure six points from two matches in Group B.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu smashed an unbeaten 119 off 69 deliveries to become the first batter to hit a Women's Asia Cup century in T20 format.

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Star BUSINESS

Drug production, supply take a hit

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Production and distribution of medicine have been disrupted for the last four days due to violence centring the quota reform movement and associated curfew to contain the situation, drug makers said yesterday.

Industry operators said they were unable to receive imported raw materials from Chattogram port and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as customs assessment and clearance were disrupted for internet blackout.

This may subsequently affect drug exports too, they said.

"Production of lifesaving drugs remains suspended since last Friday," said Md Mahbubul Karim, executive director (supply chain) at Incepta Pharmaceuticals.

There are adequate stocks of all the pharmaceuticals now to meet market demand for around one week but if the deadlock persists any longer, healthcare services will be seriously affected, he said.

Another concern was the absence of temperature-controlled facilities at the port and airport, for which some ingredients could get spoiled, he said.

Duty payments in cash are not accepted for release of raw materials, explained Karim.

All exports have been suspended since Thursday, said Wasim Haider, senior manager (international marketing) at Beximco Pharmaceuticals.

Their production facilities were running in full swing, but uncertainties remain over how long it could be continued, he said.

Domestic and global supply chains are almost wholly dependent on the internet and the blackout was seriously hampering trade, he added.

Bookings for shipment of four consignments had to be cancelled in the last three days while keeping contact with foreign clients over phone, especially centring shipment and payment confirmations, was troublesome, he said.

Jahangir Alam, chief financial officer of Square Pharmaceuticals, said their factories were running operations partially to produce some essential drugs such as insulin as employees had apprehensions over the commute to their workplaces.

Drug distribution was also affected as they were having to manually issue invoices for delivering products, he said.

On any given day they usually issue 30,000 invoices but nowadays it had come down to 8,000 to 10,000 as many pharmacies opt to stay closed, he added.

Exports had been growing but the current situation would definitely have an impact on the overall production and supply, said Monjurul Alam, chief executive officer of Medicare, a wing of Beacon Pharmaceuticals.

Most drug makers are facing troubles maintaining correspondence with foreign clients and distributing medicine in local markets due to the unrest, he said. Some new foreign clients have even postponed scheduled factory visits, Alam added.

Export orders tend to be placed in July-September and the ongoing unrest may affect the sector's business, which would be apparent at the end of the year, he said.

Moreover, foreign buyers might lose confidence in the local manufacturers if they fail to stick to shipment schedules, Alam said.

There were very few vehicles plying the Dhaka-Chattogram highway yesterday, the third day of a nationwide curfew imposed to tackle violence centring the quota reform protests. The photo was taken in Sitakunda around 10:00am.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Dhaka-Ctg highway is disrupted. What does it mean to economy?

AHSAN HABIB *and* **TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY**

The disruption in the Dhaka-Chattogram highway for the last six days amid violence centring the quota reform movement has dealt a huge blow to the economy, damaging the pipeline for around 90 percent of the country's $120 billion trade and causing fears of a lasting ripple effect.

A huge number of industrial establishments have been built along the highway, hoping to capitalise on the connectivity to the country's largest seaport in Chattogram.

However, that means their supply chain is also dependent on the proper functioning of the highway. Furthermore, most of the tourism sector is also reliant on the highway as it links Dhaka to Cox's Bazar, the country's single largest tourist destination.

Against this backdrop, economists and businessmen were desperately seeking to ensure the security of the highway and guarantee hassle-free movement.

Agitators prevented vehicular movement on the highway several times this month, severing road connectivity, while protesting Cumilla University students shut it down as recently as Wednesday.

A few vehicles started using the highway on Sunday.

According to data from the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), on average around 35,000 to 40,000 vehicles use the four-lane highway daily.

Among the vehicles, 35 to 40 percent are goods-laden, an RHD official said, citing data from toll plazas at Meghna bridge and Gumti bridge along the highway.

"But, the number of vehicles was very thin in the last few days," the official added.

On average around 35,000 to 40,000 vehicles use the four-lane highway daily. That number fell by nearly 80 percent to 8,550 on Sunday

Only 8,550 vehicles used the highway on Sunday, according to data from these two toll plazas. From midnight to 7pm yesterday, 10,018 vehicles plied the highway.

Another RHD official said the highway was cleared of debris last night but the road from Jatrabari flyover area to Shitalakhya bridge was severely damaged as agitators had started a number of fires.

Additionally, barriers, medians, signs and signals along the highway were either burned or looted, which is expected to pose further problems, the official said, asking not to be named.

The closure of the highway is also a source of huge sufferings for tourists and general passengers.

Khandaker Enyet Ullah, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said many tourists were stuck in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar due to the situation.

Prof Md Shamsul Hoque, a noted transport analyst, said the country is dreaming of becoming a developed nation by 2041. Although Bangladesh's $450 billion economy is mostly dependent on the Dhaka-Chattogram route, the government is yet to turn it into an expressway.

The four-lane road is not of the quality required for the expected economic development, he opined, adding that expressways are the best way to ensure connectivity, reduce travel time and congestion, and ensure reliability.

He added that exporters also demand a quality road connection since their activities are time-sensitive. "They are ready to pay a handsome amount to use quality roads. General people will also pay for it when they get proper service," Hoque said.

Bangladesh has eight highways. But the Dhaka-Chattogram highway undoubtedly deserves to be an expressway given its economic importance since it has enormous multiplier effect as it is also connected with major tourism hubs, he added.

Fazlul Haque, a former president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the country's main seaport would be better served by a railway connection, which is the most popular method in the world to carry goods.

However, even railway services remained shut down during the past six days.

The Pangaon water port is not an attractive option either as it lacks adequate infrastructure and supporting facilities. It also takes longer to send goods, he added.

A top official of a leading garment manufacturing company, preferring anonymity, said when he was travelling via the Dhaka-Bhanga expressway, he felt this type of expressway was required to connect Dhaka and Chattogram.

As the corridor has a huge economic impact, an expressway could lead to greater contributions to the economy.

At a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and top business leaders yesterday, Syed Nasim Manzur, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, urged the government to ensure safe passage through the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

"Otherwise, we will not be able to survive," he said.

Internet blackout intensifies port congestion

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, *Ctg*

Container congestion turned acute at the Chattogram port yesterday as deliveries remained suspended for a second consecutive day for operational complexities caused by an ongoing internet blackout and a lack of transportation facilities.

At least 1,252 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of containers were unloaded from ships and placed at the port yards yesterday.

As of 8:00am, there were 42,150 TEUs of containers at the yards.

This is around 78.76 percent of the total storage capacity of 53,518 TEUs, according to data of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

Port officials say it becomes tough to load and unload containers and manoeuvre them through the yards once 60 percent of the storage capacity was reached.

Moreover, importers are having to bear storage rent for each additional day that they are having to keep import-laden containers at the port yards.

Export and import activities have been facing unprecedented disruptions following the countrywide internet blackout since Thursday evening as digital entry of data is a must for port operations, said the port users.

They underscored the need for immediate resumption of internet services to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

AT A GLANCE

- Another 1,252 containers piled up at Ctg port in a day
- No import container could be delivered for the second day
- Importers are counting extra store rent
- Container transport between port and private ICDs improved a bit
- Port users called for immediate resumption of internet

Meanwhile, container handling activities have dropped by around 50 percent as only 5,079 TEUs were handled in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, much lower than the 8,000 to 9,000 TEUs handled on any regular working day.

In the same period, a total of 2,107 TEUs of containers were discharged from the vessels and 2,972 TEUs were loaded onto ships, according to the CPA data.

Some 415 TEUs of import-laden containers were transported from the port to inland container depots (ICDs) during this time, but not a single one could be delivered to the consignees, said CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

NBR for manual assessment of essentials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has recently instructed customs to release imported perishables, food, chemicals and industrial raw materials through manual assessments to keep supply chains and factories operational.

The same has been directed for shipment of exportable goods.

"We have given instructions to clear the goods from day one as the internet is not working," NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem told The Daily Star yesterday.

The move comes as an internet shutdown since the night of July 18 has been hindering the assessment of tariffs of imports and exports.

Chattogram customs began to assess goods in line with the directive. Officials said they are carrying out the task manually for imported industrial raw materials and fuel oil too.

Until now, importers received 22 consignments of fly ash, cement clinker and stone weighing 3,500 tonnes, said an official yesterday.

However, importers could not receive any perishable item as they could not submit any documents.

Garment buyers worried over shipment

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

International clothing retailers and brands are faced with uncertainties over work orders placed with Bangladeshi manufacturers as communication has become troublesome due to an internet blackout.

Following the internet outage since the night of July 18, liaison offices of foreign retailers and brands in Bangladesh have been unable to share documents with the port and customs authorities for clearance of goods. They have also been unable to send inspection reports to their headquarters.

A number of retailers and brands also have doubts about placing work orders amidst violence centring the quota reform protests, subsequent curfew to contain the situation and disruption to communication stemming from the internet shutdown.

"Our garments worth $200 million are now lying at the Chattogram port as we cannot clear customs procedures because of the ongoing violence and curfew," said a top official of a European retailer asking not to be named.

"Similarly, I have been unable to place fresh work orders at the local factories over the past week due to the ongoing crisis," he said.

He said the disruption to the internet was also creating problems in communicating with their headquarters in Europe.

"The current situation will have a bad impact on business as the country's reputation will be under question," he said, urging the authorities for fast restoration of at least broadband internet services.

Another Dutch clothing retailer also said he was unable to communicate with his headquarters because of the internet blackout.

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The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Curfew and violence slowly bleeding the economy

Resulting damage could have severe long-term impacts

The ongoing nationwide curfew, which may be necessary for security reasons, and internet shutdown are slowly bleeding the economy and causing untold sufferings for businesses and ordinary citizens. The country's biggest exporting sector, the garment sector, has already endured direct losses amounting to around $48 million due to the production suspension, according to a report in this daily. When the country's exports have been on a decline over the last three years, such a big hit to its largest export sector could prove seriously damaging moving forward.

The violence that happened across the country in recent days, along with the repressive tendencies demonstrated by government agencies, has definitely damaged the image that Bangladesh has painstakingly built in the global arena over the years. This could mean that less business prospects will be available for local businesses with international partners, and other indirect losses that industries will have to incur. Losses due to delays, with buyers either cancelling work orders or shifting them to other countries, is already a concern that garment industry insiders are fearing.

On top of that, the shipment of goods because of unrest and curfew has come to a grinding halt. Reportedly, 6,000 export goods containers are currently stuck at Chattogram Port depots as customs cannot clear export consignments, and shipping agents have lost contact with main line operators without access to the internet. Operational activities at the port have been moving at a snail's pace, and port yards have been choked with containers. Meanwhile, export activities at Inland Container Depots dropped by 80-85 percent due to the unavailability of export cargo from factories.

With vehicles used to carry goods sitting idle for the last few days, the overall losses of the truckers would amount to at least Tk 175 crore per day. And due to the increased transportation risks, the very few vehicles transporting perishable goods such as fresh vegetables and fruits are demanding higher fares as risk premium—in most cases nearly double the normal rent per vehicle. As a result, prices of essential commodities including vegetables and eggs skyrocketed in kitchen markets across the capital and elsewhere. Low-income people and informal workers have been hit the worst by this. According to the Labour Force Survey 2022, more than five crore people (84.9 percent) of the employed population are engaged in the country's informal sector, over one crore of them working in Dhaka. What will happen to these people if the curfew continues? Without any available work, how will these people meet their daily needs, particularly with prices of essentials rising by the hour?

Under the circumstances, the government urgently needs to restore the country's internet connection and lift the curfew, so that all economic activities can resume as per normal.

Ensure accountability

Investigate allegation of abuse

We are disturbed by reports that Nahid Islam, a key organiser of quota reform movement, was allegedly abducted and tortured mentally and physically until he lost consciousness. In comments made to *The Daily Star*, Nahid stated that he was picked up in the early hours of Saturday from a house in Sabujbagh by at least 25 men in plainclothes. Blindfolded and handcuffed, he was then taken to a room where he was interrogated repeatedly about his involvement in the student movement and tortured. His body bore deep bruises sustained in his arm and legs.

Once he regained consciousness, he found himself dumped under a bridge in Purbachal. The inevitable question is: who abducted and tortured him so? Once his family came to know that their son had been picked up, they went to the office of the Detective Branch of police, but they said they have no information about him. Then they went to Khilgaon Police Station to file a GD, but there the police did not take the matter into cognizance. When contacted by this daily, the police have reiterated that they have no information about Nahid having been picked up.

How are we to interpret this incident, at a time when the government wants to accommodate the demands of the protesters? Nahid's family and fellow protesters had earlier alleged that Nahid was picked up as he was against the idea of holding a dialogue with the government prior to the Appellate Division verdict. If we accept, as we would like to, the version given by law enforcers, then isn't the obvious step to find out who the culprits are? The fact that Khilgaon Police Station refused to record the GD of Nahid's parents opens up many uncomfortable questions.

We urge the government to ensure, at the very least, security for the student activists and due process of law during any questioning of student protesters in the future. We have seen in the past how activists and dissenters have been arbitrarily and illegally detained and harassed by various state machineries in the aftermath of previous student movements. If the government is to restore people's confidence in the rule of law, the government must prioritise and protect human rights.

The Supreme Court on Sunday stated that it expects the judicial probe commission, led by a High Court judge, to unearth the reasons behind the deaths of the students. We hope that any excess of state machineries and ruling party will also be investigated.

Move away from blame game and confrontational power politics

Dr Iftekharuzzaman
is executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The Appellate Division verdict of July 21 has opened the scope for resolution of the main issue around the demands coming from the quota reform movement. However, its observations associated with the judgment represent at least partial insensitivity to the bigger picture around the constitutional provision of equality and justice for the underprivileged section of society, especially women and Indigenous communities. The women's issue has been totally ignored, while the provision for Indigenous communities have been curtailed. One would hope that the government would exercise its leverage to address these critical issues before long.

Be that as it may, the nation has once again been reminded that student power is invincible, especially when fighting peacefully for a legitimate cause. Like many a time in the past, they have also shown the limits and fault lines of regime power that neglects lessons of history.

The student movement for quota reform, which challenged the prevailing state of discrimination in public service recruitment, cannot be in any manner linked to its violent and devastating turnaround. Though the movement and the violence were isolated from one another in terms of respective objective and means, what facilitated an unholy and unsurprising sync between the two is the country's confrontational zero-sum game of politics. From the beginning, there were clear replays of the ruling authority's usual practice of smelling in the quota reform movement a rot of conspiracy of the political opposition. The latter—as yet another example of its political bankruptcy—in the name of solidarity, took the quota reform movement as an opportunity for political mileage, for their core agenda against their political arch-rival.

Thus, when the student front of the ruling party, inspired by its general secretary, cracked down on protesters with the support and participation of law enforcement agencies, condoned by the partisan administration of most educational institutions, unprecedented violence was unleashed. What initially erupted in the campuses very quickly then spread nearly all over the country.

This opened the floodgates of mayhem by the subversive forces that have clearly been gaining from strength to strength in the space created for them by the confrontational politics between two major contenders. Needless to say, these subversive forces capitalised not only on the confrontational power game, but also on public discontent over growing economic hardships, governance deficits, and the atmosphere of intimidation and insecurity against free speech and freedom of association.

The kind of violence and destruction of public properties can represent nothing but evil designs and acts of such subversive elements. The cost of management failure of a crisis around a very genuine grievance of the young generation for justice, equality and non-discrimination in the public sector job market has already crossed enormous proportions. On top of all are at least 170 lives and countless injuries inflicted upon students, youth, and even children as well as professionals like journalists and police. Not to underestimate the huge loss of public properties, including key state installations and infrastructures.

But the economic cost of the deficit of political acumen in crisis management that catalysed the violent turnaround is going to be unprecedented in terms of disruptions of production, services, and businesses. A ballpark estimate of direct GDP lost is no less than $1.3 billion daily since July 18, when everything came to a standstill, including the internet being shut down, unprecedented not only in Bangladesh but perhaps anywhere else in the world. Beyond the monetary value, the cost of public suffering and harassment for being deprived of various essential services including utilities, not to speak of the mental stress and agony, is mind-boggling. Whether the continued internet shutdown is attributable to reported damages caused to relevant infrastructure or whether it is because of the failure to determine how to cope with implications of the free flow of information and opinion remains an open question.

With such baggage, whether Bangladesh will continue to be treated as the second most attractive destination for foreign investment in the region is anyone's guess. The same can be said about the time needed for our development and foreign trade partners and even the employers of our stranded expatriate workers to regain the eroded confidence.

It is indispensable to ensure exemplary accountability and justice for those who were victims of abuse by both politically patronised power and the institutionally mandated authority.
FILE PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

No less important is the national and international implications of the information and images of human rights violations unleashed by the attackers on the movement as well as the disproportionate use of force by law enforcement agencies, despite the foreign ministry's invitation to follow the ostrich syndrome. Equally disturbing will be the possible impressions of us as a violence-prone society created by the images of destructions by the subversive elements who took advantage of the crisis.

The key lesson of the crisis, therefore, is that intransigence, non-responsiveness, denial of reality or overconfidence of absolute power, and use of disproportionate force do not serve the purpose and can only be counterproductive and self-defeating.

The more the regime power is detached from the people and public interest, the more fragile and vulnerable to governance deficits and political failings it can be. Vulnerabilities are further accentuated by partisan control of state institutions, which may serve only short-term interests at the expense of a greater public good.

Moving on, the top priority is to ensure safety and security of the striking students. Ministers have promised no legal or administrative action against the students, which may be encouraging. But the question is whether the government or relevant agencies will walk the talk in a "securitised" context where some actions do not require legal or administrative mandate, like the reported abduction and torture of one of the coordinators of the movement, Nahid Islam. To be sure, this is nothing new nor isolated, while such "operations" not only remain unaccountable but also assume their own dynamics outside mainstream governance structure.

It is indispensable to ensure exemplary accountability and justice for the victims of perpetrators of violence against the striking students and others who were victims of abuse by both politically patronised power and the institutionally mandated authority, like the point-blank shooting down of a student in Rangpur. Failure to do so will further erode public trust in the government and the state institutions.

No less important is to identify and bring to justice those responsible for orchestrated violences, targeted attacks and enormous damages caused to public properties, including some key institutions. But as experience has also shown, ensuring accountability of perpetrators alone is not enough, especially leaving the breeding ground open on a daily basis for such militant forces to grow. On top of preventive measures is the imperative of moving away from the politics of blame game and confrontation for power, with a view to putting back public interest and people's participation at the core of political culture.

QUOTA REFORM PROTESTS

Govt failed to handle the situation properly

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M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

The demand that was placed by student protesters could have been fulfilled through discussion. They had only one demand: that the existing quota system in government jobs be reformed to make space for meritocracy. They did not ask for a change in government or chant slogans against the government. But the government handled the issue from an egoistic stance, and made several wrong decisions while tackling the situation. The way they tried to quell the protests by using Chhatra League, the ruling party's student wing, cannot be justified, either legally or morally. The situation came to what it is today because of that.

It is being said that some political parties have infiltrated the protest. This not something new; political parties usually get involved with this kind of movements. It happened during the protests in Ershad's time and even during the Pakistan period. It is unfortunate that the issue got prolonged and so many lives were lost, which according to various media reports, is about 170. This is too much! This means excessive force has been applied in this situation. The way our law enforcement agencies tackled this situation, using helicopters, is unprecedented. A civil protest should not have been dealt with this way.

Those who died, about half of them, if not all, were students. These were children! Farhan Faiyaaz, Abu Sayed—losses like these is even harder to process. Also, why were the key point installations, some of which were attacked and burnt down, not protected by the authorities from the beginning? Even the way the police acted shocked us. I saw law enforcement agencies with assault rifle in hand! Overall, I think, the government could not handle this situation properly and is still failing to do so. Bringing the military in and imposing a curfew mean that the government had no other options left. A different message is being projected to the whole world because of military deployment and the curfew.

I think, the government could not handle this situation properly and is still failing to do so. Bringing the military in and imposing a curfew mean that the government had no other options left. A different message is being projected to the whole world because of military deployment and the curfew.

Regarding the government's narrative that the data centre was burnt down, the question arises: what happened to the back-up for that? Why are those not working? Crores of taka is being lost every day because of internet shutdown. People are complaining that they cannot transact money or pay their electricity bills because of this. When most businesses are dependent on the internet, I do not think shutting the internet service down across the whole country is worth it. Shutdown is okay for a day or two, but for how long will it continue, especially when the violence did not stop completely despite the internet shutdown? Lives were lost even yesterday (Saturday); about 35 people were killed, according to newspapers. Did the past protests—in 1969, for example—not take place when there was no internet? The internet shutdown is causing a great loss to the economy.

Anyway, all we can hope for is that good sense will prevail all over. The government should now properly heed the rest of the protesters' demands. There is not a single demand that cannot be implemented. I have all the sympathy for the students and their movement, which they had started peacefully but unfortunately a lot of lives were lost and much blood shed on the streets. I pray for the souls of those students who died, and for their families.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
advertisement@thedailystar.net
GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
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BIDEN DROPS OUT OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

A historic decision, but can Kamala Harris beat Trump?

Ramisa Rob
is in-charge of Geopolitical Insights at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

Few weeks ago, even after Joe Biden's disastrous presidential debate, it didn't seem that his need to drop out of the race would become inevitable. Then things changed overnight, as it happens with politics: an unprecedented assassination attempt on former President Trump, and a viral picture of his blood trickled face with a fist held up high fuelled widespread speculation: "Did Trump just win the election?" It was followed with a loud Republican National Convention, a recharged MAGA cult and the altogether deification of Donald Trump: "a man impeached, convicted, almost killed but chosen by God to lead the United States of America," according to Trump supporters.

The pro-Democrat, liberal US media who want Donald Trump to lose—from CNN to ABC News—ran rigorous reporting, or rather a campaign, to get Joe Biden to step down. Just two days before Biden announced the historic decision, CNN reported that Biden was "seething" at all suggestions to step down, including from former President Obama and Nancy Pelosi, when they tried to explain that his chances at winning were becoming untenable. Each passing day, it seemed like the Democrats were playing a losing game with a defiant old Joe stubbornly holding onto power.

Kamala Harris breaks the wheel of Vietnam War-era politicians which voters are frustrated of seeing.

FILE PHOTO: **REUTERS**

It was becoming increasingly clear that the party needed a jaw-dropping, shocking moment to turn the tide against the surging popularity of Donald Trump. The clock was ticking, and the party delivered on the desired drama on Sunday, July 21, when Joe Biden announced that he is dropping out of the race, two weeks ahead of the Democratic National Convention. Biden has now undoubtedly sealed his legacy, for the good and the bad. He has had one of the longest political careers in US history—the youngest to become a senator, and the oldest to become a President.

Joe Biden will be remembered as the politician who let go—when veteran politicians in power rarely do—by choice. The step Biden took will domestically restore at least some of his tarnished image, especially in regard to his foreign policy blunders since last year. While there's a lot to learn from Joe Biden's wrongs, there's also a lot to learn from his best decision yet: a reminder for leaders around the world that even as heads of state, it is the country, the people, that matter first in every democracy.

The Republican Party's vigour will be overshadowed by Biden's decision and the overall respect for Biden, for at least the next two weeks till the DNC. The Republicans chose to stand behind a convicted felon, milking the tragedy of his assassination attempt. Most of them who spoke in the RNC, from DeSantis to Nikki Haley, had bashed Trump just six months ago when they ran their own presidential campaigns. After losing and realising Trump is their only ticket to power, they all became worshippers, embracing crass opportunism that is now the defining character of the Republican Party. By contrast now, the Democrats appear to voters as the party that has democracy internally within its ranks. The message this will send to voters is that unlike Trump and the Republicans, it is the Democrats who are "the true patriots and public servants."

Biden endorsed his Vice-President Kamala Harris right away. After being widely unpopular, she's risen more to the spotlight in the last year, and more so after the President's implosion at the debate last month. Every liberal media outlet had, in fact been subtly lobbying for Harris in the past few weeks, even though she kept defending Biden endlessly. Still, polls were conducted on Harris, Trump and Biden. A poll by The New York Times conducted on July 9-12, showed that she was ahead of Biden to beat Trump, amongst almost all age and racial groups, except only the demographic of 65 years and older.

As exciting as this new horizon appears, this doesn't mean the Democrats are no longer in crisis. The battle against Trump is still uphill. Polls conducted by CNN show Harris is lagging behind Trump, but not as much as Biden was. If Harris is going to be the Democratic nominee, she will still need to win the key battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Minnesota.

His endorsement doesn't mean that she automatically becomes the nominee—the party has to nominate her in the DNC. Endorsements are flooding in from prominent Democrats, but the party so far seems sincere to hold a competitive race, and a proper transparent process with other contestants. The logistics for Harris to run a successful presidential campaign is a lot easier; she has the funds that has been raised so far for the "Biden-Harris" campaign. It is highly unlikely that Kamala Harris will not be the nominee, even if there are surely better candidates out there—as that would reveal cracks within the Democratic Party, which they wouldn't want to risk against a united Republican Party. But showing that she has "earned" it through an open convention will legitimise her candidacy.

There is a lot favouring Harris, by luck mostly; she does have a shot at defeating Trump if she plays her cards right. She offers a face of change and breaks the wheel of Vietnam War-era politicians which voters are frustrated of seeing, while Trump is now the oldest presidential nominee. And policy-wise, she has the accomplishments of the Biden-Harris administration in her resume to maintain Biden's base voters. As vice-president, yet a new candidate, she could also cleverly deflect Biden's shortcomings—though that will remain to be seen, especially with Arab voters.

As exciting as this new horizon appears, this doesn't mean the Democrats are no longer in crisis. The battle against Trump is still uphill. Polls conducted by CNN show Harris is lagging behind Trump, but not as much as Biden was. If Harris is going to be the Democratic nominee, she will still need to win the key battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Minnesota. While talks have already begun of her running mate, her most strategic decision to have a chance at winning, would be to have a governor from a key battleground state, such as Governor Josh Shapiro from Pennsylvania who has already endorsed Harris.

The Trump campaign will come at Harris with their full wrath and their vintage sexism. The fact that she defended Biden's mental acuity and chose loyalty over the country, will surely be a point to poke at. It's also well-known that Harris had a disturbing track record as a harsh prosecutor, especially for the Black community, and that could hurt her. But it's also worth noting that many Democrat research groups recently found—just before Biden dropped out—that she can mobilise young Black, Hispanic voters, which Biden could not. She has been vocal and precise on re-establishing reproductive rights, which are projected to galvanise the younger female voter base to vote.

At the end of the day, debates and campaigning leading up to November shape the election outcome. Trump's 90-minute speech—the longest acceptance speech in RNC history—veered off the teleprompter and showed that the xenophobia in Trump has not changed an iota. Kamala Harris, a seasoned prosecutor, is fiery at debates and as many commentators have projected, she has the ability to attack Trump and call out his lies. A lot of people feel nervous with a woman, especially of colour, running against Trump—reflecting some sort of post-traumatic stress from 2016—when Hilary Clinton lost to Trump. Gender and race do play roles in US elections, and that is undeniable. Everything is still up in the air, but just because that other woman could not, does not mean this woman cannot.

Teesta is no longer a bilateral issue

Shamsher M Chowdhury, Bir Bikram
is a former foreign secretary of Bangladesh.

SHAMSHER M CHOWDHURY

During former Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in 2011, a deal on the sharing of transboundary river Teesta's water was supposed to be signed, sealed and delivered. But all such expectations were sadly dashed when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee backed out at the very last minute. This was not just an embarrassment for both sides—it took the wind out of such an important visit and left a bad taste here in Bangladesh. The event even prompted the highly respected Indian prime minister, a perfect gentleman, taking the blame and even offering a public apology for the failure to deliver. Since then, the Teesta deal has been stuck in a limbo, with the central and the West Bengal state governments in India blaming each other for any lack of progress as public disappointment on the Bangladesh side continues to gain traction.

It has been customary, especially in Bangladesh, that during any bilateral visit at the highest level between the two neighbouring countries, the burning issue of sharing the waters of transboundary rivers, especially the Teesta, would feature prominently at the talks between the two sides, with the hope that an acceptable solution would materialise. While the issue has featured in the discourses over the years, nothing concrete has yet appeared on the horizon.

However, things took a dramatic turn during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's two-day official visit to New Delhi in June this year, with India agreeing to dispatch a technical team to work on developing a comprehensive project covering conservation and management of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh, within a mutually agreed time frame. This was a major move forward. This, taken with an announcement of discussions at the technical level on the renewal of the Ganges Water Treaty, due in 2026, and a basket of other measures on key issues—such as exponential enhancement of multimodal transport and electricity connectivity; increased defence cooperation; extensive collaboration in frontier technologies including civil nuclear, oceanography and space technology; India partnering in the development of a small satellite for Bangladesh and its launch using Indian launch vehicle; and the decision to commence early negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aimed at promoting bilateral trade and investment—gave the visit major substance. All this was covered in a Shared Vision statement for the future course of relations between Bangladesh and India, bound as they are by shared history and geography.

While there is no denying that the Teesta is of strategic importance, a significant issue of great geopolitical value was the joint reiteration of a shared commitment to a 'free, open, inclusive, secure, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.'

The Teesta issue has now become a diplomatic issue of strategic importance.

FILE PHOTO: **S DILIP ROY**

To observers here, though, it was the signal of a positive development on the Teesta issue that understandably drew major attention. However, it is not without a context. With little to no visible progress in finding a mutually acceptable solution to sharing Teesta water until then, there emerged talks of a Chinese study on developing a project on the Bangladesh side of the Teesta, which would include conservation and management of the river. Given the geographical location of the Teesta—so close to the Indian border and not far from the strategically important Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as "the Chicken's Neck"—even the thought of China getting involved in a project of such magnitude presented the possibility of raising serious security concerns for policymakers in New Delhi, more so when there have been limited armed skirmishes between the militaries of the two Asian giants recently. Political commentators in India, including former diplomats, made no secret of the concern. This is when Teesta ceased to be just a river; it assumed a status of strategic importance.

Just days after her return from New Delhi, the Bangladesh PM, while responding to a question at parliament, clearly stated that she had asked the relevant ministries to look at the Chinese proposal on the Teesta. And yet, exactly 10 days later, the Indian decision of sending a technical team to prepare a comprehensive project, one that would include conservation and management of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh with Indian assistance, was announced in New Delhi and in the presence of the two heads of government. Reference was also made on finding an interim arrangement on water-sharing, although no details were given how this sharing would be executed.

That the Teesta issue has now become a diplomatic issue of strategic importance was made abundantly clear by a confident Sheikh Hasina at a press conference after her return from an official visit to Beijing. While the prime minister made it known that she would "give priority to India for the Teesta project," at the same time, she made reference to the Chinese proposal, implying Bangladesh has options. "This is diplomacy," she said.

Realistically, in the end, it is the Indian offer that will see the light of the day. The mention of the words "within a mutually agreed time frame" in the Shared Vision statement is a signal to set the right pace for its implementation. It it is a win-win outcome for both sides.

While there is no denying that the Teesta is of strategic importance, a significant issue of great geopolitical value was the joint reiteration of a shared commitment to a "free, open, inclusive, secure, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region." Such a commitment from Dhaka would not only be welcomed by New Delhi, it would also please listeners in Washington, Tokyo and Canberra, where the terms "open," "secure" and "rules-based Indo-Pacific" have become an integral part of the geo-strategic lexicon. At the same time, the insertion of the word "inclusive" should give some comfort to Beijing.

In sum, the overall outcome of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's back-to-back official visits to New Delhi and Beijing served to reinforce the point that relations between Bangladesh and other key Asian players are no more confined to the bilateral frame alone; they play out on a much broader regional and global canvases.

Internet blackout: FREELANCERS IN TROUBLE

MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

With the nationwide complete shutdown of internet services for the last four days, life on the digital frontier across the country has come to a halt. Mobile internet blackout was ordered on July 16 amidst country-wide protests against quota reinstatement in government jobs. After violence on the streets escalated, a complete internet blackout without any prior notice was suddenly in effect from July 18. Now, the freelancers of the country are facing significant troubles as their source of income is dependent on access to the internet.

Timely communication is one of the most important factors when it comes to freelancing in online marketplaces like Fiverr, Upwork etc. As freelancers communicate on the embedded messaging option of the platforms, no communication was possible due to internet shutdown.

Shaikh Abdullah, a Dhaka-based motion designer and video editor working for international clients said, "I was communicating with a client for an order worth $500. During negotiation, the internet was suddenly cut off without any prior announcement. After four days of complete inactivity, if the client reports my profile, I would lose profile impression which will significantly reduce click rates and overall impression of my profile. I would lose potential future clients which will reduce my income rate."

The freelancing marketplace across the globe moves at a fast pace, as clients and workers usually maintain strict timetables for work orders and deliveries. Failure to deliver the orders on time, in most cases, generate negative impressions from the clients, which in turn, affects the earnings of a freelancer if enough negative impressions rack up.

Sudiptta Apu, a Khulna-based freelancer and graphic designer said, "I had 8 ongoing orders which were valued over $1,000. Due to the internet blackout, those orders are now on hold. It is highly likely that the clients will move on to other service providers as most of them require their orders urgently on a day-to-day basis."

Mentioning about regular clients out of the freelance marketplaces, Sudiptta added, "Due to the internet shutdown, I tried communicating with out of the marketplace clients through ISD calls based out of India and the USA. However, they could not properly hear me due to network issues and it is highly likely that I would lose most of my regular clients as well."

Due to internet shutdown, many freelancers failed to deliver their orders which were already completed. Sohag Islam, a Dhaka-based UI-UX designer, and the founder of Designera, an IT firm, said, "I had two deliveries scheduled, one worth $1200 and another worth $660. Some one hour before the final delivery to the client, I lost internet connectivity. Communication with all my regular clients is completely cut off. I suffered a minimum loss of $3,000 due to internet shutdown."

Sohag Islam also mentioned that he works remotely for a USA-based firm but he could not properly communicate with them due to internet shutdown.

In the face of ongoing blackout, agencies and firms that handle online payments for digital advertisements also faced issues in handling their regular operations. Munaf Mojib Chowdhury, Partner Director, Aleph Holding (formerly, HTTPOOL) said, "We will understand the global reaction to this situation once we can properly communicate with our clients and partners after the restoration of internet."

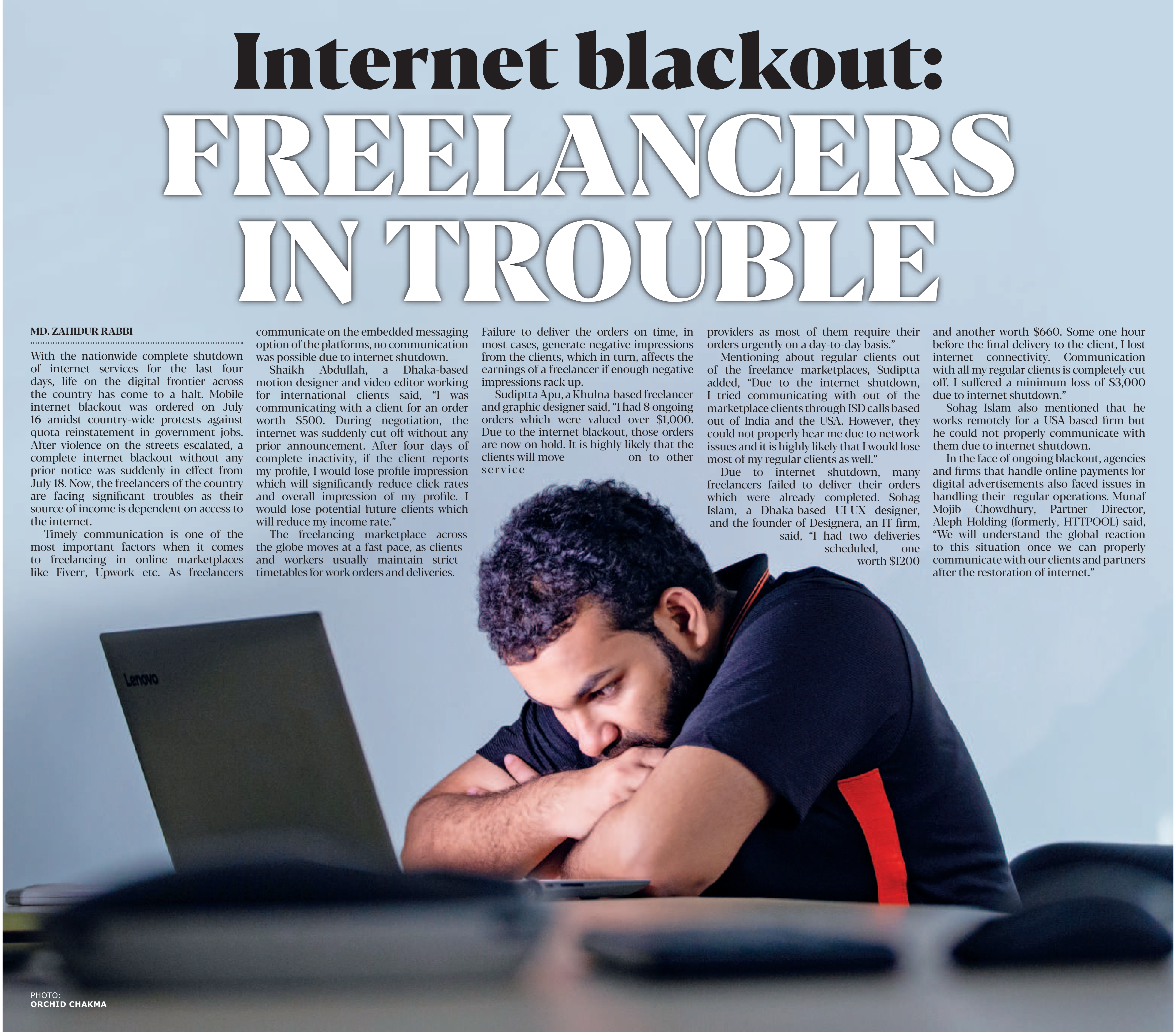

PHOTO:
ORCHID CHAKMA

What is emotional intelligence and why do we need it?

In modern day and age, Emotional Intelligence is more valued than any other form of intelligence. For the development of interpersonal relationships between peers, colleagues and even friends and family, this can be a game changer in establishing a clear and meaningful communication. Emotional Intelligence is also very much celebrated for its significant contribution in self-development and professional growth.

NOMROTA SARKER

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand and regulate our own emotions as well as do the same with others'. In practical terms, this means being aware of the fact that emotions have a significant impact in human behaviour and decisions both positively and negatively. Coined by Peter Salavoy and John Mayer, this term gained popularity in 1996.

In modern day and age, Emotional Intelligence is more valued than any other form of intelligence. For the development of interpersonal relationships between peers, colleagues ,and even friends and families, this can be a game changer in establishing a clear and meaningful communication. Emotional Intelligence is also very much celebrated for its significant contribution in self-development and professional growth.

THE FOUR QUADRANTS

Emotional Intelligence is all about channeling one's energy and feelings into exciting and positive pathways through building an awareness of emotional logic. Emotional Intelligence revolves around four quadrants with which a person's emotional excellence is determined. The quadrants are self-awareness, social recognition, self-management, and social relationship management.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness typically reflects interpersonal communication. This quadrant is concerned with how well you understand yourself and your personal psychology. Self-awareness is the first step towards a better perspective of the vision that you might have for yourself. This includes closely inspecting your own personality and learning styles, mental attitudes and states, strengths and weaknesses, stress levels, and spirituality.

In simpler terms, it is the attempt you need to take to address your feelings for exactly what they are, instead of trying to relate it to a similar yet non-applicable scenario for yourself.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION

The social recognition quadrant reflects your consideration of the feelings and responses of others. This is where empathy plays a crucial role. It is important to maintain sensitivity to the moods and emotions of others because it allows for superior intuition and connection. Oftentimes, communication with a colleague can seem to be hard if their emotions are opaque to you.

Social recognition is that step you take to be attentive and listen to them with an intention to build an effective communication with them. It is how you show your control over the external factors and scenarios. The key element for social recognition is your 'reaction' to your surroundings and how you tackle consequences to external decisions.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management quadrant reflects indicates self-evaluation coupled with self-regulation. 'Indulgent' behaviour is what we are trying to avoid here. This quadrant is only concerned with your internal discipline and your ability to achieve personal objectives. In the case of developing inner resolutions, self-management is the key quadrant that can build an achievement-oriented outlook for you. It can give you a direction, as to how to start working on yourself and bring back discipline in your life.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Social relationship management includes interpersonal skills and focuses intelligence on generating results. This quadrant of emotional intelligence fosters collaboration and connection to tap the power of synergy. This quadrant pulls together the other three quadrants and creates the final product; relationship management. Often if we have the other three dimensions figured out, this will flow more naturally.

Relationship management can be used to influence those around us to make a good decision. We can sense the reactions of others to the situation and fine-tune our response to move the interaction to a positive direction. This comes in handy in the case of collaboration, team management, and good leadership.

Star SPORT
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What to WATCH

T SPORTS & GTV
Women's Asia Cup
Pakistan vs UAE
Live from 2:30 pm
India vs Nepal
Live from 7:30 pm

PREPARATIONS HAMPERED
as practice match postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The first of the two three-day practice matches of the national team, scheduled to begin today in Chattogram, has been postponed due to the ongoing unrest in the country as cricket in Bangladesh remains at a standstill during the ongoing unrest.

"A decision on the Bangladesh Tigers camp is due but the match is not taking place tomorrow [today]," one Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BCB is still hopeful about holding the matches, which were originally scheduled to begin on July 23 and 29 respectively, once the situation improves.

"The players are still at the hotel and we are hoping that when the situation improves, we will play the games. They have been waiting patiently at the hotel. We have been communicating with the law enforcement agencies over there on whether we can hold practice if the situation allows," cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus told The Daily Star yesterday.

Our journey date has been postponed. When everything is sorted, we will possibly fly to Chattogram. The practice matches might get rescheduled. Honestly speaking, the preparation for Pakistan series has been hampered quite a bit.

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto on how current situation impacted the Tigers' preparation for upcoming Pakistan tour.

The hampering of practice schedules and practice matches due to the ongoing unrest has been a cause for frustration for the Bangladesh players, as it has disrupted the build up to their two-match Test series in Pakistan next month, which is part of the ICC World Test Championship cycle.

Two white-ball practice games on July 19 and 20, between Bangladesh Tigers and the High Performance unit were cancelled earlier due to the ongoing unrest.

Many of the Bangladesh national team stars including skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who was set to join the Bangladesh camp in Chattogram to play the three-day games, could not travel to he port city to join the rest of the players in the programme.

"Our journey date [to Chattogram] has been postponed. If everything is sorted, we will possibly fly to Chattogram," Shanto told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The practice matches might get rescheduled. Honestly speaking, the preparation for the Pakistan series has been hampered quite a bit," he added.

Shanto had been training individually in Dhaka but for him and many of the Test players, the three-day practice games were crucial especially in light of national team's previous Test series against Sri Lanka, where questions were raised about their preparation after they got routed 2-0 at home.

While the BCB are still waiting for a green signal from law enforcement agencies to hold the remainder of the camp in Chattogram, another BCB official said they were hopeful of beginning practice from Wednesday.

"If they [law enforcement agencies] give us the green signal, and if we can move, the players will go to the practice, whether there is a curfew or not," he said.

HP fall to 149-run loss in Darwin

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) HP outfit were bowled out for 279 in the second innings in chase of the 429-run target set by Pakistan Shaheens to suffer a 149-run defeat on the fourth day at the DXC Arena Ground in Darwin yesterday.

Continuing from an overnight score of 20 without loss, HP were bowled out for 279 in 83.2 overs. Amit Majumder hit a team-high 71 while Parvez Hossain Emon struck 57. Shahadat Hossain Dipu, who scored 36 in the first innings, followed up with 42 in the second innings but it was not enough to see HP bat the entire day to draw the match.

Pakistan Shaheens' left-arm spinner Mehran Muntas was the pick of the bowlers, bagging four wickets for 84 runs.

Earlier, Mohammad Hunaira's double century in the first innings saw Pakistan Shaheens post 468 for three. Bangladesh HP were restricted to 266 in the first innings, with Shadman Islam scoring 88 before the Pakistani side put 226 for three in the second innings to set a 429-run chase for the fourth innings.

Boycott back in hospital

AFP, *London*

England batting great Geoffrey Boycott was on Sunday readmitted to hospital after suffering a setback in his recovery from throat surgery, his family revealing "things have taken a turn for the worse".

The 83-year-old was discharged from hospital only on Friday after a successful operation to remove a cancerous tumour.

However, he has now developed pneumonia. "Thank you all for the well wishes, we've been blown away by the sheer number of them," read a statement from the family on Boycott's X account.

"Unfortunately, things have taken a turn for the worse and my father has developed pneumonia and is unable to eat or drink so is back in hospital on oxygen and a feeding tube for the foreseeable."

Boycott had previously been treated for throat cancer in 2002 with chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Boycott is one of a select group of cricketers to have scored 100 first-class hundreds. He scored more than 8,000 runs in 108 Tests for England.

After his 24-year first-class career ended with Yorkshire sacking him in 1986, Boycott established himself as both a newspaper columnist and a noted broadcaster, developing a global fanbase.

ICC puts USA Cricket on notice for 'non-compliance'

AFP, *Colombo*

The International Cricket Council put USA Cricket on notice on Monday to comply with its membership rules on governance, along with Cricket Chile, just weeks after the United States co-hosted the T20 World Cup.

"Neither Member is considered to have in place a fit for purpose detailed governance and administrative structure and systems," the ICC said in a statement after its annual conference in Colombo, adding that both had 12 months "to rectify their current non-compliance".

Fitness cost Pandya T20 captaincy: Agarkar

AFP, *Mumbai*

Hardik Pandya lost out on India's T20 captaincy to Suryakumar Yadav because of concerns over his availability after frequent injury absences, India's chief selector Ajit Agarkar said Monday.

Explosive middle-order batter Suryakumar, 33, was last week named Rohit Sharma's successor in the T20 format for India's white-ball tour of Sri Lanka, which begins Saturday.

All-rounder Pandya, 30, was Rohit's deputy during India's T20 World Cup triumph last month but he has suffered from fitness problems and missed the 50-over World Cup last year with an ankle injury.

"Fitness has been something that he's struggled with," Agarkar told reporters in Mumbai alongside new coach Gautam Gambhir.

"As selectors, it becomes difficult then. The thought behind it was that we want someone who is likely to be available more." India begin their Sri Lanka trip with the first of three Twenty20 internationals on Saturday and Pandya has reportedly opted out of the three subsequent one-day internationals.

He was "still a very important player," Agarkar said. "And that's what we want him to be, those skill sets are hard to find." Agarkar praised Suryakumar's captaincy credentials. "He is one of the best T20 batters in the world," said Agarkar. "We feel that Surya has all the necessary qualities to be a good captain.

"We wanted a captain, who is likely to play all the games." Suryakumar would remain solely a T20 player, said Agarkar. Rohit has retained the 50-over captaincy.

Gambhir explained his coaching philosophy, speaking to reporters for the first time since succeeding Rahul Dravid. "I think it is important to give players the freedom, that's what I believe in," he said.

'France ready to host Olympics'

AFP, *Paris*

President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that France was ready to host the Paris Olympics as he visited the Athletes' Village four days before the Games begin.

"We are ready and we will be ready throughout the Games," Macron said.

"We have been working on these Games for years now and we are at the start of a decisive week which on Friday will see the opening ceremony and then the Olympiad which will be held in Paris, 100 years since the last one."

He added: "This is the fruit of an immense amount of work which has profoundly changed the country, in particular area" of Seine-Saint-Denis, where the Athletes' Village is situated.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach also visited the Village to the north of the French capital, where thousands of athletes and officials are arriving, with up to 14,500 expected there at the peak of the Games.

Comprising 40 different low-rise housing blocks, the complex has been built by employing innovative construction techniques using low-carbon concrete, water recycling and reclaimed building materials.

It was also intended to be free of air-conditioning with a natural cooling system, but some Olympic delegations are unconvinced and have ordered around 2,500 portable cooling units for their athletes.

Seine-Saint-Denis, where the main athletics stadium for the Olympics is also situated, is the poorest area in France and is hoping to reap benefits from the sports extravaganza.

Macron promised the area would not be forgotten after the Olympics.

Meanwhile, France's foreign minister said Israeli athletes were welcome at the Paris Games after a hard-left member of the French parliament sparked outrage by urging them to stay away because of the conflict in Gaza.

"The Israeli delegation is welcome in France," Stephane Sejourne said in Brussels ahead of talks with his Israeli counterpart, adding that the call by France Unbowed (LFI) lawmaker Thomas Portes for the country's exclusion had been "irresponsible and dangerous".

"We will ensure the security of the delegation," Sejourne added.

Portes drew an angry response from French Jewish groups and both political opponents and allies.

Meanwhile, French security forces were continuing preparations for the unprecedented opening ceremony on Friday, the first time a Summer Olympics has opened outside the main stadium.

Between 6,000 and 7,000 athletes are to sail down the river on 85 barges and boats, with a backdrop of world-famous monuments including Notre-Dame cathedral, currently being renovated.

The athletes will disembark for the culmination of a ceremony at the Trocadero opposite the Eiffel Tower that organisers promise will be spectacular.

Up to 300,000 ticketed spectators will watch from stands and on the river banks and another 200,000 are expected to watch from the overlooking apartments.

Mushfiqur, Mominul to play in 'A' team's Pak tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran Bangladesh batters Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque are expected to be part of Bangladesh 'A' team's tour of Pakistan, which takes place ahead of the national team's Test tour of the country in August-September.

Mushfiqur and Mominul, currently with Bangladesh Tigers programme, will play the first four-day fixture of the A team, a BCB official informed The Daily Star.

The team is slated to depart for Pakistan on August 6 after holding three days of practice sessions in Dhaka. The team will play two four-day games in Pakistan, the first of which will take place from August 10 to 13 and the second one is slated for August 17 to 20. The last three fixtures are scheduled for August 22, 25 and 27 respectively.

Along with Mushfiqur and Mominul, players mostly from the Bangladesh Tigers programme will form the 'A' team's squad. Two other national team batters may join up to acclimatise with the conditions in Pakistan.

The national team would play two Tests in Pakistan from Aug 21-25 and Aug 30 to Sept 3 in Rawalpindi and Karachi respectively.

"We are trying to ensure that the players get maximum match practice and avail all the facilities. This is how we have been trying to schedule so that our players [members of the national team] can already play a match there [in Pakistan before the Tests]," Shahriar Nafees, in-charge of BCB cricket operations, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The national team players will, meanwhile, train in Dhaka from August 3 to 16 before departing for the Pakistan Tests.

'Bashir showed his full bag of tricks'

AFP, *Nottingham*

Ben Stokes said Shoaib Bashir had "showed the world" he belonged in international cricket after the 20-year-old off-spinner bowled England to a series-clinching victory over the West Indies in the second Test at Trent Bridge on Sunday.

Bashir took 5-41 as the West Indies collapsed to 143 all out on the fourth evening, with England triumphing by 241 runs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match campaign.

It was Bashir's third five-wicket haul in just five Tests but first in England after he twice achieved the feat on spin-friendly Indian pitches earlier this year.

His latest exploits were all the more impressive given Bashir did not bowl a single ball and was out for a duck during England's innings and 114-run thrashing of the West Indies in the first Test at Lord's.

Bashir removed Kirk McKenzie, Kavem Hodge and Alick Athanaze -- all top-order batsmen -- in quick succession before bowling Jason Holder and last man Shamar Joseph as West Indies, set 385 to win, slumped to 143 all out.

"I think what Bash has done today is to show the world what he can do," said England captain Stokes.

"That wicket hardly offered anything for a spinner throughout the whole Test match and look at what he was able to do today.

"The way in which he can change his pace, produce over-spin and under-spin...I think he showed his full bag of tricks. He's got so much talent and the ceiling is so, so high. He's got an unbelievable desire and a will to get better and learn."

Stokes added: "It's really good for a young guy to come out and put in a performance that wins England a Test match, it's pretty cool for him."

For all his success in India, rising star Bashir was unable to break into the Somerset side at the start of the season after the side opted for a more experienced England spinner in Jack Leach.

That led Bashir to go on loan to Worcestershire last month, but England kept faith with him all the same.

"The decisions we make are all based around not only how far we think their talent can take them, but whether we think they're good enough for international cricket straight away," explained Stokes.

"I don't want to sound like it's an 'I told you so' kind of thing but it sort of is."

Defeat left West Indies with just pride to play for in next week's third Test at Edgbaston.

They actually managed a much-improved showing with the bat in Nottingham while making 457 in reply to England's first-innings 416 prior to Sunday's spectacular slump, which saw all 10 of their second-innings wickets lost in 23 overs.

"The big positive was our first innings, scoring 400 runs was great," said West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite.

"The two defeats are gone but we still have five Tests matches remaining for this year. So we keep learning and by the end of the year we'll be better off, once we have that correct mindset."

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ARSON ATTACK

3 bodies found at shopping centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

Three charred bodies were recovered from the second floor of Haji Ibrahim Shopping Centre in Shimrail area of Narayanganj yesterday.

Agitators torched the eight-storey building on Saturday during a clash with members of law enforcement agencies. The building was completely burnt.

The second floor of the building housed Shimrail Branch of Dutch Bangla Bank where several construction workers were working on its interior. When the clash broke out and the building was set on fire, all but the three of them were able to escape, said police.

Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Siddhirganj Police Station, said two injured workers, who were undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, informed police that their three fellow workers got trapped in the building.

He said as the clash was going on, police and fire service personnel could not reach the building. Yesterday, locals went into the building and found the

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People throng the Desco office in the capital's Mirpur-1 yesterday to recharge their prepaid electricity meter cards. Thousands of electricity consumers are struggling to recharge their cards as the country has been without internet for the last four days. The photo was taken around noon.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

DEATHS DURING DEMO

Judicial body to visit spots once situation calms down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial commission, formed to probe the deaths in violence centring the quota protests, will begin visiting the flashpoints of clashes as soon as the situation improves.

Led by Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, a High Court judge, the commission is now formulating its plan of action in order to properly conduct the inquiry into the violence, a source close to the commission told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The commission will work as per the relevant terms of condition," according to the source.

The source, however, did not clarify whether the commission will probe all deaths since the violence broke out or only the deaths of six people on July 16.

On July 18, Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain issued a notification saying that the commission will learn the reasons behind the deaths of six persons

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

IT, BPO firms staring at a bleak future

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The country's promising export-oriented IT firms and business process outsourcing (BPO) companies, which fetch close to $1 billion a year, are fearing getting dropped by their foreign clients after abruptly going off the grid on Thursday night for the internet blackout.

The nature of their work needs them to provide services to their clients round-the-clock and also submit tasks within a strict timeframe.

Bangladesh's internet blackout from 9:00pm Thursday, which came without any warning, meant that the companies could not inform their clients of the impending service disruption.

"We have not been able to inform our clients of our current situation -- even during the depths of the pandemic there was no service disruption," said Md Riajul Islam, chief executive officer of Bright River Bangladesh.

> **There is a high chance that these foreign clients will shift to India, Vietnam, the Philippines and other competitor countries.**
>
> **RASHAD KABIR**
> MD of Dream71

Bright River provides services to clients in 16 countries in North America and Europe and saw a bump in client intake following the pandemic as the firm proved itself to be a dependable service partner.

But now, due to this service disruption, the foreign clients will divert orders to other countries even if the rates are not as competitive as Bright River's.

"I don't know how many employees I have to say goodbye to now," Riajul said, while urging the government to restore the internet service immediately and block social media if need be so that they can at least do some damage control.

Being without internet for even a day is disastrous for BZM Graphic, which does photo processing for ecommerce companies with 3-12 hours' deadline, according to its Managing Director Apel Mahmud Khan.

BZM mostly works as the production partner of Pixelz, which processes photos for 50,000 e-commerce platforms around the world.

"We have built this relationship with Pixelz over eight years of quality work with great reliability."

But now, this partnership is most definitely in jeopardy as BZM was not even able to ask the client to look for a temporary vendor.

"Our clients would not only be deserting our company but also our country. They may lose confidence in Bangladesh completely," Apel Mahmud added.

The daily financial losses to the IT industry due to the internet outage is about Tk 80 crore, said Russell T Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services.

"If it continues longer, the overall image of Bangladesh as a reliable partner in IT services will be tarnished. The progress that Bangladesh made in digital services will also be on halt."

Supporting the government's move to stop the violence, he said a mechanism should be

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

HQ of ex-Pak PM Imran's party raided

AFP, *Islamabad*

Pakistan police raided the headquarters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party yesterday, a week after the military-backed government vowed to ban the political movement.

An AFP journalist at the scene saw the headquarters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sealed off by police, who led a number of party workers into waiting vans.

Pakistani media initially reported party chairman Gohar Ali Khan, a barrister, was among those taken away.

However, an official at Islamabad Police, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to speak to the media, told AFP that they had not arrested him.

The official confirmed the arrest of Raoof Hassan, a founding member of the party and head of its press department.

"Raoof Hasan was arrested but the police did not arrest Gohar Ali Khan," the police official said.

The government's information minister said last week it would ban Khan's PTI, just days after the Supreme Court made a crucial ruling in the party's favour that dealt a huge blow to the government.

Candidates loyal to Khan won the most seats in February elections but were kept from power by an alliance of usually feuding parties, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with the key backing of the powerful military.

On the run for 4th time

Residents of Khan Yunus flee as Israel prepares offensive; 45 more killed in Gaza

AFP, *Palestinian Territories*

The Israeli military yesterday ordered Gaza civilians to leave the eastern part of Khan Yunis city, saying it was preparing to "forcefully operate" there after rockets were fired from an area designated as a humanitarian zone.

"Due to significant terrorist activity and rocket fire toward the state of Israel from the eastern part of the humanitarian area, remaining in this area has become dangerous," the military said in a statement.

In recent months the Israeli army has launched intense military operations in several areas of Gaza that were previously declared free of Hamas fighters.

Yesterday, it prepared to launch an operation in parts of Khan Yunis governorate, whose namesake city is the largest in the Palestinian territory's south.

- Heavy tank shelling reported in town of Al-Qarara
- No space for displaced in crowded makeshift encampment
- Gaza death toll rises to 39,028

Youssef Abu Taimah, from the town of Al-Qarara in Khan Yunis, told AFP yesterday that this evacuation order was the fourth time his family was displaced.

"We left amidst ongoing air and tank shelling, and drones firing shots," said the 27-year-old, who saw "injured and dead people transported by tuk-tuk (three-wheeled motorcycle) and donkey cart to Nasser Hospital" on the way.

Abu Taimah said his family headed to the humanitarian area of Al-Mawasi, but found there was no space for them in the crowded makeshift encampment.

"We will stay on the street, and even the sidewalks are full of people and tents. We are tired and fed up. Enough of this displacement."

Ahmed al-Bayouk, a 53-year-old man from Khan Yunis, felt similar despair. "Al-Mawasi is packed with people. There is no empty space," said Bayouk, who was displaced for the third time, "each time harder than the last".

"We barely settle for a few days before the army comes, bombs, displaces us, and destroys more," he told AFP. "Where should we go? Every place is at risk of bombing."

According to the Gaza health ministry, more than 39,028 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7. The toll incudes 45 deaths in 24 hours, reports Al Jazeera online.

Earlier this year the military had carried out a sweeping operation in Khan Yunis for months that saw swathes of the city reduced to rubble and tens of thousands of people displaced to a nearby humanitarian zone.

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP

Tigresses bounce back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh bounced back from a first-game defeat with a seven-wicket victory against Thailand in their Women's Asia Cup Group B match in Dambulla yesterday.

Young leg-spinner Rabeya Khan took four wickets for 14 runs as Bangladesh restricted Thailand to 96 for nine after being asked to bowl first. Opener Nattaya Boochatham scored innings-high 40 off 41 deliveries for the Thai women.

Bangladesh, who sufferred a seven-wicket defeat against Sri Lanka on Saturday, romped to the victory target in 17.3 overs, thanks to a 55-ball 50 from opener Murshida Akter.

The Tigresses will play against Malaysia in their final group match tomorrow.

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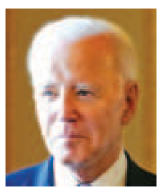
Due to a lack of rain, a farmer couple resorts to irrigating their farmland to ensure the proper growth of the Aman seedlings they planted this season. The photo was taken in the Shaktipur village of Gaibandha's Gobindaganj upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: **MOSTAFA SHOBUJ**

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Biden exit offers scope, pitfalls for Democrats

AFP, *Washington*



Joe Biden's withdrawal from the US election offers Democrats the precious opportunity for a late reset in a campaign that was going badly -- but ushers in an uncertain few weeks that will make or break their chances against Donald Trump.

Grassroots voters will hope to be better served than they were during the initial nomination race, when Democrats put up no serious competition to the 81-year-old president's candidacy despite worries over his age.

"Remarkable leadership shown by Joe Biden. Now it falls to the (Democrats) to show equal leadership by having an open process to determine the best candidate(s) to take on Trump-Vance in November," said entrepreneur Andrew Yang, who ran against Biden for the party's nomination in 2020.

"The goal should be simple -- to win," he wrote on X.

With Biden's endorsement, Vice President Kamala Harris, 59, starts out

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Paris lacking football stars

P11

Protests, deaths and a collective breakdown

P9

Saluting the spirit of our young people

P8

Dhaka hospitals stretched to their limits

P3

QUOTA IN GOVT JOBS

New system applicable for all grades

Following SC order, govt circular says 93pc jobs to be given on merit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reform to the quota system in public jobs, the government yesterday issued a circular, taking merit-based recruitment in civil service to 93 percent from the existing 44 percent. The rest seven percent will come from various quotas.

The new quota system, which came in line with Sunday's Supreme Court order, will come into effect immediately and will be applicable to all grades of the government, semi-government, autonomous, semi-autonomous, statutory bodies and corporations in case of direct recruitment through exams, according to the circular.

There are 20 grades in government jobs. Direct appointments are usually done in 9th-20th grade. However, such direct appointments are also done in case of a handful of posts in some top grades like 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades, according to public administration ministry officials.

As per the circular, there will be five percent quota for the children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas. One percent quota has been reserved for ethnic minorities and another one percent for persons with disability and people of third gender.

If enough candidates are not available from the quotas, the vacant posts will be filled up from the merit list.

"We have implemented the apex court's verdict as is... It was mainly a movement to reform the quota and we have done it. The students should now return to their classrooms," Law Minister Anisul Huq told a press briefing, announcing the circular.

Four key organisers of the quota reform protest rejected the circular, saying there should have been a discussion with the stakeholders before issuing the circular.

QUOTA: WHO GETS WHAT

- 5pc for children of freedom fighters, Biranganas
- 1pc for ethnic minorities
- 1pc for persons with disability & people of third gender
- No quota for women
- No quota for grandchildren of freedom fighters
- Vacant posts to be filled up from merit list

"Our movement will continue until justice is done about those killed and injured," said Nahid Islam, one of the organisers, about two hours after the law minister's announcement.

The circular came in the wake of an unprecedented violence centring on student protests for quota reforms.

According to The Daily Star's count, at least 150 people have been killed and several thousand wounded in clashes with law enforcers, joined in by alleged ruling party activists, since Tuesday.

The overall death toll may rise, as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals in Dhaka and elsewhere where many critically injured were taken for treatment. Also, many friends and families reportedly took the bodies of their loved-ones from the scene and this newspaper could not contact them. The Daily Star's count of the death toll is based solely on hospital and police sources.

The massive unrest also saw dozens of public and private

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

A prison van carrying over 40 people, who were arrested on Monday in cases over violence. Around 500 arrestees were produced before the CMM court, which sent most of them to jail yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

4 organisers of quota reform demonstration reject circular

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four key organisers of the quota reform demonstration have said the protests would continue after they rejected yesterday's government circular announcing the new quota allocation in government jobs.

"Before issuing the circular, the authorities should have held a dialogue with students and other stakeholders. We'll not accept the circular as the final resolution," Nahid Islam, a key coordinator, told a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

The statement came two hours after Law Minister Anisul Huq briefed reporters on the circular at his residence around 3:30pm.

As per the government decision, 93 percent of the recruitment at government, semi-government and autonomous bodies will be based on merit.

There will be a five percent quota for children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters, and Biranganas. One percent quota has been reserved

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A welcome move

The public administration ministry yesterday published a circular in line with the Supreme Court verdict on the quota system in government jobs. Following the circular, The Daily Star's Baharam Khan spoke to experts who expressed hope that the circular would bring about significant changes to the government recruitment process.

M MUSHARRAF HOSSAIN BHUIYAN
Former cabinet secretary

I think the issuance of the government circular on the reforms to the quota system is the right move for this moment as it will play a role in normalising the situation. However, I am in favour of quota for women. Not many countries in the world have quota for females in parliament, but we have reserve seats for women in our parliament. So, there can be quota for

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FIROZ MIA
Former additional secretary

The circular rightly reflects the Supreme Court judgment and is expected to bring about significant changes in the government recruitment process as it will reduce bureaucratic tangles drastically. However, the public administration ministry and some other relevant authorities have to clarify the new circular from time to time.

Government

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

ABUL KASHEM MD MOHIUDDIN
Secretary, IMED

We got an epoch-making decision on the quota system. This decision will eliminate complications in government recruitment. From now on, meritorious candidates will also get better opportunities in government jobs.

Those who are involved in the government recruitment process used to face a lot of difficulties in dealing with the quota system.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Carry out fair probe, punish those responsible

Demand Editors' Council, Noab about recent violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council and Noab yesterday demanded impartial and fair investigations into the loss of life, vandalism, arson and destruction amid the recent violence.

They also demanded punishment of those responsible.

The Editors' Council and Newspapers Owners' Association of Bangladesh issued a joint statement after holding a meeting.

The parties involved, including the state, should play responsible roles to avoid such untoward incidents, said the statement signed by Mahfuz Anam, president of Editors Council, and AK Azad, president of Noab.

They demanded immediate restoration of the internet, which has

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Another 1,100 arrested in police raids

At least 133 cases filed over violence centring on quota protests

STAR REPORT

Over 1,100 more people were arrested in the capital and other districts in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday, as law enforcers continue their crackdown on those suspected to be linked to the recent violence across the country.

So far, at least 133 cases over violence have been filed with different police stations in the capital.

> **At least 2,657 people have been arrested in the capital and elsewhere over the last four days.**

According to an analysis of 29 of them, 499 named and 74,055 unnamed people have been made accused in the cases lodged with 17 police stations on charges of attacking law enforcers, damaging and torching state properties.

In 24 cases, the numbers of the

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জরুরী রপ্তানি কাজে নিয়োজিত

Staffers of the toll booth on the Mayor Hanif Flyover were collecting tolls manually yesterday, as the booth was burned down on the night of July 17 amid the recent series of arson attack across the country.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

7-hour curfew break in Dhaka, 3 other districts

Govt offices to stay open from 11am to 3pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to continue the ongoing nationwide curfew until further notice.

The curfew will remain in force in Dhaka, Narsingdi, Narayanganj and Gazipur with a seven-hour break from 10:00am to 5:00pm today and tomorrow.

It also decided to keep all government, semi-government and autonomous offices open from 11:00am to 3:00pm today after the three-day general holiday, according to public administration ministry officials.

In Dinajpur, curfew will be relaxed between 8:00am and 5:00pm, said Shakil Ahmed, deputy commissioner of the district.

In Chattogram, curfew will be relaxed from 9:00am to 6:00pm, said Chattogram DC Abul Bashar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan has instructed that the judicial functions of all the courts across the country, including the Appellate and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Prof Yunus' statement anti-state

Says foreign minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud has said Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus' statement calling on the world leaders to end the violence in Bangladesh is anti-state.

"Prof Yunus has urged the global community to end violence here. Such a call means making a suggestion for intervention in the internal affairs of a country. This is anti-state. It is unfortunate. We cannot expect this. I condemn it," he said.

The minister said Prof Yunus did not condemn the attacks on state, rather he talked about the law enforcers killing people with bullets.

Hasan was speaking at a media briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Prof Yunus in a statement on Monday urged the international community to stop the deadly violence in Bangladesh. The Daily Star did not run any report on the statement.

Violent clashes centring the quota

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Policemen searching the bag of a bus passenger in the capital's Matuail area on Dhaka-Chattogram highway around noon yesterday. A few buses operated on the road during the curfew hours amid tight security.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Ethiopia landslides toll hits 229

REUTERS, *Addis Ababa*

The death toll from two landslides in southern Ethiopia has jumped to 229 and could rise further as the search for survivors and casualties continued into a second day, a government official said yesterday.

A landslide buried people in Gofa zone in Southern Ethiopia regional state on Sunday night, then a second one engulfed others who had gathered to help on Monday morning.

"I don't know when it will stop. We are still recovering bodies," Markos Melese, head of the National Disaster Response agency in Gofa Zone, told Reuters by phone. "We are still digging."

On Monday an official said at least 50 people had died and children and police officers were among the dead.

Footage shared by the local administration showed people digging up bodies with shovels and bare hands.

"The death toll surged after the people who came to rescue also got trapped," said Gofa district administrator Misikir Mitiku. "It is a very sad incident."

President Abiy Ahmed said he was deeply saddened by the terrible loss of life, and that federal officials had been deployed to reduce the impact of the disaster.

"We stand in strong solidarity with the people and Government of Ethiopia as rescue efforts continue to find the missing and assist the displaced," African Union chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat wrote on the social media platform X.

Musharraf Hossain

FROM PAGE 1

women in government jobs too considering that they belong to underprivileged group.

However, the government should take a decision based on evidence if it wants to reform the quota system again in future. That means the government should analyse relevant data such as the percentage of employable workforce among the population for whom the quota is intended and the percentage of employed people among them.

On the other hand, the apex court has established the fact that only the government has the authority to decide on quotas. So, there will be no confusion about it in the future.

Firoz Mia

FROM PAGE 1

recruitment to grades are done under different laws and rules. This circular will not change those recruitment processes. That means, quota for female in primary school teachers' jobs and ward quota in Bangladesh Railway have not been changed by this circular. Those quotas are still in effect. However, the ministry of public administration can clarify these issues.

I think the government should consider quota for females. Women of our country are still underprivileged. So, I hope the government would keep quotas to bring them into the mainstream of our society. Under the previous quota system, there were some provisions like district- or upazila-level positions for which only candidates of that particular district or upazila could apply. The ministry should clarify if this system still exists.

In my opinion, the biggest achievement of the new quota system is a smooth and trouble-free recruitment process. The previous quota system had made the recruitment process a really complicated task.

Abul Kashem

FROM PAGE 1

Thanks to the new directive, most of those difficulties are now gone. It will help speed up the government recruitment process. On the other hand, meritorious candidates, who used to be deprived due to the previous quota system, will now have better opportunities to join the civil service. The new system will increase competition among the candidates.

Recruitment of primary schoolteachers and enforcement of ward quota for Bangladesh Railway are done under separate laws and rules. Those laws and rules cannot be nullified by a government circular. However, the government will decide, if necessary, whether the Supreme Court verdict on quota reform will also be applicable to those.

Iran seizes oil tanker, arrests 12 foreign crew

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized a Togo-flagged oil tanker on Monday and arrested its 12 foreign crew members over alleged fuel smuggling, the Guards' news website said.

"The Revolutionary Guards' navy captured an oil tanker flying the Togolese flag and carrying over 1.5 million litres of smuggled oil," the Sepahnews website said.

"The vessel was brought to the port of Bushehr, along with its 12 crew members, who are of Indian and Sri Lankan nationality," it added.

Iranian naval forces frequently announce the detention of vessels transporting fuel in the Gulf.

New system applicable for all grades

FROM PAGE 1

establishments, including BTV centre and two Metro stations, vandalised or burned or both. Scores of vehicles also came under arson attacks.

Many non-students also took to the streets in Dhaka and elsewhere, especially in the last few days, to join the student protesters.

The sheer scale of the violence prompted the government to impose curfew and deploy armed forces across the country.

THE QUOTA DEBATE

The latest quota reform is the biggest yet since its introduction in 1972.

From 1972 to 1976, 20 percent recruitment was merit-based. It was increased to 40 percent in 1976 and continued until 1985, when it was further increased to 45 percent.

In 2012, one percent quota was introduced for persons with disability, taking merit-based recruitment to 44 percent.

Until the 2018 government decision, 44 percent government jobs were merit-based, 30 percent was reserved for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren, 10 percent for districts, 10 percent for women, five percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for persons with disability.

In October 2018, the government through a hastily issued circular cancelled the quota system in 9th-13th grades (Class-I and Class-II jobs) amid a massive quota reform movement at different universities.

The students never wanted its abolition, they only demanded that it be revised down.

Subsequently, the government circular was challenged in the High Court by seven children of freedom fighters. In response, the HC on June 5, 2024, declared the government circular illegal, essentially reinstating the 56 percent quota.

NATIONWIDE PROTEST

The HC verdict triggered a student protest on public university campuses first in Dhaka and within days in other parts of the country.

Thousands of students from private universities, colleges and in some cases from schools joined the nationwide movement.

Protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 declined to issue a stay on the HC verdict, triggering a massive one-point movement for quota reform.

After three days of countrywide demonstrations, the SC gave a status quo on the HC verdict and set August 7 for hearing. The decision did little to pacify the agitators.

The movement turned violent after alleged Chhatra League and other ruling party activists attacked the agitating students at Dhaka University and some other universities on July 15.

The attack came hours after Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said that "Chhatra League would give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota movement who labelled themselves as Razakars and were arrogant."

Violence escalated further after the killings of several students during their clashes with law enforcers and alleged pro-government activists, who were seen attacking the students with iron pipes, rods, sticks and hockey sticks in Dhaka and elsewhere. Some of them also opened fire on the protesters in and outside the capital.

In the wake of the situation, the government requested the top court to hold an early hearing as death toll continued to rise.

After hearing the matter for about two and a half hours on Sunday, the seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan gave the verdict, curtailing quota to only seven percent.

In disposing of the matter under article 104 of the constitution, the top court "considered the importance of the case and the prevailing overall reality."

THE PRESS BRIEFING

At the briefing held at the law minister's official residence, Anisul read out the circular, and provided its context.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain and State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat were present.

Asked about women quota, the law minister said female students during the movement said they are empowered enough and they do not need this quota.

"I have nothing to say if the Appellate Division listened to them," he said.

He also said the government will take care of the treatment of the general students who were injured during the movement.

"Earlier, the prime minister in her address to the nation said that she will take steps about those who have been killed and injured. We are sticking to that comment," Anisul said, replying to a question.

"We came to know they have something to say about the cases that were filed. We are trying to reach out to them [protesters] through the media. It they give us information about the cases, we will look into the matter."

He said the government will create a congenial atmosphere at educational institutions and ensure safety and security of the students.

He also claimed that "militants, BNP, Jamaat, Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal" infiltrated into the quota protest to destroy the country.

"We believe the situation will not deteriorate, as the problem has been solved. If anyone makes any ill attempt to deteriorate the situation, we will take stern actions."

About allegations that some international media ran reports using "distorted information," Arafat said a plan for carrying out violence using the students as a shield was hatched long ago.

"They had preparation to attack the data centre and disrupt internet service. Without internet, we also suffered as we could not communicate globally. As we could not communication globally, their syndicate abroad carried out a disinformation campaign. As a result, international media is providing wrong information," he said.

He claimed "BNP, Jamaat and Shibir men" attacked different government structures like BTV, data centre, toll plazas and Setu Bhaban.

"I received phone calls from BTV. They were crying, feeling threatened. They were saying, 'sir save us.'"

"When you are attacked, you have to fight back. When we fought back in defence, the clashes left many people killed and injured. The attackers are responsible for the killings. Each and every one involved in the killing will be brought to book," he said.

The education minister said students were used as a shield in the movement.

"We will assess how many students were involved in the movement and from which institutions after reopening of the educational institutions," he said.

Another 1,100 arrested in police raids

FROM PAGE 1

accused were not mentioned and only stated "many unidentified accused".

Among the over 1,100 arrestees, 505 were in the capital, according to police and court sources.

Of the others, 102 were arrested in Chattogram; 34 in Barishal; 12 in Dinajpur; 33 in Rangpur; 55 in Mymensingh; 12 in Kishoreganj; 31 in Narsingdi; 18 in Khulna; nine in Manikganj; 100 in Savar; 72 in Rajshahi; 80 in Narayanganj, and 60 in Gazipur.

With the latest count, at least 2,657 people have been arrested across the country in the last four days.

Shamsuddin Didar, a member of the BNP's media cell, yesterday said police arrested BNP leader Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas and Dhaka city (north) BNP convener Saiful Alam Nirob from the capital's Bailey Road and Bashundharaarea yesterday.

BNP Treasurer Rashedujjaman Millad and executive member Tariqul Islam were also arrested in capital yesterday, he alleged, adding that law enforcers raided BNP standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy's Nayapaltan office, but did not find him there.

Police started block raids in the city and other parts of the country after violent clashes and destruction took place in the capital and elsewhere.

According to the Police Headquarters, 281 different kinds of police vehicles were torched or damaged, while 235 police establishments, including stations and outposts, were also vandalised or gutted.

Yesterday, the 505 arrestees in Dhaka were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, which sent almost all of them to jail. A few were placed on remand on different terms, court sources said.

According to court records, 799 people were produced before the CMM court in three days till Monday.

Meanwhile, Additional Commissioner of DMP's Detective Branch (DB) Harun-or-Rashid yesterday said the DB has so far arrested 150 BNP and Jamaat leaders.

At a press briefing in his office yesterday, he alleged that different wings of the BNP and a section of Jamaat-Shibir activists carried out arson attacks on the BTV Bhaban, Setu Bhaban, Data Centre, metro rail, police traffic boxand police stations, upon the instructions from Tarique Rahman, acting chairman of the BNP, from London.

Harun said they arrested BNP executive committee member Tariqul Alam yesterday. According to the DB chief, Tariqul had been in contact with Tarique and used to convey his messages to other leaders.

4 organisers of quota

FROM PAGE 1

for ethnic minorities and another one percent for persons with disability and people of third gender.

The new allocation is in line with Sunday's Supreme Court verdict.

Nahid said the verdict and the circular were in favour of the protesters. But the government should answer for the recent bloodshed and deaths.

"So, we demand a policy-making dialogue involving the stakeholders in a conducive environment. Besides, we urge the government to form an independent commission to avoid issues regarding the quota system in future.

"Our movement will continue until justice is ensured for the deaths and injuries."

Two other coordinators, Sarjis Alam and Hasant Abdullah, Assistant Coordinator Hasib Al Islam, and Billal Hossain, father of Asif Mahmud, an organiser who allegedly had been missing since July 19, were present at the briefing.

There were also some policemen at the briefing, while a large number of them were seen outside.

Nahid said the situation escalated as a result of "instigating speeches by different government officials, controversial activities of Jubo League and Chhatra League, and use of excessive force by the law enforcers".

Taking advantage of the anarchic situation created to foil the movement, criminals launched arson attacks on different government establishments, he added.

"It's clear that irresponsible acts by the government and oppressive policy are to blame for this anarchic situation. For this, the government is solely responsible, while the law enforcement agencies failed to ensure public safety."

He added that the government was now shifting the blame to students and different political parties.

The government called for a dialogue while driving students out of campuses and shooting at protesters. "So, we had then rejected the call for dialogue."

He added that he was abducted and tortured physically and mentally for 24 hours, but did not say who abducted him.

"We don't feel safe."

"The government tried to suppress the movement through arrests, enforced disappearances, and use of excessive force."

Hasanat Abdullah said that before things got out of hand, the students urged the government to hold dialogue. "But they did not listen. The government cannot avoid responsibility for the damage."

"The internet shutdown caused a lack of coordination among the organisers." Meanwhile, three organisers Asif Mahmud, Abu Baker Majumder, and Rigat Rashid had been missing, he added.

Sarjis Alam said 300 to 400 people have been killed in the recent violence. "This loss is irreparable."

He said dialogues with the government could only be held when the safety of the protest organisers is ensured, the internet is fully restored, the curfew is withdrawn, educational institutions are reopened, and law enforcers leave the campuses.

The protesters on Friday night put forth a set of demands that include a public apology from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the resignation of Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan from the cabinet.

Carry out fair probe

FROM PAGE 1

been suspended since Thursday night.

They welcomed the government decision to restore internet as a trial around 10:00pm yesterday and demanded full restoration of internet.

In future, the media should have internet services during such situations.

The closure of the internet services is disrupting the exchange and verification of information. The economy is also being affected badly.

Such closure of internet service creates a fear of information blackout, it said, adding that resumption of internet service is imperative in keeping the economy running.

The statement said several journalists lost their lives and at least 100 others were injured.

"Journalists discharging their professional duties are still in a state of insecurity. All parties have to take the responsibility to ensure safety of journalists.

"The situation turned worse as rumours, false and baseless information spread over the last few days due to the internet closure," added the statement.

The meeting was attended by Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; AK Azad, publisher of Samakal; Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Prothom Alo; AMM Bahauddin, editor of Dainik Inqilab; Naem Nizam, editor of Bangladesh Pratidin; Alamgir Hossain, editor of Samakal; Zafar Sobhan, editor of Dhaka Tribune; Mostafa Mamun, editor of Desh Rupantor; Md Golam Rahman, editor of Ajker Patrika; Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age; Shahriar Karim, executive editor of Sangbad; Shamsul Huq Zahid, editor of The Financial Express; Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor of Manabzamin; ASM Shahidullah Khan, publisher of New Age; Shyamal Dutta, editor of Bhorer Kagoj; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor and publisher of Bonik Barta; Altamash Kabir, editor of Sangbad; and Saiful Alam, editor of Jugantor.

7-hour curfew break

FROM PAGE 1

High Court divisions of the Supreme Court, will remain suspended during the curfew hours.

The courts will resume judicial proceedings if the curfew is relaxed.

The SC administration yesterday issued three notifications in this regard detailing the instructions.

The offices and sections of the courts will remain open as usual even during the curfew.

If the government declares any general holiday, the courts will remain closed on that particular day, SC Registrar General Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan told The Daily Star citing the notifications.

According to a notification, the district judges, district and sessions judges, metropolitan sessions judges, chief judicial magistrates and chief metropolitan magistrates will fix the timing of their courts and offices after coordinating with the district magistrates and the police commissioners concerned.

They will conduct the judicial functions after informing the judges, officials and lawyers about the timing.

In Gazipur, eight factories were shut in Sreepur upazila yesterday for running operations during the curfew hours, said Assistant Commissioner (land) of Sreepur Atahar Shakil.

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PATIENTS WITH BULLET, PELLET WOUNDS

Dhaka hospitals stretched to the limit

DIPAN NANDY, SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **MASHFIQ MIZAN**

Patients with pellet and bullet wounds at DMCH. PHOTO: STAR

Some of them are teens, some in early 20s and many are middle-aged men. The one thing common between all of them is that they have been shot either by shotgun pellets or bullets, as police and BGB opened fire at protesters and alleged infiltrators during the recent unrest centring the quota protests.

Many claimed they had nothing to do with the violence or protests. According to them, they were either harmless onlookers or commuters who had to venture out for different emergencies. And now, they are barely surviving on hospital beds, after coming in the line of fire.

From Thursday, Dhaka hospitals, mainly Dhaka Medical College Hospital, were stretched to their limits with patients suffering from pellet and bullet wounds.

Take the case of Shafiqul Islam.

He was shot in his back on Sunday evening when he went out to see what the situation was outside.

When these correspondents visited DMCH yesterday, his four-year-old daughter Fatema was peacefully sleeping beside him.

But peace was the last thing on Shafiqul's mind. He was barely awake, completely worn out after going through a life-saving surgery.

"I cannot move my body. Sometimes, the pain is so severe that I think even death was better. I don't think I can return to normal life," he said.

Currently, 217 patients with pellet and bullet wounds are undergoing treatment at the facility.

As many as 1,071 patients, with injuries sustained from sharp weapons, pellets, and bullets, have sought treatment at DMCH from July 15 to July 22, according to DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman.

Around 60 bodies were brought to the facility during this time, while 19 died undergoing treatment, he added.

Miraz Hossain is one such patient who is still undergoing treatment.

He went out of his home to grab breakfast. When he reached Boubazar, Rampura, he suddenly heard gunshots. People were

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Healthcare limps on

AHMED DEEPTO

Private medical colleges, hospitals and diagnostic centres across the country have been facing unprecedented disruptions due to the ongoing internet shutdown.

All online healthcare services are now out of reach for patients. Mobile internet was shutdown from 1:00pm on Thursday while broadband services came to a halt from 9:00pm the same day.

There are a total of 15,247 registered private hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres and blood banks. Of them, 5,029 are hospitals and clinics, 10,021 are diagnostics centres and 197 blood banks, according to DGHS.

"The central operating system connecting every branch of our hospital has been stopped as we don't have internet. All the lab reports are being registered through typing, which takes a lot of effort and time," said AM Shamim, chairman of LabAid Group.

"There is no alternative to restoring the internet for healthcare services. We don't want social media. We only need the internet," he said.

There is no alternative to restoring the internet for healthcare services. We don't want social media. We only need the internet.

AM SHAMIM
Chairman of LabAid Group

Square Hospitals authorities said they are facing six types of trouble because of the internet shutdown. Online doctors' appointments, receiving lab or investigation report through apps and emails, updating software's and high-tech equipment, online call centres -- these services are off.

Many attendees used to pay their hospital and test bills through online services, which is totally off now, said Esam Ebne Yousuf Siddique, chief operating officer of Square Hospitals.

Moniruzzaman Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Private Clinics and Diagnostic Owners' Association, said they urged the government to restore internet to prevent further damage to the private health sector.

Nilufar Yasmin, 55, a resident of Dhanmondi, said, "I have chest pain for the last couple of days. My physician advised me to conduct an X-ray and an echo-cardiogram. Earlier, I used to get my lab report online, but now I cannot."

Meanwhile, State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak yesterday said broadband services would resume by midnight on a trial basis.

ARRESTS FOLLOWING UNREST

Desperate for a glimpse of loved ones

Families crowd CMM court

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Julekha Khatun could not sleep. Her husband Helal, 49, was arrested at 2:00am yesterday from their residence in Karail slum.

She headed to the kitchen early morning and cooked some food. She heard from law enforcers that her husband, a tea seller, would be produced in front of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

With home cooked meal, she left house for Old Dhaka, where the court is situated, despite the ongoing curfew.

After walking for hours, she finally reached her destination, walking past several check-posts.

All she wanted was to catch a glimpse of her husband, and hand him the food if possible.

A mother collapses in front of the CMM court after seeing her 21-year-old son being sent to jail from the court in a prison van. PHOTO: STAR

But she failed. Even after waiting for five hours till 5:30pm, she couldn't meet him.

"My husband sells tea. He was not involved in any violence, yet police arrested him," she claimed.

Helal was among 505 people produced before the CMM court yesterday in cases filed centring the recent violence, according to court sources.

The court premises were filled with relatives of the arrestees, and many couldn't get to see their loved ones amid the rush of people.

"We live on my husband's meagre earnings. How will we maintain the family expenses now?" Julekha asked.

Later in the day, Helal was sent to jail after police produced him before the court in a case filed with Banani Police Station over violence.

Hafsa Akter, 40, came to the court premises from Fakirerpool to find her son Mamun.

She said her son is an employee of a grocery shop in the area. Police arrested him on Monday evening when he went to buy medicine.

However, like Julkeha, she too couldn't catch a glimpse of her son.

Meanwhile, Hosna collapsed in front of the court premises when she saw her 21-year-old son Hridoy being taken away from the court in a prison van.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Travel agents face EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

Says ATAB president; activities of 4,000 agencies remain halted since Thursday

RASHIDUL HASAN

Passengers, especially migrant workers, continue to suffer at the Dhaka airport due to cancellation or delay of flights. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The travel agents are facing an "existential crisis" due to the countrywide internet blackout as all activities of around 4,000 travel agents have remained halted since Thursday night.

Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), a platform for travel agents, said ATAB is incurring a loss of around Tk 100 crore as all kinds of air ticket sales, rescheduling and hotel bookings have remained halted since July 18.

Besides, travel agents also couldn't realise money from different corporate and regular clients from earlier sale of tickets, as monetary transactions remained suspended due to the closure of banks and other financial services, said ATAB.

"Our existence will be in danger if internet service does not resume immediately. We need to start our activities as soon as possible," ATAB President Abdus Salam Aref, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We assume bitter days are awaiting us due to the ongoing situation," he added.

ATAB fears that travel agencies will fail to pay International Air Transport Association (IATA) bills if the current situation continues for another day or two.

Different foreign airlines collect money against ticket sales from IATA, as it acts as a mediator between travel agents and foreign airlines.

Travel agents pay airlines through IATA every 15 days. The next payment date falls on July 30, said the ATAB president.

"Besides, if we cannot collect the ticket sales money from buyers and organisations, we won't be able to pay arrears to respective airlines," he added.

"We have not been able to contact any airlines in the last five days due to the internet shutdown," he said, adding that global distributing system, ticket booking -- everything entirely depends on online

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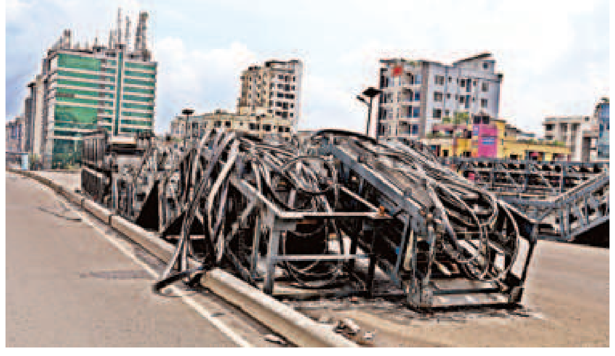

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN
Remains of burnt escalators in Uttara's Abdullahpur.

DHAKA TO GAZIPUR BRT LINE

Arson chars 22 escalators, project may get delayed

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The launch of a dedicated bus service between Dhaka-Gazipur corridor may get delayed further as miscreants have damaged 22 escalators to be used for elevated stations on the route during the recent unrest.

After changing several deadlines, the authority planned to start trial run of the service on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 from January next year.

"But the trial run is likely to be delayed," Md Moniruzzaman, managing director of Dhaka BRT Company, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Even if they can start trial in January, all the stations will not be ready by then due to the escalators being damaged, Ilias Shah and Mohirul Islam, two project directors, told this correspondent yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

প্রাণ
সস
স্বাদ বাড়াতে বস
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'Detention, arrest of students concerning'

Say 22 current, ex-DU IR teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-two current and former teachers of International Relations Department at Dhaka University yesterday expressed grave concern over "large-scale arrests and detention of students" for participating in the quota reform protest, and demanded their immediate release.

In a statement, the teachers said the students have merely exercised their rights to freedom of assembly and expression, guaranteed in the constitution.

They alleged that Rashidul Islam, a third-year student of DU IR and a co-coordinator of the protest, has been missing since July 18, and demanded that the authorities find him and ensure his security.

"There have been news reports of disappearance of student activists, with some being subsequently found abandoned in isolated places with severe bodily wounds. We urge the authorities to take appropriate action against the perpetrators and ensure that everyone is treated in accordance with the law," said the statement.

The signatories are Prof Akmal Hossain, Prof Ramjul Haque, Prof M Shahiduzzaman, Prof CR Abrar, Prof Ashequa Irshad, Prof Ehsanul Haque, Prof Rashed Uz Zaman, Prof Tanzimuddin Khan, Prof ASM Ali Ashraf, Prof Rozana Rashid, Prof Abdul Mannan, Prof Niloy Ranjan Biswas, Associate Prof M Obaidul Haque, Associate Prof Bushra Hasina Chowdhury, Asst Prof Sayeda Akhter, Asst Prof Mohammad Ali Siddiquee, Asst Prof Anwarul Azim, Asst Professor Lamea Momen, Lecturer Samia Zaman, Lecturer Tanvir Habib, Lecturer Iffat Ara, and Lecturer Saddam Hossain.

JAIL ATTACK

Trying hard to arrest attackers

Says home minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

The government is trying hard to arrest all the attackers of Narsingdi District Jail and the masterminds behind the incident, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday.

"We have already arrested 95 people who carried out the anarchy... We are trying our best to arrest the rest of the criminals involved in the incident," he said.

The minister was briefing reporters on the Narsingdi Jail premises.

"Many convicts -- who fled from the prison -- are now surrendering," he said.

"We have formed two probe committees to investigate the incident. We believe that BNP-Jamaat men are behind the incident," he added.

The home minister also informed that the nationwide curfew will be withdrawn within a day or two.

In a separate press conference yesterday afternoon, the district's Deputy Commissioner Badiul Alam said 136 convicts have already surrendered and 33 firearms have been recovered.

Narsingdi Jail Superintendent Md Abul Kalam Azad and Jailer Md Kamrul Islam have been suspended, he said.

On July 19, a total of 826 prisoners fled from the jail, while 85 arms, and 9,000 bullets were looted.

A man reads a newspaper to get updates on the recent events. With internet being shut down amid the countrywide curfew, people are relying more on newspapers for information. The photo was taken in Sylhet's Bandarbazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

RECENT VIOLENCE

Funding came from abroad

Says Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday claimed that miscreants collected funds from Europe and Middle East in the name of providing aid to students during the quota protests.

These funds were used for subversive activities by communicating with the vested quarters in the country and abroad.

Rab made the claims while addressing media at the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday following the arrest of four members of Gono Odhikar Parishad, including its joint member secretary, for their involvement in violence and sabotage activities in BTV building and metro rail.

Arrestees are Tareq Rahman, 31, joint member secretary of the party; Sajal Mia, 24; Al Foysal Roky, 27; and Ariful Islam, 30.

Lt Col Munim Ferdous, director of legal and media wing of Rab, said they have already identified four people who financed the violence.

Without disclosing the details, he said they are investigating to know the roles of suspects.

Addressing media at the same venue, Harun Ar Rashid, additional inspector general of Rab, said the protests turned violent from July 19.

Protesters targeted the police and conducted violent activities at different government establishments, said the Rab chief.

Fuel sales drop by 89.3pc

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, *Ctg*

The ongoing curfew, which began on Saturday, has resulted in fewer vehicles plying streets throughout the country. As a result, fuel sales have decreased significantly.

The sale of diesel has dropped by 98 percent, while sales of petrol and octane have fallen by 82 and 88 percent respectively. On average, fuel sales dropped by 89.3 percent.

Chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) Aminul Ahsan told The Daily Star that there is a sufficient fuel stock in the country. Fuel depots were closed due to unstable situation, but now all activities in the depots are normal.

"Sale of fuel decreased in the past few days, as vehicular movement remained stopped," he said, adding, "As the situation has improved now, sale of fuel has also increased since Tuesday."

As per data from BPC, around 3,000 tonnes of diesel was sold on Monday. On the same day, 175 tonnes of octane, 295 tonnes of petrol and 1,400 tonnes of furnace oil was also sold.

On Saturday, only 1,400 tonnes of diesel, 42 tonnes of octane and 160 tonnes of petrol were sold. No furnace oil was sold on that day.

Requesting anonymity, a number of officials of BPC said 11,000 tonnes of diesel was sold in the country on July 20, 2023 while 1,000 tonnes of octane and 1,300 tonnes of petrol were sold on that day.

The sale of diesel has dropped by 98 percent, while sales of petrol and octane have fallen by 82 and 88 percent respectively.

At present, the demand for diesel in the country is 15,000 tonnes a day, while for octane the daily demand is 1,500 tonnes and 1,600 tonnes for petrol.

According to officials at the depots, demand for diesel is high in the northern districts of the country, including Rangpur and Dinajpur, at present. So, supply of diesel is being ensured in this region through railway wagons.

BPC chairman Aminul Ahsan said jet fuel is being supplied to the four airports in the country with the help of security forces.

Arson chars 22

FROM PAGE 3

Taken in November 2012, the project, formally known as Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project, was originally planned to be completed by December 2016 at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore.

But long delay was caused by issues relating to land acquisition, relocation of utility services, design changes, contractors running out of money, and the pandemic. Moreover, physical work was suspended twice.

As a result, the total project cost is now estimated at Tk 4,268.3 crore and the deadline is December 2024.

The 20.5-kilometre bus corridor, the country's first dedicated rapid bus service, will allow people to reach Dhaka from Gazipur in 35-40 minutes, which now takes between 1.5 and two-three hours. There will be 25 stations.

Moniruzzaman said all construction works under the project is supposed to be completed within September and they have already floated the tender to procure buses for the dedicated bus service.

According to the progress report, 94.61 percent of physical work of the project was completed by May this year.

He, however, said at least 22 new escalators, which were kept on the project site, were burnt down either fully or partially during the unrest centring the quota protests.

Cost of each escalator is around Tk 50 lakh to Tk 60 lakh, he said.

He said they were now checking whether these escalators can be repaired or they have to be replaced.

"All these escalators were imported from abroad. It would take a good amount of time if these need to be imported again," he said.

Ilias Shah, project director (Roads and Highways Department part), said out 57 escalators, 16 were burnt down partially or fully. Besides, different equipment at several under-construction stations from Uttara's Azampur area to Gazipur's Board Bazar area were either vandalised or burnt down, he said.

Now, they will have five months to either repair or replace the escalators before launching the trial run, he said. If they cannot repair or replace the escalators by this time, they will have to ration the rest of the escalators among 19 stations that fall under their (RHD) project area, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mohirul Islam, project director (Bangladesh Bridge Authority part), said six out of their 12 escalators for six stations under their (BBA) project area were affected.

He said they could not ascertain whether those have to be repaired or replaced.

If those escalators are found to be unusable, then all the stations may not be opened during the trial run, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Desperate for a glimpse

Holding NID card of her husband, Julekha waits in front of the CMM court to catch a glimpse of him. Her husband, Helal, a tea seller, was arrested early yesterday in a case centring the recent violence.

PHOTO: STAR

FROM PAGE 3

She said her son was a worker at Shanta Tower in Tejgaon Industrial Area.

"My son was not involved in any violence, but police arrested him around 5:00pm on Monday while he was returning home after work," she claimed.

Dhaka hospitals stretched

FROM PAGE 3

running and screaming, and before he could understand anything, a bullet hit the left side of his chest and pierced through his back.

When he regained consciousness, he found doctors trying to stop his bleeding at DMCH.

He had to go through a surgery. Although his condition is now stable, he can neither eat, nor use the bathroom without the pipes installed in his body.

Md Sumon, a middle-aged trader in New Market area, shared a similar ordeal.

He was shot below his waist.

"I stay in Azimpur. On Friday, I went out for Juma prayers. When I reached the New Market area, a bullet suddenly hit me. Although doctors saved my life, I don't think I can ever return to normal life. I am not sure if I can even walk again," he said.

For Md Sifat, 17, a joyous trip to his "nana bari" (grandfather's home in village) in Narsingdi turned into a nightmare as he was hit by a bullet when he went out.

The bullet pierced through his waist. A cannula was installed on his wrist, and all sorts of pipes through his body. He couldn't talk to this correspondent, only tears rolled down his cheeks.

His aunt, Nasrin Akhter, said, "Our Sifat is a good boy. He was never involved in politics. He came to his native village in Narsingdi from Shariatpur after education institutions were closed."

"He cannot eat solid food now. Only liquids are being given to him through a pipe," Nasrin said.

Meanwhile, 16-year-old Waliullah is the middle child in a family of five.

Due to poverty, his parents couldn't afford to send him to school.

He worked at a repairing shop in Narsingdi to support his father. On Friday, he went outside after lunch and got hit by a bullet. His condition is similar to Sifat.

Md Rubel, was stuck in his home for a day as sounds of gunfire and sound grenades rocked his neighbourhood on Friday. However, they ran out of drinking water.

So, he had to go out to buy water. When he reached Mugda Bishwo Road, a bullet pierced through his back.

Dr Md Alauddin, resident medical officer at DMCH, said all the patients admitted now were brought in a critical condition. They all had to undergo surgery.

"Although most of their condition is now stable, there are chances of infections in the wounded areas," he added.

The situation was more or less the same in National Institute of Traumatology, Orthopedic and Rehabilitation, and Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

In NITOR, around 1,369 patients were treated from July 17 to July 21, mostly with bullet and pellet wounds in arms and legs, said its Director Prof Dr Kazi Shamim Uzzama.

Of them, 537 had to be admitted.

The situation was the worst on Friday, the director said.

"The day-offs of all our doctors and staff had to be cancelled. They worked round the clock, and we had to keep all the eight operation theatres open for 24/7," he added.

Doctors at the emergency department said many patients, who were admitted to the facility before the violence, had to be discharged before time to make room for patients with bullet wounds.

Nayeem Mia, 19, is one such patient. He had to undergo a surgery on his limbs on July 9.

His father Naser Mia said his son was supposed to stay for at least a week, but the doctors told them to leave and return when things turn normal to make room to for the influx of patients on July 19.

In SMCH, as many as 518 people were treated during the same timeframe, according to its Director Prof Shafiur Rahman.

Of them, 30 had to undergo major surgeries while 150 minor ones.

Meanwhile, at least 394 patients were treated in National Institute of Ophthalmology, most with bullet and pellet wounds in eyes.

Of them, 157 had to be admitted, as per hospital sources.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 24

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAT	4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Travel agents face

FROM PAGE 3

communication.

The ongoing crisis has also put outgoing passengers in limbo.

ATAB leaders said they are in total darkness regarding whether passengers who have already bought and issued tickets will be able to fly to their respective destinations.

In the present situation, passengers who need to fly immediately buy tickets directly from the respective airlines at airports.

Things are really chaotic in the travel industry now, said Abdus Salam Aref.

Due to the internet outage, the total ticket-selling system has collapsed, said different airlines as foreign airline depends on agencies for selling tickets.

Due to passenger shortage, around 26 flights have been cancelled since last Friday, they said.

Several hundred passengers, mostly Saudi Arabia-bound migrant workers, suffered immensely due to the cancellation or delay of flights to and from Dhaka airport.

The return of the workers to KSA on time became uncertain as Saudia, the national flag carrier of Saudi Arabia, cancelled at least 10 flights.

Meanwhile, according to the civil aviation and tourism ministry, limited-scale internet service has resumed at airports.

RMG factories

FROM PAGE 6

Law enforcers allowed workers with identity cards to enter the factories, he said.

"Production resumed at Klarion Designs located in Dewanhat area at 8:00am," said Managing Director Altaullah Siddique Masud.

Around 95 percent of the factory's 1,100 workers came to work, as most live nearby, he said.

The workers of a sister concern, MKM Designs, travelling to their factory on eight buses were stopped by local police at Kalurghat, he said. They were released after confirming where they were going, said Masud.

He said he was scheduled to ship 150 containers of jerseys to Spain by the end of this month.

"We already lost four days. Now we need our workers to do overtime to ensure timely shipment," he said.

Meanwhile, many workers complained of having to pay double the transport fares to reach their factories.

Sultan Ahmed, quality in-charge at Uni Garment at Bayezid, said he had to spend over Tk 90 against Tk 40 on a regular day.

"Along with the production resumption, restoration of internet is also needed now to ensure timely shipments," said Rakibul Alam, vice-president of the BGMEA.

Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Limited
Road Transport & Highways Division
House-04, Road-21, Sector-04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230.
www.dhakabrt.gov.bd

DHAKA LINE

Corrigendum-02

Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.002.24-595

Date: July 23, 2024

The Invitation for Tender (IFT) for "Supply and Installation of Galvanized Steel Rolling Shutter Gates in Station Front (Docking Locations) of 25 BRT Stations", vide IFT Memo No. 35.06.0000.010.07.001.24-506, dated: 26/06/2024 is hereby amended as follows:

ITT Ref.	Title	Original Text	Amended Text
-	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	24 July, 2024; 05:00 PM	**31 July, 2024; 05:00 PM**
-	Tender Closing Date and Time	25 July, 2024; 02:00 PM	**01 August, 2024; 02:00 PM**
ITT 44.1	Tender Opening Date and Time	25 July, 2024; 02:15 PM	**01 August, 2024; 02:15 PM**

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum will be an integral part of the published IFT.

SD/-
Md. Kamruzzaman
Deputy General Manager
E-mail: dgmmaint.dbrtcl@gmail.com

GD-65

MYANMAR CRISIS

Junta chief takes on acting president role

AFP, *Yangon*

Myanmar's acting president has taken medical leave and transferred his duties to military chief Min Aung Hlaing, the junta said on Monday.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power in 2021, deposing the government of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Acting president U Myint Swe "took sick leave and is getting treatment according to his current health situation", the junta's information team said in a statement.

"Acting president duties have been handed over... to the chairman of State Administration Council," he said, using the name the junta calls itself.

Myint Swe was vice president under the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi that the military ousted in 2021.

He was later appointed acting president by the junta.

He had been suffering "psychomotor retardation and malnutrition," state media said on Friday.

A Palestinian woman and a little girl ride on a donkey cart laden with their worldly goods, as thousands of Palestinians who fled following the Israeli army's evacuation order for parts of Khan Yunis, including the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone, arrive in another area of the southern Gaza city yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

POST-WAR GAZA PLAN

Hamas announces 'unity' deal with Palestinian rivals

AFP, *Beijing*

Hamas announced yesterday that it had signed an agreement in Beijing with other Palestinian organisations including rivals Fatah to work together for "national unity", with China describing it as a deal to rule Gaza together once the offensive ends.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who hosted senior Hamas official Musa Abu Marzuk, Fatah envoy Mahmud al-Aloul and emissaries from 12 other Palestinian groups, said they had agreed to set up an "interim national reconciliation government" to govern post-offensive Gaza.

"Today we sign an agreement for national unity and we say that the path to completing this journey is national unity. We are committed to national unity and we call for it," Abu Marzuk said after meeting Wang and the other envoys.

China has sought to play a mediator role in the conflict, which has been rendered even more complex due to the intense rivalry between Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, and Fatah, which partially governs the occupied West Bank.

Israel has vowed to keep fighting until it destroys Hamas, and world powers including key Israeli backer the US have scrambled to imagine scenarios for the governance of Gaza once the offensive ends.

US Secret Service chief resigns

AFP, *Washington*

US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned yesterday, a day after acknowledging that the agency failed in its mission to prevent an assassination attempt against Donald Trump.

Cheatle was facing bipartisan calls to step down after a 20-year-old gunman wounded the former Republican president and current White House candidate at a July 13 campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

"It is overdue, she should have done this at least a week ago," Mike Johnson, Republican Speaker of House of Representatives, said.

Blinken heads to SE Asia to reaffirm ties with strategic allies

AFP, *Washington*

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken heads to Southeast Asia this week to deepen ties with Washington's strategic allies, an official said Monday, as the United States seeks to bolster its regional stance against an increasingly assertive China.

On a 10-day trip that will see him visit Vietnam, Laos, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia, Blinken will carry a message of US commitment to its allies in the region, said Daniel Kritenbrink, a senior US State Department official.

"We're deepening our bilateral relationships, we're expanding our allied and partner relationships, which have reached unprecedented heights, and we are creating a latticework of mutually reinforcing partnerships together," he said.

The United States has in recent years significantly increased its engagement with several countries in Southeast Asia, particularly those locked in territorial disputes with Beijing in the South China Sea.

Blinken's tour will include his participation in an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) ministerial meeting in Laos, where he will also meet with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines.

President Joe Biden has made expanding US alliances in the region a core part of his administration's foreign policy, and Kritenbrink said there was "strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for our allies and partners and our approach to the region."

Under Biden, Washington has doubled down on its engagement in what it terms the "Indo-Pacific" region, upgrading ties with several countries in the region and forming the so-called "Quad" alliance, which includes the United States, Japan, Australia and India.

Blinken's visit to Asia will be his 18th to the region since he took office more than three years ago.

"The message that the Secretary is going to be conveying to the region is that America is all in on the Indo-Pacific," said Kritenbrink.

Blinken will begin his six-nation tour in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, where he will attend the funeral of late communist leader Nguyen Phu Trong which is scheduled to begin tomorrow.

Trong died last week at a military hospital in Hanoi "due to old age and serious illness" at the age of 80.

In Laos, the US Secretary of State will participate on Friday and Saturday in the Asean ministerial meeting, where he will also meet Foreign Minister Wang.

Neither the United States nor China has confirmed whether the meeting will be a full bilateral sit-down or a less formal exchange.

India on $24bn jobs drive in Modi's first post-polls budget

AFP, *Mumbai*

India's government will spend $24 billion on employment and training, it said yesterday, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks to address uneven economic growth and mollify disgruntled voters after a surprising election setback last month.

The funding will be used over five years for a package of five schemes and initiatives to "facilitate employment, skilling and other opportunities" for more than 40 million young people, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her annual budget speech.

Some will go on "employment-linked incentives" for companies, which the government hopes will create jobs.

"The global economy, while performing better than expected, is still in the grip of policy uncertainties," Sitharman said.

"In this context, India's economic growth continues to be the shining exception and will remain so in the years ahead," she added.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell short of an outright majority in recent national elections.

Ctg student, 2 others die from wounds

FROM PAGE 12

based solely on hospital sources.

Hridoy was a residential student of CU's Shah Amanat dormitory, reports our Chattogram correspondent.

With his death, six people were killed in clashes in Chattogram.

Victim's friend Tahmina Firuz Hasan said Hridoy was rushed to Chattogram Medical College Hospital on July 18 evening after being hit by bullets and later he was moved to Park View Hospital's ICU. The next day, the doctors referred him to Dhaka for better treatment.

Youngest among two siblings, Hridoy hailed form Patuakhali Sadar upazila. Losing his only son, Ratan Chandra Tarua and Archana Rani became shell-shocked, reports our Patuakhali correspondent.

About the death of another youth, Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said police received the body from the neurosciences hospital and sent it to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

He sustained head injuries during clashes in the capital's Uttara, the OC said.

Shuvo Shil, 24, who had bullet wounds in clashes between agitators and law enforcers at Savar on Saturday, died at Savar Enam Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Yousuf Ali, manager of the hospital, confirmed the death.

According to him, another youth Faruk, 24, who was hit by bullets during Saturday's clash, breathed his last early Sunday.

Faruk was among Sunday's 14 deaths.

Quader stays away from press

FROM PAGE 12

questioned the organisational strength of the party's Dhaka city units and its associate bodies, said sources.

He expressed disappointment at the failure of the leaders and activists of the party's Dhaka city units and some associate bodies to take to the streets despite the party's directives.

After violence broke out at different parts of the country, Quader on several occasions urged the party men to take to the streets and put up resistance against the troublemakers.

On July 16, Quader in a meeting with the Dhaka city unit AL leaders instructed them to remain vigilant.

But no leaders and activists of the AL and its associate bodies were seen in many parts of Dhaka city during the demonstrations over quota reforms.

Violence broke out since July 16 that left at least 150 people dead and several hundred injured.

In yesterday's meeting, Quader expressed his frustration that the thana unit committees of the Dhaka city AL have not been formed. He asked the leaders to form those committees immediately.

The AL leader requested the party activists to comply with the curfew rules.

Broadband internet back in selected areas

FROM PAGE 12

were given a list of social media and messaging apps at a meeting at the BTRC and instructed to submit a report on the success rate of blocking those apps after running trials, according to sources involved with the process.

They requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of matter.

While, the government and the BTRC said the internet blackout occurred due to the attack on the data centres in the capital's Mohakhali, the sources said the shutdown of the internet was ordered by the government.

The Daily Star visited the data centres in question and found no sign of fire damage to the building that housed them.

Officials of these data centres also confirmed that the fire did not reach their offices.

They said the fire that broke out on Thursday in the building of the Department of Disaster Management in Mohakhali, adjacent to the data centres, has damaged several overhead cables connected to the data centres.

Even if these data centres were completely gutted by the fire, the internet connections of less than one-fourth of country's users at best should have been disrupted, Mohiuddin Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers Association told this newspaper.

He went on to say that since there were redundancies and big internet service providers did not host their servers at those centres, the countrywide internet service should have been running largely smoothly.

Terming internet service as a basic need, Mohiuddin urged the government to restore internet for every citizen as soon as possible.

Multiple broadband service providers said many of their cables and equipment were vandalised during the recent violence, but it should have only resulted in suspension of internet connections in those specific areas, not a complete blackout.

On July 17, after the government ordered the shutdown of mobile internet, Palak, state minister for ICT, said the decision was taken in light of the current unrest in the country and to stop the spread of fake news on social media.

On July 18, a fire broke out in the building of the Department of Disaster Management in Mohakhali, damaging the internet transmission lines of some data centres housed in an adjacent building.

On the same day, around 8:00pm, officials of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) said fire may eat away 30 to 40 percent of bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

But around 9:00pm, Bangladesh went under a complete internet blackout.

Emdadul Haque, president of ISPAB, yesterday said though there are some works still going on to restore their damaged lines, they are now prepared to provide broadband internet across the country.

WHO sounds alarm

FROM PAGE 12

Gaza City, with four others killed in the Jabalia refugee camp.

At least 39,090 people have been killed since the Israeli offensive began on October 7. The toll includes 84 deaths in 24 hours, according to the Gaza health ministry figures.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under pressure to reach a truce and hostage-release deal, arrived in Washington to address the US Congress today.

Netanyahu will meet US President Joe Biden tomorrow. In late June, Netanyahu said the offensive "in its intense phase" was about to end.

The evacuation order for Gaza's Al-Mawasi area came just two months after the military directed Palestinians there for their own safety.

"Due to the Israeli occupation's attacks and massacres in Khan Yunis governorate from the early hours of this morning until now, 70 people have been martyred and more than 200 wounded," the Gaza health ministry said.

The Israeli military did not offer comment on the toll when asked by AFP. But in a statement, the military said its fighter jets and tanks "struck and eliminated terrorists in the area".

It said forces targeted more than "30 terror infrastructure" sites in Khan Yunis. Israeli warplanes also hit a weapons storage facility, observation posts, tunnel shafts and structures used by Hamas, it added.

UN, US, UK slam violence

FROM PAGE 12

when they come under attack, which is true for any country in the world. Police were forced to shoot when they were attacked, and public properties were destroyed and set on fire.

Catherine West, parliamentary under-secretary of state of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, on Monday expressed deep concerns over the violence in Bangladesh in recent days.

"The loss of life is unacceptable ... the rights to protest, to peacefully assemble and to express different political views are rights, which the UK holds dear and must be protected," she said, calling for quickly restoring internet.

"We urge an end to the violence and loss of life and call on all sides to find ways to restore calm across Bangladesh, including by establishing a pathway for constructive political dialogue in the interest of the people of Bangladesh."

Meanwhile, the UN has conveyed its concerns to Bangladesh authorities over the "misuse of UN-marked vehicles" during the student protests over the last week.

"The misuse of UN-marked vehicles is alarming and has been conveyed to Bangladeshi authorities," a UN spokesperson told a briefing in New York on Monday.

During the diplomatic briefing by Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud on Sunday, acting UN resident coordinator Domenico Scalpelli also spoke about UN logos on helicopters seen on TV.

"This has now come to the attention of the UN headquarters in New York," Scalpelli said.

A UN official in Dhaka told this correspondent yesterday that these vehicles are the properties of Bangladesh government, but use of those marked with UN logos during violence is a reputational issue for the UN.

Asked, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told this correspondent yesterday evening: "We are looking into it."

The UN spokesperson in New York said the "brutal crackdown on the student protesters" in Bangladesh is unacceptable. Accountability and dialogue are essential.

Domenico Scalpelli told Hasan on Sunday that internet outage is impacting the lifesaving work of UN and NGO partners for flood victims and Rohingya crisis response, as well as government's monthly social security cash payments for most vulnerable poor families.

"Reduction of security forces in Cox's Bazar camps risks resulting in further increase of insecurity in those camps."

"We need government's facilitation for us now to bring in satellite phones and other equipment for emergency communications," he said.

Prof Yunus' statement anti-state

FROM PAGE 2

reforms protests left at least 150 people dead and several hundred injured.

On Friday, the government declared curfew and deployed armed forces to help the civil administration restore normalcy.

The US State Department spokesperson on Monday condemned the reported shoot-on-sight orders and called for those to be rescinded.

"We said everywhere in the world police take action if they come under attack.... [In Bangladesh] police had no other option but to open fire when they came under attack, houses and properties were destroyed or set on fire."

The minister said some vested quarters are spreading rumours abroad amid the internet outage at home. The foreign ministry has instructed the Bangladesh missions abroad to send messages to the Bangladesh communities and foreign governments describing the real picture of what has happened in Bangladesh.

Hasan said the foreign ministry has also arranged a visit for the foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka to the destroyed public properties today.

"As these need to be rebuilt, we will not be able to show them later. So, we have arranged the visit tomorrow [today]," he said.

About diplomatic mission staff going on voluntary leave, the minister said he had no idea about how many staff went on leave. "The situation is not like that the diplomatic staff will have to leave Bangladesh."

He said Dhaka has issued a note to New Delhi regarding West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Benarjee's remarks on "students' bloodshed" in Bangladesh.

"With due respect, we would like to say that we have good relations with her. But her remarks may create a scope for confusion. We have already issued a note to the Indian government about it," he said.

The minister said many media personnel came under attack during the violence. Two journalists were killed and many injured.

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 24, 2024, SRABAN 9, 1431 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Star BUSINESS

RMG factories start to reopen gradually

All units may resume production today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Garment and textile factories started to gradually reopen yesterday after being kept shut for four days with the expectation that all factories will reopen today.

Nearly 30 percent of garment factories, including some in Dhaka, were opened yesterday and no untoward incident was reported.

All factories will reopen today, SM Mannan Kochi, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said after a meeting with the home minster, who assured him of safety.

"We are hopeful that all the factories will reopen tomorrow," said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, over the phone.

He added that they were facing challenges in communicating with their foreign buyers due to an ongoing internet blackout.

Local liaison offices of international clothing retailers and brands have also complained of being unable to contact their headquarters and place new work orders.

Leaders of the garment and textile sectors have been lobbying the home minister and state minister for ICT over the last two days to ensure safety of workers and restore the internet.

They met the prime minister on Monday seeking to reopen factories. The prime minister advised to do so at their own risk.

Kochi added that the sector has already suffered losses amounting to Tk 6,400 crore in potential earnings due to the shutdown over the four days.

Nearly 30 percent of garment factories, including some in Dhaka, were opened yesterday and no untoward incident was reported

The factory owners will have to pay Tk 1,000 crore in wages although there was no production in the factories, he added.

Similarly, the losses in the garment accessories sector stands at over Tk 2,500 crore, Kochi also said.

The sector leaders were scheduled to sit in another meeting with the home minister last night.

Members of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association are also trying to reopen their factories but some have been barred by local administrations over safety concerns.

Meanwhile, many garment factories in Chattogram, except those inside export processing zones, have resumed production.

Law enforcement agencies and the local administration consented to the reopening in a meeting with leaders of the BGMEA's Chattogram chapter on Monday, Syed Nazrul Islam, first vice-president of the BGMEA, told The Daily Star.

"Around 70 to 80 percent of the 450 factories currently operational outside the EPZs resumed production yesterday," said Islam.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A bus terminal in the capital's Syedabad is overflowing with vehicles, which have been forced to stay off the roads due to a nationwide curfew amid violence centring the quota reform protests. Transport operators are counting heavy losses because of the volatile situation, which has seen them unable to ply the roads for nearly a week.

Bus operators stare at losses

JAGARAN CHAKMA *and* **TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY**

Bus services, the main mode of passenger transportation in Bangladesh, have been shut for nearly a week in the wake of violence centring the quota reform movement and the subsequent imposition of a nationwide curfew by the government.

The shutdown not only deprived operators from carrying passengers and earning revenue, but also caused them to incur huge losses. This is because they still have to bear expenses to repay bank loans, pay salaries to employees and pay counter rent.

There is no exact estimate of losses, but a top leader of a bus operators' association said inter-district operators have been losing out on at least Tk 18 crore in daily revenue since Friday, when they stopped plying the roads amid escalating violence.

Around 30,000 buses ply inter-district routes daily under around 200 companies. Each bus is losing at least Tk 6,000 in revenue daily, said Khandker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owner's Association.

The loss is even greater if fixed expenditures are factored in.

Bangladesh has over 83,000 registered buses, with private investment in the business growing in line with the expansion of national and regional highways.

The country now has roughly 4,000 kilometres of national highways and 4,900 kilometres of regional highways.

Buses carry roughly 70 percent of passengers, followed by inland waterways, rail and air.

Enayet estimated overall investment in the sector by private operators at several thousands of crore taka, saying that they are the first victims of any violence or unrest.

Around 30,000 buses ply inter-district routes daily under around 200 companies. Each bus is losing at least Tk 6,000 in revenue daily, said owners

He added that the sector directly employs around 10 lakh individuals.

Enayet said their business suffered heavily when a lockdown was imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Operators did not get support from the government, nor did banks defer interest and instalment payments, he said.

Md Abdur Sattar, general manager of Green Line, an air-conditioned bus service provider, said they have not been operating for a week due to the ongoing violence and curfew.

Green Line operates over 100 air-conditioned buses on eight routes, he said, adding that they have 47 counters and around 400 staff members.

"Although we are not operating, our unavoidable costs (fixed costs) are almost Tk 1.5 crore per day, including rent of counters, staff salary and utility charge," he said.

"We have no revenue because our operations are stopped, but bank interest will still have to be paid," he said.

However, he said they would not need to pay drivers, conductors or helpers as their job is under the master roll, meaning they are not paid when operations are halted.

A number of their buses were stranded in different districts, Sattar said, adding that they even had to repay passengers who had booked trips in advance as those were cancelled.

He further said that miscreants had vandalised three of their buses.

"But we have to accept reality as we have no alternative," he lamented.

Moshareff Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, said they will resume operations after getting the green signal from the government.

On the other hand, sources at the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation said they are yet to get any order regarding bus operations from government high-ups.

SM Nadiruzzaman, managing director of Dola Paribahan, which operate buses on the Dhaka-Khulna and Dhaka-Pirojpur routes, said they have also faced huge business losses due to unavoidable circumstances like other operators.

"Although we did not need to pay salary to the drivers and support staff, we have to provide food to the staff and allowances to those who take care of the vehicles. That amount is not low at all," he said.

He added that they had decided to begin operating from today as the government has relaxed the curfew hours.

Shuvenkar Ghosh, proprietor of Shyamoli NR Travels, said they already started to operate considering the plight of their workers. As they needed to make a living, the company decided to operate on a limited scale on very limited routes, he said.

"Despite starting operations, the number of passengers is very low. If the number of passengers rises, we will increase the number of buses on all routes," he said.

Ghosh, also joint secretary of the Bangladesh Bus, Truck Owners' Association, said other operators will also start operations soon.

Container congestion eases slightly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Container congestion at Chattogram port eased slightly yesterday as a noticeable number of containers could be transferred to private inland container depots (ICDs).

The number of total containers lying in different port yards came down to 41,620 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) as of 8am yesterday, down from 42,150 TEUs a day ago.

Around 1,110 TEUs of containers could be transported to different ICDs in the 24 hours to 8am yesterday, said Md Omar Faruk, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

Moreover, 65 TEUs of import containers could be delivered from the port yards to consignees yesterday whereas none could be delivered to consignees in the previous two days.

Transport of import and export containers between the port and private ICDs also improved, said officials of ICDs.

However, import containers and cargoes started piling up at the ICDs because of slow release of containers thanks to problems in duty assessment amid internet shutdown and poor vehicular movement on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Very few export cargo from Dhaka and other parts of the country reached the port, as most factories remained closed yesterday, said Ruhul Amin Sikder, secretary general of the Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association.

Banks waive penalty for delayed loan repayment

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Some banks have decided not to impose any interest or fees on clients for delayed payment of loan instalments, including that against credit cards, amidst a nationwide curfew and internet blackout.

A good number of banks are also on way to take the decision in the next one or two days.

Four local private commercial banks, BRAC Bank, City Bank, Mutual Trust Bank and Pubali Bank, and foreign lender Standard Chartered Bangladesh have already taken the decision.

Jamuna Bank Managing Director and CEO Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed confirmed to The Daily Star that they have already spoken to their chairman so that the decision could be taken.

The Association of Bankers Bangladesh (ABB), a forum of chief executive officers of private commercial banks, requested the Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB), comprising owners of banks, to take the decision taking into consideration the unavoidable circumstances at present, said industry insiders.

Issuing a notice, BRAC Bank said it took the decision against the backdrop of general holidays and internet outage and would reimburse any such interest or fee that might have been already charged.

"We took the decision as clients are facing trouble conducting online banking," Managing Director Selim RF Hussain told this newspaper.

They have ensured that their ATM booths contain adequate cash but international transactions for export and import, remittance collections and all payments abroad are now suspended for the internet shutdown, confirmed Hussain, also the ABB chairman.

KEY POINTS

- BB urged BTRC to allow broadband internet for banks
- People facing trouble in withdrawing money
- Foreign transactions for export-import halted
- Banks can't make overseas payment
- Banks' profitability will be impacted adversely

Mutual Trust Bank also has taken the same decision, confirmed Managing Director Syed Mahbubur Rahman.

Pubali Bank Managing Director Mohammad Ali said they generally do not impose such interests or fees and took the decision to refrain from imposing those as it would not have been ethical to do otherwise.

He believes the internet blackout will adversely affect the banking sector alongside the bank's profitability.

In another notice, Standard Chartered Bangladesh said it would waive any extra fees, charges or interest on credit cards or loans incurred for repayment delays. It added that its ATM network was active.

Top Bangladesh Bank officials spoke to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to ensure broadband internet for banks, said a senior central bank official seeking anonymity.

Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed of Jamuna Bank told The Daily Star that the central bank assured them of talking to government stakeholders to reconnect banks with broadband internet.

"We came to know that the central bank is going to meet with the BTRC to restart broadband internet of banks as soon as possible," said Selim RF Hussain.

Around $80 million to $100 million in remittances are sent to Bangladesh on a regular day, which was disrupted for the internet shutdown, he said.

Amidst the internet shutdown and nationwide curfew, people have been unable to conduct online banking since July 18. A lot of ATM booths have been kept shut while others have run out of cash.

Dairy farmers' income falls amid curfew

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

Dairy farmers in Pabna and Sirajganj are reporting a drop in sales revenue, citing that a few companies have either reduced or stopped making purchases amidst the curfew.

Farmers are now depending on local traders to sell their milk at low prices.

Around 34 lakh litres of milk are produced per day by dairy farmers of Pabna and Sirajganj, according to the district livestock offices.

Out of the 19 lakh litres produced in Sirajganj, dairy companies buy 7-8 lakh litres while local traders the rest, said Md Omor Faruk, the livestock officer of Sirajganj.

Around 15 lakh litres of milk are produced in Pabna every day and dairy companies buy 1.5 to 2 lakh litres, said Gourango Kumar, the livestock officer of Pabna.

However, there is no scope of any milk going to waste as many private companies and sweetmeat shops operating in the region end up purchasing leftovers, he said.

A local conglomerate has dropped their daily purchases from their usual 550-600 litres to 300-400 litres, said farmer Md Al Amin of Pabna, adding that they were having to sell off their milk to locals at low prices.

Local traders used to pay Tk 52 per litre but now they pay Tk 50, he said.

The cost of producing each litre of milk is Tk 48 to Tk 50, said Md Saiful Islam, president of Dairy Farm Owners Association of Pabna.

Farmer Md Raju Ahmed of Ramkharua village in Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj said his usual daily sales to a cooperative in Baghabari has dropped from 20 jars which are of 40-litre capacity to 16 jars.

Locals pay lower than the rate which dairy companies usually set based on the percentage of fat, he said.

HOW OUR LIVES are interwoven by the internet

The internet has revolutionised communication, allowing the general public to spread messages to the world with the click of button and by ensuring that business deals can be completed in minutes by facilitating the easy transfer of documents. At present, the internet is so ubiquitous that life crawls to a standstill without it. Essential services such as customs procedures and port operations are severely hindered while the general public is left without entertainment, access to money or online services. The recent internet blackout shows how it has impacted our lives.

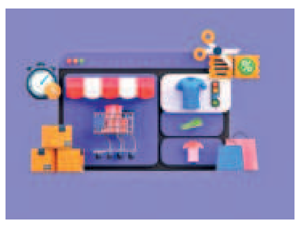
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Banking, cash transfer and cash withdrawal from ATMs

Ride-sharing services

Online purchase and delivery

> We have our own logistic support by which we can perform all our activities, from production to delivery across the country, with the help of the internet. But if there is no internet, the whole system collapses.
>
> RN Paul
> Managing director of
> RFL Group



Facebook-based small businesses

Food delivery and cloud kitchen

Online news consumption

Digital communication, including email, WhatsApp and Messenger

Social communication/networking

All kinds of ticketing, including air, rail and metro rail tickets

Tourism and hotel booking

Bill payment

Online education, information gathering/study

Hospital services managed by software

Online multimedia and streaming services

Online games

Online payments of utility bills

Mobile top-up

Talk-time and mobile data purchase

> My daughter lives abroad and I usually communicate with her through video calls. But I can't do it now due to the blackout.
>
> Nibedita Paul
> A homemaker
> in Dhaka

BUSINESS LIFE

Customs assessment of import and export goods and clearance at ports

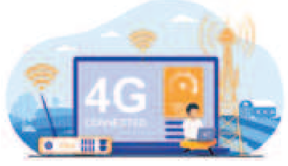
Software-based business management

Local and international business communication (Placement of orders, delivery and others)

LC opening and settlement

Stock market trading

Freelancing



Online news presentation

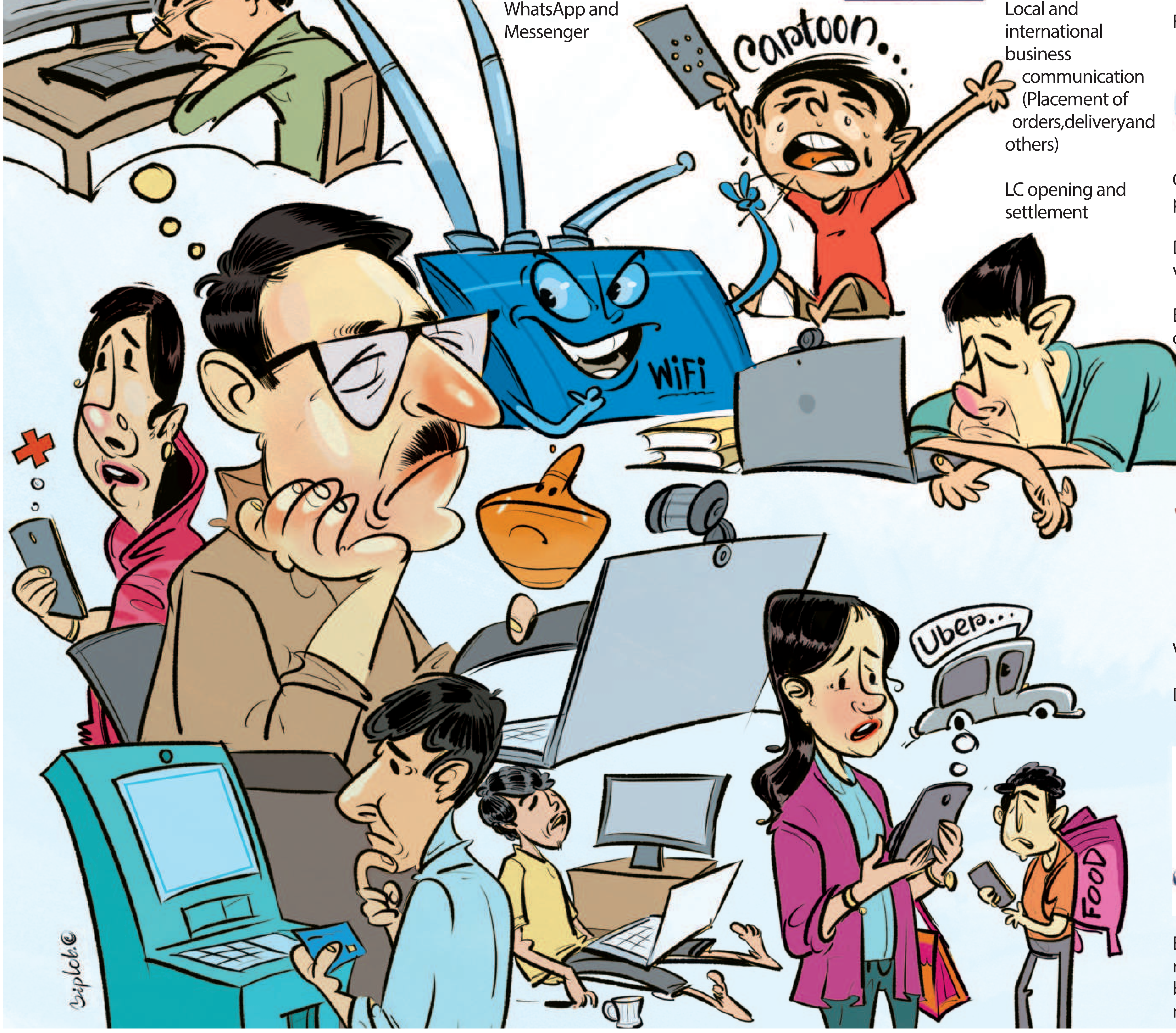
Data collection and verification

Business process outsourcing

Visa processing

Digital advertisements

Enterprise resource planning-based business management



The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Time for a deeper reflection on protests

Legal action for violence is vital, but so is addressing popular anger

It is natural to be consumed by the sheer number of people killed during the recent clashes—at least 146 in six days, as per *The Daily Star*, and even higher by some other estimates. Tragedies like this leave behind a crippling sense of doom and hopelessness, especially with restrictive measures like curfew and internet shutdown isolating us not only from the outside world but also each other. But while we try to process all this, it is crucial to take stock of other losses suffered, notably through the destruction of key public infrastructures, which we condemn in unequivocal terms. People are already having to suffer for this, with key services disrupted or discontinued. Images showing charred remains of so many government establishments and installations indicate that any recovery from the fallout will take months, if not years.

The question is, how should we go about this unprecedented crisis in our life? While attempts are underway to bring back some semblance of normalcy, including through restoring internet partially, a key concern relates to establishing accountability for what happened so far. The government appears to have made up its mind, even before investigations. It claims that BNP-Jamaat men are responsible for the destruction and arson attacks, with the PM issuing a stern warning about not sparing them "like in the past." But any blanket accusation shrinks the space for a more nuanced reading of the situation. Is it possible that what's really to blame is a combination of political foul play and outbursts of popular anger? Would the situation become so uncontrollable if the government handled the initial protests more judiciously, without resorting to force? And is accountability at all possible without critically probing the role of security forces, especially the intelligence services?

It is important to separate the movement from the violence that has ensued, however. As experts have pointed out, what facilitated the unholy sync between the two is the "zero-sum game of politics" which leaves little space for opposition. In such a climate, subversive forces may capitalise on public discontent over growing economic hardships, governance deficits, and the general atmosphere of intimidation and insecurity against free speech and freedom of association. People want their grievances to be heard and acted upon. But intransigence and non-responsiveness, denial of reality, or use of disproportionate force in the event of protests may be counterproductive for the authorities in the end.

What we understand from analyses like this is that it is possible, even critical, to see the recent clashes from more perspectives than one (the government's). As we write this, over 1,400 people were arrested across the country. Many cases were also filed. This trend will likely continue as the nation searches for answers. But before this again becomes a one-way road to political blame game and suppression of rivals, it is vital that the authorities try to understand the broader circumstances in which those indiscriminate killings and destructions occurred, and ask whether it was possible to prevent them. Otherwise, we may continue to be at risk of such meltdowns.

Dhaka filling up with garbage

Urgent action needed to remove accumulated waste

In the aftermath of the mayhem that saw the destruction of multiple public infrastructures across Dhaka city on July 18-20, we face a grim, putrid reality. While several service sectors have been severely disrupted due to the violent clashes and attacks, the city's garbage management system has also collapsed. According to media reports, since July 18, the authorities have been unable to collect household waste from residential and other areas. As a result, Dhaka has been filling up with garbage.

The events of the last one week disrupted the garbage management system of both city corporations. Garbage collection was halted during the complete shutdown called by the quota reform movement. Later, saboteurs vandalised garbage management offices and vehicles. According to a report by this daily, four garbage-carrying compactors and 29 vehicles including 10 garbage-carrying container carriers used by the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) were set ablaze at its zone-4 office in Mirpur-10 on Friday and Saturday. Meanwhile, in the Matuail landfill area, four garbage-carrying vehicles of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) were burnt down, *Prothom Alo* reported. Amounting to Tk 120 crore in losses, these made up one-fourth of DNCC's garbage management fleet and had the collective capacity of carrying 400 tonnes of waste.

The massive loss has greatly affected the city corporations' garbage management system, the result of which is visible now. Piles of household waste are seen lying on the streets, spreading stench around. Collectors have not visited households for the last four or five days, forcing people to dump their garbage either in the local garbage containers or directly on the streets, per another report in this daily. The secondary transfer stations are full to the brim and the garbage is now spilling onto the streets in several areas of the city. We understand that this is an unprecedented situation, and the city authorities have limited resources at the moment. But they should have had a back-up plan.

The DNCC mayor has said his office is prioritising garbage removal and has staff working in shifts amid the curfew, but it will still take a week for things to go back to normal for all kinds of crisis. If the garbage is left to rot out in the open, it poses a serious threat to not only public health and well-being, but the environment as well. Moreover, if it rains, the garbage could block the drains and cause water-logging, exacerbating the problem. We urge the city corporations to be more prudent in handling the situation and mobilise the available resources to urgently remove all the garbage from the streets to prevent another potential crisis.

Saluting the spirit of our young people

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

There is no shame in admitting that in the last few days many of us have cried helplessly, over the senseless deaths of students—teenagers or in their early twenties—the same age or close to the ages of our children. The first time we saw the video of Abu Sayed, one of the coordinators of the movement in Rangpur, being shot to death as he spread out his hands in surrender, our hearts broke at the ruthlessness of a law enforcer, repeatedly shooting at a young man who was practically unarmed. But our hearts filled with awe at the bravery of this young man who was so steadfast in a cause that demanded equal opportunity for young people to compete for government jobs.

Amidst the anguish and despair, this is what stands out the most—the spirit and courage of our young people. Our young students have proved to us once again that they are a conscious generation—contrary to common perception of them. They are well aware of the reality they are surrounded by and do not live in a bubble. We got a glimpse of this clarity of purpose during the 2018 Road Safety Movement by school students after a few of their fellow students were crushed by a raging bus at a bus stop. Their outrage took a positive form as they organised themselves into monitoring groups and started checking vehicles for their fitness, licenses etc. They were doing the job the traffic police were supposed to be doing and trying to implement basic road safety rules that should have been enforced by the government a long time ago. They showed us what their state had failed to do, which was to keep people safe from the road crashes we have become notorious for. On the streets, we saw uniformed school kids stopping vehicles—even VIP cars going the wrong direction were turned back—and checking documents. What we saw in those young faces was hope, belief in a better future, a saner world where people do not have to worry whether they will come home alive, every time they step into the streets. Their selflessness, determination and immense courage, gave us an optimism we had forgotten how to feel anymore. Sadly, their movement was nipped in the bud with violence and intimidation, though it didn't erase the fact that they had made history during those days and shown the country their worth as leaders.

The anti-discrimination protests for quota reform started the same year and was considered successful as it led to the government to abolish the quota system altogether. This move, however, done in haste and possibly in a huff, proved to be controversial when the High Court ruled in July 2024, that it was unconstitutional and had to be scrapped leading to the second anti-quota protests. As we know, the anti-discrimination movement was never one to abolish all quotas but to come up with a logical, fair percentage for the various marginalised groups.

The young leaders of the current movement—Students' Movement against Discrimination—from what we saw through clips of videos aired by the media (before the internet blackout), seemed to have a much more determined and organised plan. Their agenda was the same as before—to have a reasonable quota system that would give more opportunity for regular, non-quota BCS candidates a chance to compete for government positions. They were challenging the system that gave 30 percent quota to freedom fighters, their children and grandchildren, a quota which, even many freedom fighters feel, is outdated and unnecessary after 53 years of independence.

The peaceful demonstrations started to spread all over the country, and were joined not only by students of public universities but private universities, colleges and even schools—young people who joined in out of solidarity for their brothers and sisters. This fraternity of students was something so beautiful to witness that we, the grownups, could not help but feel proud despite the inconvenience of prolonged traffic jams and restrictions on movement. The cause they were demonstrating for in the heat and rain, for hours on end, was justified and there seemed no reason for the government not to endorse it with open arms.

But what happened in the following days is a painful reminder of the disconnect between our leaders and their young population. The government decided to "nip it in the bud" yet again but this time their strategy backfired badly. The students refused to back down, even after they were beaten mercilessly by ruling party goons, even when the pellets from police shotguns pierced their young bodies and blinded their eyes, even when live bullets went through their hearts. The more force and brutality were inflicted on them, the more their numbers swelled in the demonstrations, the more resolute they became. It is this fearlessness that has shown us what these young people are made of.

While the movement was derailed by the government's disproportionate use of force that took the lives of at least 146 people, many of them students and innocent bystanders, which gave the scope for political and extremist elements to carry out vandalism and arson attacks, the steadfastness of the student protesters of the current quota reform movement remained. While we can never reconcile ourselves with this unprecedented level of violence and deaths, we will never forget those bright young faces, their fiery speeches and articulate understanding of the realities they live in. Those heroes who literally took the bullet to bring about change will be remembered as crucial figures of a tipping point in history.

The more force and brutality were inflicted on them, the more their numbers swelled in the demonstrations, the more resolute they became.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Preparing for a future of extreme heat waves

Renzo R Guinto
is associate professor of Global and Planetary Health at the Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore.

RENZO R GUINTO

People across Asia have eagerly awaited the end of heat-wave season, which now appears to be drawing to a close. In my home country, the Philippines, the first typhoon of the year arrived in late May, lowering temperatures that had climbed to nearly 50° Celsius (122° Fahrenheit). Over the previous few months, the record-breaking heat led to school closures, a spike in emergency-room visits, reduced productivity, and a return to remote work.

While the public-health effects and economic impact of extreme heat waves can be difficult to measure, the speed at which they are forgotten is alarming. This mirrors the cycle of panic and neglect that often follows pandemics: societies forget the lessons of past health crises and are caught unprepared when the next one arrives.

Just as we must improve pandemic preparedness, we must mitigate the health risks posed by life-threatening temperatures. As climate change accelerates, heat waves are expected to become increasingly frequent and intense, especially in Asia. To survive this "new normal," we cannot rely on inadequate public-health guidelines like drinking more water and staying in air-conditioned spaces, as if the vast majority of the world's population has access to air conditioning or even clean water. Nor is it acceptable to suggest that women should cope with extreme heat by not wearing underwear, as a former Philippine health minister recently suggested.

Instead, governments must adopt a more proactive approach and accelerate efforts to build heat resilience. By the time the next historic heat wave hits, all countries should have a national plan to address it, along with adaptation measures for local communities. In fact, every aspect of policymaking should be viewed through the lens of resilience. Beyond the health sector, the top priorities should be housing, transportation, and water—which are all targets under the Sustainable Development Goals.

Housing should come first. Many of Asia's most vulnerable people live in poorly ventilated public housing or densely populated slums. Globally, an estimated 1.6 billion people suffer from inadequate living conditions. Given that such surveys do not usually account for ventilation, this could well be an underestimate.

There are more viable options for adaptation than advising poor people to live in air-conditioned buildings. In addition to being costly, air conditioners consume vast amounts of electricity, with researchers estimating that they are responsible for 3.9 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions. Instead of burning more fossil fuels to meet this increased energy demand, policymakers must reimagine urban development to protect both the planet and public health. For example, some countries in Asia, including Indonesia and Singapore, have begun using low-cost "cool roof" paint to lower indoor temperatures without air conditioners.

Transportation is another heat-sensitive sector. Whether riding in overcrowded buses or waiting for extended periods on sweltering train platforms, commuters in low- and middle-income countries are often exposed to extreme temperatures. Investing in sustainable transportation systems that also provide comfort during heat waves is crucial to achieving vital climate and public-health goals.

To build heat resilience, governments must also address the global water crisis. Although hydration is crucial for protection against extreme heat, nearly one-third of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water. Single-use plastic water bottles are not the answer; like air conditioning, they are costly, carbon-intensive, and polluting.

Heat-preparedness programmes must focus on highly vulnerable groups, such as farmers and fisherfolk, construction and factory workers, the elderly, and people with comorbidities. This effort must also be extended to prisoners, detained migrants, and psychiatric patients, all of whom are often confined to extremely hot, cramped spaces.

Like storm and pandemic-response protocols, heat preparedness must be embedded in health policies. To this end, Asian countries' disease-surveillance systems should be updated to account for heat-related illnesses before the region endures another historic heat wave. Maintaining adequate supplies of medical equipment, from basic items like intravenous fluids to cooling vests, is also crucial.

Moreover, the potential effects of extreme heat must be integrated into the education and training of emergency doctors, community-health workers, and primary-care providers, who are often the first point of contact for underprivileged patients. Regrettably, the clinical management of heat-related illnesses like heatstroke was mentioned only in passing when I was a medical student.

Lastly, researchers must focus not only on the epidemiology of heat, but also the effectiveness of our policies and interventions. The National University of Singapore, for example, launched a research centre dedicated to heat resilience in 2023; my institute will complement this with a new initiative on planetary health that will help health systems and communities across Asia build climate resilience.

With global temperatures rising at an alarming rate, we have no choice but to adapt to a warmer world. At the same time, accelerating decarbonisation could enable us to reduce the frequency and intensity of extreme heat waves. By pressuring governments and corporations to stop burning fossil fuels, we can build true heat resilience and improve planetary health.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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What are the implications of revised export figures?

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SADIQ AHMED

Bangladesh Bank (BB) recently released revised export figures for July-May 2024 that are much lower than the figures reported by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). According to BB, actual export earnings for the period was $40.7 billion, compared to $51.5 billion reported by EPB.

> **Exporters in general have been complaining about rising costs and falling demand for RMG. Moving forward, the recent correction of the exchange rate policy should help. Reduction of inflation would also be helpful. But a much more aggressive export diversification strategy is needed.**

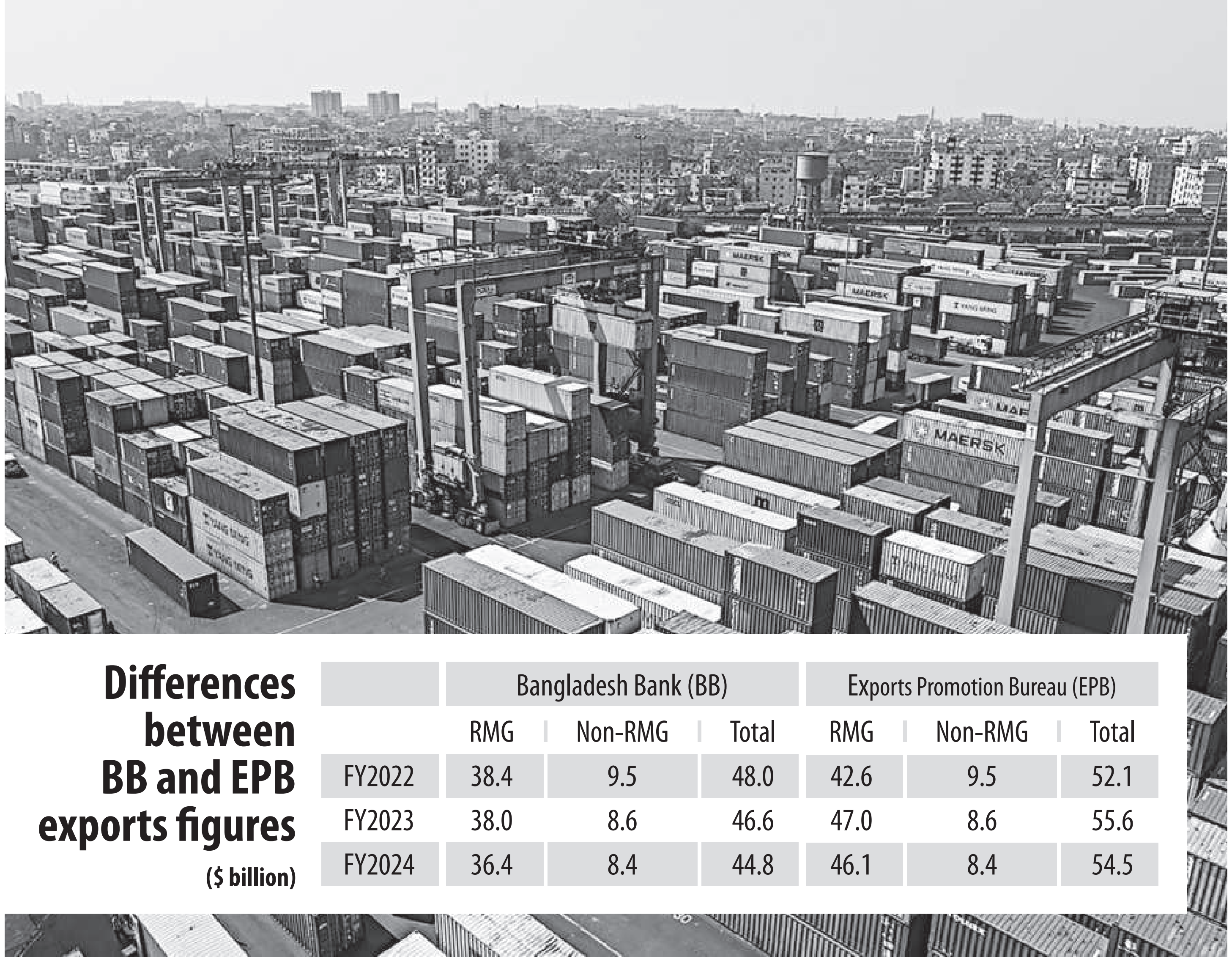
This nearly $11 billion discrepancy has raised considerable speculation about the true export performance and reliability of macroeconomic data in Bangladesh. It has also led to speculations about the implications of this adjustment for the macroeconomy.

The reliability of the export data, published by EPB, has been under scrutiny from BB for well over a year. Since FY2022, actual export earnings emerging from the banking sector data were significantly lower than the figures reported by the EPB based on the customs data of the National Board of Revenue (NBR). The initial reasoning was a combination of the gap between export shipment and actual earnings, and the suspicion that exporters were not sending back all earnings and were instead holding them outside Bangladesh (capital flight). Accordingly, in their published data, BB continued to use EPB figures for exports but adjusted the difference below the line in the financial account under the heading of negative trade credit.

The gap between EPB figures and earnings reported by commercial banks got cumulatively larger, which ballooned the negative entry of trade credit in the financial accounts.

Prodded by the IMF, the BB established an investigative team led by the bank staff, with participation by staff from NBR and the EPB. Detailed investigations showed that the NBR reported exports figures to EPB were overstated owing to several accounting errors all pertaining to RMG exports. These included: (i) serial duplication errors in customs data; (ii) miscalculation of value of fabrics; (iii) sample items classified as products with export value; (iv) sales by EPZ-based firms being counted twice; (v) failure to adjust the gap between initial LC value and actual export proceeds; and (vi) loses from stock-lot sales, discounts, and commission not being adjusted.

The inevitable conclusion is that export figures reported by EPB based on NBR customs data for RMG were much higher than actual RMG exports as reported in the export earnings figures emerging from the banking sector reports. The estimated gap for the FY2022-FY2024 is shown in Table 1. For FY2024, the full fiscal year estimates are based on July-May data. The revisions are still preliminary and a team comprising of EPB, NBR and BB staff has been constituted by the finance minister to undertake a detailed review of all export numbers. The findings are expected to be available in the next 3-4 months.



Differences between BB and EPB exports figures
($ billion)

	Bangladesh Bank (BB)			Exports Promotion Bureau (EPB)		
	RMG	Non-RMG	Total	RMG	Non-RMG	Total
FY2022	38.4	9.5	48.0	42.6	9.5	52.1
FY2023	38.0	8.6	46.6	47.0	8.6	55.6
FY2024	36.4	8.4	44.8	46.1	8.4	54.5

What are the implications of this revision?

First, while the substantial downward revision in the export figures is disappointing, it paints a much more realistic picture about the challenging global environment for exports faced by Bangladesh. Exporters in general have been complaining about rising costs and falling demand for RMG. Moving forward, the recent correction of the exchange rate policy should help. Reduction of inflation would also be helpful. But a much more aggressive export diversification strategy is needed. The supportive policies include reform of trade policy to eliminate the anti-export bias, sharp improvements in trade logistics, attraction of FDI in export-oriented enterprises, and upgrading of labour skills through in-house and government-financed training programmes.

Second, the immediate effects of this adjustment for the macroeconomy are thankfully negligible. The effect on the balance of payments (BOP) is zero because the BB numbers are already built into the actual BOP numbers. In a way, the correction of the financial accounts provides some relief that the perceived huge negative outlook of trade creditors about Bangladesh reflected in the large negative trade credit balance is not true. It is also a relief that the perceived huge capital outflows from the export account is not based on facts. There may still be some element of that, but if so, it would likely be small. The correction of the overvaluation of exports could have implications for GDP estimates. But the government has clarified that the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) uses actual export earnings data provided by BB for calculating GDP, which is then double-checked with production data.

Third, and most importantly, the revision serves as a wake-up call for the government to really upgrade its capacity to gather correct information and share it on a timely basis with the people at large. Credit goes to BB for having the courage to report the errors in the public domain. BB also has a strong team of economists and statisticians and therefore is able to provide good data on a timely basis on its website. But this is not true of many other government entities. For the immediate future, the EPB and the NBR must make all-out efforts to upgrade their data collection, investigation and analytical capabilities with some minimum staffing of professional economists and statisticians. The NBR collects a lot of data on revenues but has very little investigative or data analytical capabilities. As a result, it is impossible to determine the quality of the data.

At the national level, the primary data agency, BBS, has been slowly upgrading its capabilities but there is still a long way to go. Concerns about the reliability of national accounts and inflation figures have been raised by many researchers. Since the BBS provides public goods (knowledge and information), it should be an autonomous body funded by the government, but managed by professionals rather than civil servants.

> **For the immediate future, the EPB and the NBR must make all-out efforts to upgrade their data collection, investigation and analytical capabilities with some minimum staffing of professional economists and statisticians. The NBR collects a lot of data on revenues but has very little investigative or data analytical capabilities.**

Overall, a strengthening of BBS with professional staff and some minimum investment in upgrading data mobilisation and analytical capabilities of core government institutions dealing with the macroeconomy, and sharing them widely online will go a long way in calming the prevailing skepticism about the true state of the macroeconomy.

In the long drawn out days since the lines of communication were shattered, I have thought of what the long term impact will be of such a violent reaction to a justified demand.
PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Protests, deaths and a collective breakdown

Aliza Rahman
is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

ALIZA RAHMAN

It is a special kind of horror to see the semi-abstract theories you studied for your semi-abstract major come to life, and begin to apply to events 20 minutes away from you. I came across the term necropolitics as a student in the last year of my bachelor's. A play on biopolitics, this specific rendition spoke to a new form of sovereignty, one where the state pushes to death certain lives deemed unworthy of keeping alive. It's the word that has been ringing in my mind since the start of the whole affair that cracked open the consciousness of the whole nation. It has been the only word that I can use to make sense of the violence that has ruptured across the lives of the young protesting for a fair chance at a decent future.

It is a fact well known that wordless horror brings with it a gnawing kind of pain that doesn't subside. But what of the pain that has a name but we are forbidden from saying it? What of the people who have questions, and even corresponding answers, but are not allowed to voice them? At the apex of the conflict, before the internet shutdown, things that must not be said were being stated on countless social media accounts. My Facebook app showing the same 20 posts that had loaded before the blackout all consisted of people fearlessly sharing information to assist the students, or revealing in fear and desperation the violence unleashed upon them.

In a near surreal turn of events, the BGB and were deployed along with the police to reign in a largely defenseless body of students demanding what is wholly allowed by our constitution. In the empty roads outside my house, bombs and guns were heard because of the fighting on the main road. For the past few days, a helicopter has been flying over our house and flocks of birds have intermittently flown off at the sudden sporadic loud sounds emanating from a place out of our view. The quiet and the unquiet moments have caused an equal amount of trepidation, all exacerbated by the sudden cutoff of information.

A dome has been placed upon us, and we have been feeling its presence since the day it descended. The atmosphere outside Bangladesh and the atmosphere inside it have been separated cleanly as if by surgical cut, severing us not just from the rest of the world, but even each other.

I try to imagine and then try to forget how frightened the kids must have been as they ran from the pellets fired from trained and armed personnel, how they rushed themselves and their friends to hospitals to tend to wounds they should have never gotten in the first place. All this systemic violence for a demand they had every right to make.

When the classes will begin, I will be forced to ensure normalcy, even when I know that of the over 100 students I am teaching, at least one may have lost a friend, or seen a kind of brutalisation that I personally can only justify if it were carried out in self-defence. We know from one of the most enduring images of the resurgent movement that not all the shootings were carried out for that reason.

In the days since the shutdown, I have felt the full slowness of each day. Throughout, it feels as if the time is not passing. Perhaps, however, it shouldn't pass, and the knot we feel in our chests should remain until a semblance of justice is achieved. Perhaps it is only right that I find myself sweating at the thought that a student may have died in the educational institution I have begun to teach in, because when I asked myself how to comfort the students, I came to the thought that perhaps comfort should be kept at bay for the time being. I have felt time and again since July 15 that we not only be allowed to keep grieving, but that we need to keep grieving. Perhaps the refusal to return to the previous state of normalcy will be the beginning of a quieter resistance, one tempered by the bone chilling fear of weapons on the land and sky far surpassing the collective will of people who want and believe in similar things, but still present even if in a dimmed capacity. Maybe we will find answers in the everyday acts of assistance toward a community that has been, and in many ways will continue to be segregated, not just by class, but by prejudice and unbacked assumptions.

> **I try to imagine and then try to forget how frightened the kids must have been as they ran from the pellets fired from trained and armed personnel, how they rushed themselves and their friends to hospitals to tend to wounds they should have never gotten in the first place. All this systemic violence for a demand they had every right to make.**

In the long drawn out days since the lines of communication were shattered, I have thought of what the long term impact will be of such a violent reaction to a justified demand, from a segment of the population who know their rights precisely because they are intelligent and educated. What will be the effect of this crackdown on civil society? Will we slowly fold in and become smaller to accommodate powers we feel we should never question? What will happen to the many qualified people unable to find suitable employment that allows them to assist their families? Where will their frustrations go if they feel that their demands will be shut down with violence over and over again? What will it say about us if we stay silent? For the time being, the least we can do is make sure we remember, both the demands made, and the lives lost, because there is no discussion, acquiescence or reform that will bring them back.

OTT platforms reel from daily losses

The uncertainty of the continuation of internet services meant heavy losses for these organisations each day, amounting to crores in certain cases.

> **If we calculate the financial loss, it will approximately be around Tk 5 to 7 crores, and it is not possible to recoup.**
>
> REDOAN RONY
> Chief Executive Officer, Chorki

> **We are suffering profusely.**
>
> SAKIB R KHAN
> Country Head, Hoichoi Bangladesh

> **From Bongo alone we are facing a loss of approximately Tk 10-15 lakhs every day.**
>
> MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN
> Chief Content Officer, Bongo

SHARMIN JOYA

Over the Top (OTT) platforms are one of the major digital mediums of entertainment. The country has been suffering from a complete internet outage, resulting in huge financial losses for industry leaders.

The Daily Star caught up with the leaders of four major streaming platforms of the country.

Redoan Rony, Chief Executive Officer, Chorki, said, "We were at the promotional stage of our upcoming project from ***Ministry of Love***, titled, ***36-24-34***. It was supposed to release on Thursday. If we calculate the financial loss, it will approximately be around Tk 5 to 7 crores, and it is not possible to recoup," shared Redoan Rony.

The uncertainty of the continuation of internet services meant heavy losses for these organisations each day. In this regard, Sakib R Khan, Country Head, Hoichoi Bangladesh, shared that within these few days, there had been no new subscriptions. "We are completely a subscription-based platform; thus, it is obvious that without this revenue, we are suffering profusely." Sakib shared that a Tk 15-20 lakh loss has been incurred. "We were also at the dubbing stage of our upcoming content ***Rongila Kitab*** featuring Pori Moni, and the dubbing was supposed to end on July 19. However, we couldn't complete it. This will affect the post-production and release date as well."

He also added that the pre-production of Ashfaque Nipun's ***Jimmi*** featuring Jaya Ahsan is complete, and they were ready to move to the shooting floor from August 10, however, the situation will also hamper the shooting.

Mushfiqur Rahman, Chief Content Officer, Bongo, stated that Bongo is only one of their multiple online platforms. "From Bongo alone, we are facing a loss of approximately Tk 10-15 lakh every day, if we add the other services, it will be around Tk 30 lakh," shared Mushfiqur. "During COVID lockdown, OTT platforms became popular and during that crisis, we received a lot of subscribers, but didn't have enough content -- but now, the scenario is completely different. This situation has made us realise that we are solely dependent on the internet, and now we are helpless."

Hoping for the quick recovery of the country's current situation, Head of Content, Binge, Umme Khairun Islam Swizee shared that during this time they have an opportunity cost of 10,000 subscribers. One of their projects, Vicky Zahed's ***Ekti Khola Janala***, was supposed to release on July 18. "We have to re-promote this content, and fix another release date. It is obvious that in this critical situation, people will not remember this content." She also informed that the promotions for ***Maya*** directed by Raihan Rafi and another series by Anjan Dutta have been stopped.

Looking forward to peaceful times:

Fazlur Rahman Babu

Amid the ongoing nationwide curfew and suspension of internet services, people are left suffering with no means of entertainment. The Daily Star spoke with veteran actor Fazlur Rahman Babu to inquire about his concerns and activities during this crisis.

The artiste said, "I usually don't get to spend as much time at home. Although I have been spending this abundant time, it's making me feel anxious."

In hopes to see our collective better days, he said, "I am optimistic that good days are bound to return to all of us. I hope for better days to arrive peacefully."

However, he admitted, "I may be getting to spend time with my wife and our two children, yet we are constantly feeling apprehensive. During one recent instance, my blood pressure shot up."

"In terms of how I am currently occupying my free time– I've been reading a lot, both fiction and nonfiction, while also watching TV pretty often," he concluded.

Rahat Fateh Ali concert in Dhaka uncertain

Pakistani musician Rahat Fateh Ali Khan was scheduled to perform in Dhaka on July 20. However, due to the ongoing political unrest and nationwide curfew, the concert has been postponed to November.

Organised by Asiatic Limited and sponsored by Buy Here Now (BHN), the show was supposed to take place at the United Convention Centre.

Rahat Fateh Ali announced the concert on his official Facebook page on July 11. Priced at Tk 10,000 each, the tickets for the show were already sold out.

However, Hasib-Ul-Islam from Asiatic informed The Daily Star that the exact date for the concert would be announced as soon as the internet services are resumed in the country.

The organisers have also decided to offer a refund option for the sold tickets since the show has been postponed. The refund option would be available on their website following the announcement of the latest concert date.

'Kalki' sequel on the horizon

Nag Ashwin's directorial film ***Kalki 2898 AD***, featuring Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Amitabh Bachchan, is reported to see sequels and spin-offs after setting record of Rs 1000 crore in global box office as the first Indian cinema of the year.

However, the release dates for the upcoming productions have not been confirmed yet.

Produced under the banner of Vyjayanthi Movies, the sci-fi film has marked earning of Rs 600 crore in Indian box office. It amassed Rs 95 crore on the opening day, of which Rs 64.5 crore was collected from the Telegu version of the film.

The film also stars Kamal Haasan and Disha Patani, among others.

Making history, ***Kalki 2898 AD*** became the first Indian film to have its first glimpse revealed at the prestigious San Diego Comic-Con.

INFLUENCERS LEFT without influence during internet outage

If your livelihood was based on the internet, specifically social media, what would you do if there was an outage that lasted almost a week? We caught up to some popular Bangladeshi influencers to see what they were up to during these unstable times.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

RAKIN ABSAR

Before the complete shutdown took place, we had only one concern -- and that was the students' safety. We, the influencers community, tried our best to get the immediate help necessary for the students as much as we could.

Just hours before the shutdown, students had a hard time breathing due to exposure to tear shells and other harmful substances, many of the students were massively injured and they were asking for oxygen cylinders on social media. We were trying our best to arrange oxygen cylinders at that time when the situation escalated, and the internet was cut off abruptly. I really don't know what happened to those students, and whether they received the oxygen cylinders or not.

Apart from that, personally speaking, our business is also completely shut down due to the disruption of the internet.

My first priority after getting back the internet would be to look after the people who need my help. I would want to know about their whereabouts. I really hope they are fine.

KAARINA KAISER

When the internet went off, I was really confused as to what was happening around. Earlier, we were getting updates via internet, and then things escalated towards disaster. I started calling my friends to see if they were okay.

I feel like this is the longest internet blackout in our country. I thought it would come back the next day, but it is heading towards a week now. Since we don't use cable television in my house anymore, we were completely in the dark and reliant on phone calls.

The first thing that I would do when the internet comes would be to pay my condolences to the bereaved families that have lost their bright stars. I would also like to congratulate the students for their victorious move on getting the government to approve their rightful demands. This verdict shows that our country is progressing towards the right direction.

ANTIK MAHMUD

As I was living in Mirpur, I was really panicking at that time, as a lot of rumours were circulating on social media. As soon as the internet went off, I was completely at loss.

For content creators like us, when we are active on the internet, we get an email that we have received the monetisation money from YouTube advertisements. Now that the internet is off, we won't get that, and YouTube will not give us ad money since no one in the country is able to watch our content. Apart from that, we are also not earning any money from selling our merchandise in Rokomari, Daraz and Facebook.

After the internet comes back, I would immediately check on students who were injured during the protest.

DANA BHAI

I am a student of BRAC University and during the protest on Thursday (July 18), I witnessed numerous batchmates getting injured during the quota reform protest. I could not check up on them after the internet outage. We are so dependent on internet, that we couldn't transfer money or recharge our mobile phones.

As content creators, we are supposed to share content every week, and I used to upload my content through stories. Due to the outage, I feel entirely detached from the world, and completely helpless. After the internet comes back, my biggest priority would be to reach out to people involved with the movement and get update about the current scenario.

PARI RUKH AL MARTIN

From the start, I had been sharing emergency helplines and numbers to help the students who were injured during the protest. I was going insane seeing all the violent videos and then, the internet went off. I faced a massive reality check, where I realised I couldn't pay my bills and renew my prepaid gas system. As the curfew started, I couldn't go outside, or even order food from restaurants. I had to buy an electric stove to cook food for my family. I was also supposed to upload a video on Saturday for my client, which I couldn't.

The government could have declared the shutdown at least half an hour earlier, so that people could pay their necessary bills, so that they didn't have to face the challenges that they are facing right now.

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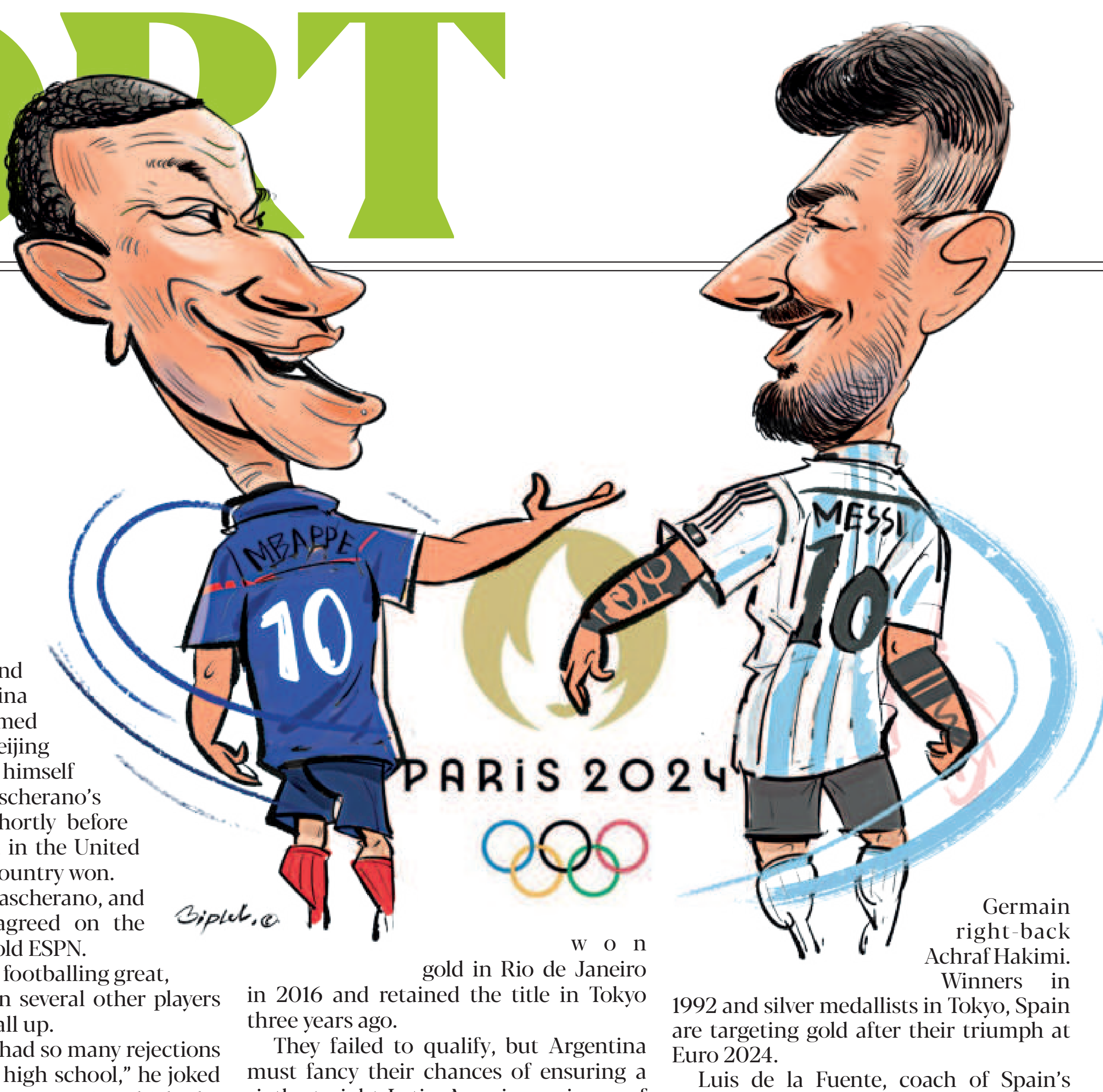
What to WATCH

T SPORTS & GTV
Women's Asia Cup
Bangladesh vs Malaysia
Live from 2:30 pm
Sri Lanka vs Thailand
Live from 07:30 pm

PARIS lacking football stars



AFP, *Paris*

Kylian Mbappe wanted to take part in this year's Olympics in his home city, while there were hopes that Lionel Messi would feature for Argentina, but instead the men's football tournament at the Paris Games will be largely devoid of star attractions.

As captain of France and the most famous athlete in the country hosting this year's Games, Mbappe's presence in coach Thierry Henry's Olympic squad would have been an enormous boost for organisers as well as for the team's chances of winning gold.

But Mbappe, 25, had to accept that his new club Real Madrid would not allow him to participate immediately after he played in the French side that reached the semifinals of Euro 2024 in Germany.

That is the problem for the men's football competition, which begins on Wednesday and runs until August 9.

Clubs are not obliged to release players for a tournament held outside an official FIFA window for international football.

Messi, now 37 and part of the Argentina team that claimed Olympic gold in Beijing in 2008, ruled himself out of Javier Mascherano's squad for Paris shortly before the Copa America in the United States, which his country won.

"I spoke with Mascherano, and we immediately agreed on the situation," Messi told ESPN.

Henry, a French footballing great, also missed out on several other players he had hoped to call up.

"The last time I had so many rejections was when I was at high school," he joked when announcing a team in which the most recognisable names are Alexandre Lacazette, the Lyon striker, and new Bayern Munich signing Michael Olise.

The competition is restricted to players aged under 23, apart from a maximum of three overage players per squad.

As well as the superstar names, the tournament is also missing Brazil, who won gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and retained the title in Tokyo three years ago.

They failed to qualify, but Argentina must fancy their chances of ensuring a sixth straight Latin American winner of the men's football gold medal.

In Julian Alvarez, the Manchester City striker who won the 2022 World Cup and the recent Copa America, they will have one of the highest-profile players.

Argentina are in Group B with Iraq, Ukraine and a Morocco side who have secured the services of Paris Saint-Germain right-back Achraf Hakimi.

Winners in 1992 and silver medallists in Tokyo, Spain are targeting gold after their triumph at Euro 2024.

Luis de la Fuente, coach of Spain's Euros-winning side, led the team to the final at the last Olympics. Santi Denia, his assistant three years ago, is in charge now.

Leading names from the European Championship such as Lamine Yamal are not involved, but another prodigious young Barcelona talent will feature, in 17-year-old centre-back Pau Cubarsi.

Cricketers return to training in Chattogram

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricketers in the Bangladesh Tigers programme returned to training on Tuesday for the first time since July 16, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus informed the media yesterday.

"As the curfew was relaxed for four hours today [yesterday], we communicated with the Chattogram police and when they assured us that we can go to the ground under their protection, the players went to the ground for the practice session," Jalal told reporters on Tuesday.

Earlier, the cricketers had been held up in their team hotel amidst the ongoing unrest in the country. Quite a few national team stars which included the likes of skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and veteran Mushfiqur Rahim, could not move to Chattogram due to disruptions in flight schedules.

"They will leave as soon as possible. There were disruptions in flight schedules and tickets. Since we didn't know at first how relaxed the curfew would be and since day by day the situation is improving, we are planning to send the rest of the national team players in one or two days," Jalal informed.

Practice matches on July 19 and 20 had been scrapped and the three-day practice match which was supposed to begin on Tuesday was postponed.

Jalal informed that they would like to continue with the scheduled practice match on July 29, depending on the situation, adding that 'eight to nine hours of curfew relaxation' would be required to hold the match.

Meanwhile, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, along with the fielding coach and strength and conditioning coach are expected to arrive in the country in three to four days with Jalal informing that some of them are resolving visa issues while others have been able to manage air tickets.

Messi, Suarez out for MLS All-Star Game

AFP, *Miami*

Argentina star Lionel Messi and Inter Miami teammate Luis Suarez will miss Wednesday's Major League Soccer All-Star Game with injuries, the league and team announced Monday.

An updated MLS roster for the match-up against Mexico's Liga MX All-Stars at Columbus, Ohio, listed Messi and Uruguayan striker Suarez among those who would not play.

Inter Miami detailed the injuries, with Messi still sidelined after missing two MLS matches last week with a right ankle injury suffered in Argentina's Copa America final triumph over Colombia.

"Messi will miss the All-Star Game due to an ankle injury while Luis Suarez, who recently returned from international duty after over 40 days away from the club, will miss the All-Star Game due to knee discomfort," Inter Miami said.

It would have been the first MLS All-Star appearance for 37-year-old Messi, who joined Inter Miami last July.

Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi, who helped spark Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title, led Miami to last year's inaugural Leagues Cup crown in a tournament of MLS and Mexican league squads.

But Miami said Messi's status and that of Suarez remain in doubt for Saturday's home match against Mexico's Puebla, Inter's first step in defending the Leagues Cup title.

The availability of Messi and Suarez will be determined by their "daily recovery process" according to the team statement.

'We can understand our current state' in Australia

*Bangladesh's U-19 World Cup-winning skipper **Akbar Ali** is all set to lead Bangladesh Cricket Board's High Performance (HP) Unit in their upcoming assignment in Australia, where they will feature in a T20 tournament involving Pakistan Shaheens and Big Bash teams. The wicketkeeper-batter spoke to **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** on Monday about his side's overall preparation for the series, his personal target, and more during the nationwide unrest. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:*

The Daily Star (DS): How was the overall preparation for the Australia tour?

Akbar Ali (AA): For the last six days, we've been stuck at our team hotel [in Chattogram]. We came here to undergo extended preparation for the Australia tour, only to end up playing just two practice matches. We were to play two more matches, but it didn't happen due to the prevailing situation in the country, which isn't in our control.

DS: How excited are you about the series, where you will be leading in one format, in your maiden Australia tour?

AA: Obviously, there is huge excitement as we are going there to play for the first time. We will try to adjust with conditions within our two or three practice sessions there.

DS: How much the series mean for you and others who might represent the national team in future, given a Test series lined up in Australia in 2027?

AA: We don't usually get chance to play in Australia. If we can provide a notable performance in Australia, it will give us confidence that we can also do well there. With the presence of competitive teams in the tournament, we can also understand our current state.

DS: What could be the biggest challenge there?

AA: Actually, we will realize that after going there. But we have obtained some information about the conditions and wickets, which are expected to be fast and bouncy.

DS: Have you lot underwent any special batting practice to bat on such pacey wickets?

AA: Apart from the conventional training sessions, we tried to practice on wickets made of slabs; so hopefully, it will help. Also, we had some programmes which were designed for the Chattogram camp, but those were hampered due to the current situation. But we did that work specifically during our Rajshahi preparation phase, keeping the bounce and fast conditions in mind.

DS: You are still in HP after having led the U-19s winning campaign in 2020, while many of your teammates have gone on to make their marks with the senior side. Will this series open your pathway to the national team?

AA: I think the series is a great opportunity for me. Not only this series, wherever I play, I think the opportunity for the national team will come if I do well. I always try to perform, be it NCL, BCL or Premier League.

DS: You have gained good domestic experience, apart from playing in BPL. Do you think you lack T20-related preparations?

AA: I think I have been regular in all domestic tournaments, except BPL. As we have in store a domestic T20 tournament, featuring only local players, my focus will be on performing well over there.

DS: Do you have any personal target for the Australia trip?

AA: As a group, we will go there to become champions [in T20 tournament]. About personal target, I will say I want to contribute in some of our winning causes. It can be 20, 30 or 40 runs, whatever.

Asalanka named new Sri Lanka T20 captain

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka named Charith Asalanka their new T20 captain Tuesday ahead of a white ball series against visiting India.

The 27-year-old middle-order batter replaces Wanindu Hasaranga, who stepped down 11 days ago following Sri Lanka's early exit from the T20 World Cup in June.

The board did not say if it was making changes to the ODI squad, led by Kusal Mendis, while Dhananjaya de Silva remains Test captain.

The Indian team arrived on Monday ahead of the first of three T20 matches on Saturday at Pallekele in Kandy. The three-match ODI series will be played at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo from August 2.

Sri Lanka T20 squad: Charith Asalanka (captain), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Perera, Avishka Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Dinesh Chandimal, Kamindu Mendis, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana, Chamindu Wickramasinghe, Matheesha Pathirana, Nuwan Thushara, Dushmantha Chameera and Binura Fernando.

Murray set for emotional farewell

AFP, *Paris*

Just two weeks after Wimbledon, the stars of tennis switch from grass back to the clay of Roland Garros, home of the French Open, in pursuit of Olympic gold.

Former world number one and three-time Grand Slam title winner Andy Murray will call it quits in Paris after almost two decades on tour while Rafael Nadal, another two-time champion, looks to successfully exploit the surface which brought him 14 Grand Slam titles.

In a tennis dream team, Nadal will also partner Carlos Alcaraz in the doubles.

Now ranked at 121, and playing with a metal hip since 2019, time has caught up with the 37-year-old Murray who suffered ankle damage this year and underwent surgery to remove a cyst from his spine which ruled him out of singles at Wimbledon.

"I want to play forever, I love the sport and it's given me so much. It's taught me loads of lessons over the years I can use for the rest of my life. I don't want to stop so it is hard," admitted Murray.

Murray won gold at the 2012 Olympics on an emotional day at the All England Club where he defeated Roger Federer just weeks after he had lost the Wimbledon final to the Swiss on the same Centre Court.

Four years later, he defeated Juan Martin del Potro to become the first player, male or female, to win two Olympic singles golds.

Meanwhile, Nadal captured Olympic singles gold in 2008 at Beijing before adding the doubles title alongside Marc Lopez in Rio eight years later.

Now 38, Nadal has been plagued by injuries which have limited him to six tournaments this year and seen his ranking slip to 161.

At the weekend, he reached his first final since 2022 but his run at Bastad in Sweden saw him finish runner-up to Portuguese journeyman Nuno Borges.

"The level was so far from what it should be. Probably the energy too," admitted Nadal.

Nadal has collected 14 of his 22 majors at Roland Garros, losing just four times in 116 matches.

His 2024 campaign, however, ended in the first round at the hands of defending Olympic champion Alexander Zverev.

Nadal will also play Olympics doubles with French Open and Wimbledon champion Alcaraz who was only two when his compatriot won his first Roland Garros title in 2005.

Tigresses eye 'A' game against Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team will be looking to put forth their 'A' game when they take on Malaysia in their last Group B match of the ongoing Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024 at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium in Sri Lanka today.

The Tigresses have played two matches so far in the ongoing meet but their performances were not convincing in either games.

Against Sri Lanka in their tournament opener, Bangladesh could make only 111-8, which the hosts chased down with 17 balls to spare and seven wickets in hand.

The Tigresses then took on Thailand on Monday, where it took them 17.3 overs to chase down a target of mere 97 runs. Nonetheless, Bangladesh's semifinal hopes are still alive thanks to the win over the Thai side.

Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana Joty heaved a sigh of relief after the much-needed victory, which was also their first in this format this year, but admitted that they were still far from their best.

Bangladesh, who are currently sharing the second spot with Thailand in their group, should reach the last four if they beat Malaysia today.

Sri Lanka have all but confirmed their place in the semis from this group after winning their first two games and will face Thailand in the last Group B match at the same venue later in the day.

De Bruyne won't be leaving City: Guardiola

AFP, *London*

Pep Guardiola insists Kevin De Bruyne will not leave Manchester City this season after reports the Belgium star could move to Saudi Arabia.

De Bruyne has just one year left on his current City contract and the midfielder revealed recently he has spoken with his wife Michele about his future plans.

"For Michele an exotic adventure is OK," De Bruyne said in a hint that he could end his successful spell at Premier League champions City.

Saudi Pro League club Al-Ittihad were believed to be interested in De Bruyne.

But UK press reports on Tuesday said City manager Guardiola had rejected any thought of the 33-year-old being allowed to walk away this season.

Speaking ahead of Manchester City's friendly against Celtic in North Carolina, Guardiola told reporters "Kevin isn't leaving".

De Bruyne returned after missing the first half of last season due to injury and helped City make history with a fourth successive Premier League title.

He has been with City since joining from Wolfsburg in 2015, winning 15 major trophies including six Premier League titles and one Champions League crown.

While Guardiola is adamant his influential playmaker will stay at the Etihad Stadium this term, it remains to be seen if he can persuade the Belgian to remain in Manchester.

Guardiola claimed City would not make major changes to his squad before their Premier League season kicks off against Chelsea on August 18.

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Broadband internet back in selected areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Broadband internet connections were restored in selected areas yesterday after five days of complete countrywide shutdown amid the violence over quota protest.

The area-based partial restoration of the broadband service will be on a trial basis, with priorities initially given to the banking, commercial, technology, exports, outsourcing service providers, and media outlets, Zunaid Ahmad Palak, state minister for Posts, Telecommunications and ICT told a briefing at the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) yesterday.

Internet connections will soon be restored in the remaining areas, he added.

Asked if users would be able to use social media, Palak said he could not clarify the level of access to social media apps that the government could allow at this time.

Asked about the restoration of mobile internet, he said he would address the matter today.

Earlier on Monday, International Internet Gateway (IIG) companies

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Two concrete mixers, which were set on fire on Monday night, were yet to be removed from a road in Narayanganj's Signboard area on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Quader stays away from press for three days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday held a meeting with the top leaders of the party's Dhaka city (north and south) units and associate bodies at the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Quader, however, did not brief the media about the outcome of the meeting.

The AL spokesperson, who usually briefs the media on a regular basis, visited the party president's Dhanmondi office last three days and held talks with the party leaders, but did not make any statement to the media, according to party sources.

If the party spokesperson did not appear before the media, the AL office would issue a press statement on his behalf. But no such statement was issued over the last three days on Quader's behalf.

The AL general secretary, also the road transport and bridges minister, last appeared before the media on Saturday and spoke about the justification for declaring curfew. He accused the BNP-Jamaat of resorting to violence.

In yesterday's meeting, Quader

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

QUOTA PROTESTS

Ctg student, 2 others die from wounds

STAR REPORT

Three more people, including a student of Chittagong University, who sustained injuries during clashes between law enforcers, Chhatra League, and agitators centring quota protest, died at hospitals yesterday.

Hridoy Chandra Tarua, a third-year student of history department, breathed his last at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning while an unknown youth, aged around 22, died at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital, police said.

Another youth, Shuvo Shil, 24, died at a hospital in Savar.

With yesterday's deaths, at least 150 lives have been lost since last Tuesday, when six people were killed in clashes between agitators, law enforcers, and ruling party activists.

Thirty people died on Thursday, 66 on Friday, 25 on Saturday, 14 on Sunday, and six on Monday.

The overall death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members and ruling party activists, may be more as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken. Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Prices of some commodities drop as supplies resume

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prices of some commodities dropped in Dhaka's kitchen markets yesterday after stock was replenished overnight.

During the visit to kitchen markets in Mirpur, Karwan Bazar, Mohammadpur, the prices of papaya, onion, garlic, potato, eggplant, cucumber, gourd and green chilli and many other vegetables were found to be lower than in the previous day.

The prices of fish such as rui, katla, pangasius, tilapia and shrimp, as well as broiler chicken and egg, dropped.

However, the prices of rice, soybean oil, palm oil and loose sugar remain elevated.

> **There is no crisis of products in the market.**
>
> **Ahsanul Islam Titu**
> State minister for commerce

The price of pointed gourd dropped by a half overnight to Tk 40 a kg, while the price of eggplant declined by Tk 20 to Tk 120 a kg, said Mohammad Masum, a retailer at Karwan Bazar kitchen market. The green chilli price dropped to Tk 160 to Tk 200 a kg from Tk 300 on Monday.

The price has come down due to supplies coming in once again, he said.

The price of broiler chicken declined by Tk 10 overnight to Tk 190, while the price of egg came down by Tk 5 to Tk 10 to Tk 150-155 a dozen.

Retailers from outside Dhaka have not been supplying rice until yesterday, said Md Nazimuddin, a rice wholesale retailer at Mohammadpur Krishi Market.

"I talked to the deputy commissioner of Bogura and Naogaon so that the rice trader from these districts can supply rice properly," said Ahsanul Islam Titu, the state minister for commerce.

There is no crisis of products in the market, he said after visiting the Kawran Bazar and Mohammadpur kitchen markets.

During a visit to the Mohammadpur Krishi Market, Halima Begum, a housewife, said that she was already suffering due to the persistent high inflation.

"The high prices now are affecting us even more -- we hope the government will solve everything soon," she said.

DU pledges to protect students

Says univ to open soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No student will be harassed in future for holding programmes to realise their logical demands, said the authority of Dhaka University yesterday.

Pledging security to students, it also said it is working relentlessly to open the university as soon as possible.

In a press release sent to newspapers, the DU administration said it is deeply saddened by the recent untoward incidents on the campus.

"We believe that no Dhaka University students were involved with any such incidents centring the protest to realise their just and logical demands," the notification said.

It pledged to take necessary actions as per the university rules in the quickest possible time after a proper investigation into the incidents.

The notification also said members of law enforcers will remain at DU entry points to ensure that outsiders cannot enter the campus to carry out subversive activities. However, they will remain deployed at important establishments.

Given that the law-and-order situation has been restored, the university will reopen as soon as dormitory rooms are repaired, according to the press release signed by Mahmud Alam, director of public relations office of DU.

"It will also be ensured that only regular students stay at university dormitories. Seats will be allocated based on merit as per university rules," said the press release.

WHO sounds alarm over disease outbreaks in Gaza

Says poliovirus detected in Gaza sewage; 84 more Palestinians killed in Israeli offensive

AFP, *Geneva*

A top WHO official said yesterday he was "extremely worried" over possible outbreaks in Gaza after poliovirus was detected in the sewage, warning that communicable diseases could cause more deaths than injuries.

- Communicable diseases could cause more deaths: WHO
- Netanyahu arrives in Washington to meet Biden
- Gaza death toll rises to 39,090

Ayadil Saparbekov, the World Health Organization's head of health emergencies in the occupied Palestinian territories, also said the number of people in the Gaza Strip now needing to be evacuated from the territory for medical care may have risen to 14,000.

Meanwhile, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said that an Israeli operation in the main southern city of Khan Yunis overnight killed 70 people and wounded more than 200, after Israel warned its forces would "forcefully operate" in the area.

Thousands of Palestinians fled southern areas of the territory following the Israeli army's temporary evacuation order for parts of Khan Yunis, including the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone.

The latest incident comes days after the health ministry said 92 people were killed in a strike on Al-Mawasi, when Israel said it was targeting a Hamas commander.

Gaza's civil defence agency said at least 12 people were killed in

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Banks reopen today from 11am to 3pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banks are set to re-open today from 11:00am to 3:00pm after four days of general holidays.

The central bank's decision to re-open banks came after the government relaxed the curfew today from 10:00am to 5:00pm. The reduced banking hours are for today and tomorrow.

Banks can open a limited number of branches from 11am to 3pm on Wednesday and Thursday, said Bangladesh Bank spokesman Md Mezbaul Haque.

Banks will decide how many branches and which branches will be kept open, he said.

BB and the head office of scheduled banks will remain open on Wednesday and Thursday.

The development will bring relief to the general public, who were most frozen out of banking and digital services amid the internet shutdown and nationwide curfew.

Army members on an armoured personnel carrier guard a part of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital's Matuail yesterday. Members of the armed forces have been helping to quell the recent violence that rocked the country.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

UN, US, UK slam violence in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN, US, and UK have condemned the violence during last week's students' protests that left at least 150 people dead.

They also expressed worry over the impacts of the current situation on the economy and the people of Bangladesh.

"We condemn all recent acts of violence in Bangladesh and reiterate our unwavering support for peaceful assembly," US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller told a media briefing in Washington DC on Monday.

"In addition, we remain deeply concerned by the reports of ongoing telecommunications disruptions across the country, which limit the ability of people in Bangladesh, including American citizens, to access critical information," he said, calling on the government to restore internet service.

"The US also condemns the reported shoot-on-sight orders that have been given and called for those to be rescinded."

Asked during a press briefing at his ministry yesterday, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said police take action

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

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REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXIV NO. 182 | SRABAN 10, 1431 BS | www.thedailystar.net | MUHARRAM 18, 1446 HIJRI | 12 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS: TK 15.00

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Economy with deep scars limps along

Businesses, factories reopen amid curfew break

AHSAN HABIB

Business and industrial activities resumed yesterday amid a semblance of normalcy after a spasm of violence, internet outage and a curfew that left deep wounds in almost all corners of the economy.

Violent clashes, stemming from the quota reform demonstrations, shuttered garment factories and shops and choked port activities when the country was grappling with the toughest economic challenges in decades: high inflation, falling exports and a persistent dollar crisis.

Economists predict that the impact of the widespread unrest and internet blackouts will be much greater than the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. By one estimate, the economy bled out about $1 billion a day for a stretch of five brutal days that saw deaths and destructions of a scale never before seen in independent Bangladesh.

PREMIER cemenT
ঢালাইয়ের রাজা

Amid economic gloom, garment factories restarted production yesterday to meet the tight deadline for delivery. Shipments of export containers and delivery of imported items gained pace, and trucks began to roll as the broadband internet was restored.

However, factories faced a scarcity of raw materials due to supply chain disruptions, according to Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"Had the government given importance to resolving the quota issue through dialogues, the situation would not be so dire," he added.

Banks reopened their gates to provide services to customers, who lined up for cash withdrawal, encashment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

After office hours, people trying to get into a packed double-decker to reach their destinations as public transport on Dhaka streets was scarce yesterday, the day offices opened after three days of general holidays. A curfew, imposed following clashes between agitators and law enforcers, was relaxed from 10:00am to 5:00pm. The photo was taken around 4:30pm at Farmgate. PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Three missing quota protest coordinators found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three quota protest coordinators -- Dhaka University's Asif Mahmud, Abu Baker Mazumder and Rifat Rashid -- have been found after five days.

Asif and Bakar both wrote on Facebook that they were blindfolded and left in Hatirjheel and Dhanmondi areas of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN

787 more arrested

STAR REPORT

At least 787 more people were arrested in the capital and other districts in the 36 hours to 6:00pm yesterday in cases filed over the recent violence across the country.

Of them, 413 were arrested in the capital and the remaining 355 were in eight districts and metropolitan cities, according to police and court sources.

The highest number of arrestees were from Narayanganj: 107. It was followed by Chattogram (103), Savar (50), Rajshahi (37), Tangail (25) and Natore (17). Eight people were arrested in Khulna and Manikganj each.

With the latest count, at least 3,425 people have been arrested in the country in the last five days.

Until yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 1,380 people in 154 cases filed with different police stations in the city over the violence and sabotage in the capital over the last few days, said a top police official on the condition of anonymity.

At least 75 cases were filed in six districts in connection with the recent violence, according to police. Of them,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Lifting curfew depends on this Friday

Ministers say in high-profile meeting

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The government may decide to reopen the educational institutions and lift the curfew in most places after Friday as the last weekend saw large-scale violence over the quota-reform protest.

The government wants to see what happens on Friday and will deploy a large number of law enforcers in Dhaka that day. The authorities will then make a decision if no untoward incident happens that day, said sources present at a "high-profile" meeting at the home ministry yesterday.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman Fazlur Rahman, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, and police's Special Branch chief Monirul Islam were present at the meeting.

Fierce clashes turned Dhaka into a battlefield after Juma prayers last Friday, leaving, as per The Daily Star findings, 55 dead. Eleven others got killed in different districts.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

- Nighttime curfew may remain in Dhaka, Gazipur, N'Ganj, Narsingdi
- Curfew likely to be lifted in phases elsewhere
- Schools may reopen soon elsewhere
- Strong surveillance in violence-hit areas
- AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on Friday

A makeshift office has been set up at the parking space of Setu Bhaban in the capital's Mohakhali yesterday. Several burnt vehicles were seen there. Agitators damaged and torched vehicles, and several floors of the building during clashes with law enforcers on July 18. Story on page 3. PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Bus, train services may take days to normalise

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Even though the inter-district bus service resumed yesterday, it may take a few more days for passenger transport services to become completely normal in the capital and other parts of the country.

Metro rail will be suspended and Dhaka Elevated Expressway will remain closed for a few more days, officials said.

Bangladesh Railway last night changed its plan of resuming limited scale train services from today.

The BR from its control room sent messages to the officials concerned after 11:00pm that operations of all trains, including freight trains, will remain suspended, two BR officials confirmed The Daily Star.

The message did not give any reason for the move.

Earlier in the day, Railways Secretary told The Daily Star that they would operate two commuter trains on Dhaka-Narayanganj and Dhaka-Joydevpur routes from today when the curfew is in pause.

He said operations of freight trains resumed yesterday and trains carrying oil ran unhindered.

Launch services resumed partially yesterday with only three launches leaving the capital's Sadarghat Launch Terminal for Chandpur and Bhola.

Bus, launch, and train services were suspended on Thursday amid widespread violence at different parts of the country centring the quota reform demonstrations.

Criminals vandalised Mirpur-10 and Kazipara metro rail stations and set fire to two toll plazas of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway in Banani and Mohakhali on July 18 and 19.

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Four more die from bullet wounds

6-yr-old shot while in her father's arms passes away

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The entire neighbourhood of Nayamati in Narayanganj had been praying for the recovery of Riya Gope for the last five days.

The six-year-old sustained a bullet injury on Friday afternoon when she was playing on the roof of her family's four-storey building.

As clashes broke out outside, her father, Dipak Kumar Gope, a prominent businessman, rushed to the roof to get her inside.

Dipak took her in his arms and headed towards the stairs when a bullet hit Riya in the back of her head.

With blood gushing out of her head, Dipak took her to a local hospital. She was transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same day.

Despite the efforts of the doctors, who conducted surgery on her and the prayers of her neighbours, Riya passed away yesterday morning at DMCH.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

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'I apprehended such an attack'

Says PM at Editors' Guild event

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she had an apprehension that the BNP-Jamaat nexus might unleash destruction across the country to cripple the economy and hold back the nation from marching towards prosperity.

"...they [BNP-Jamaat] tried to prevent us from holding the election [January 7], but we held it. Then they thought the election would not be acceptable to all, but we could make it acceptable. We formed the government. But I had an apprehension that a blow like this [recent violence] would come," she said.

Hasina was exchanging views with the editors and heads of news of different media outlets at a meeting, organised by Editors' Guild, at her office.

The premier said the BNP-Jamaat clique had unleashed arson attacks

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Nur Jahan cries and runs after a prison bus that is taking her son Sheikh Farid, an HSC student, to jail from a court in Dhaka. She said her son was playing in Dhalpur Math when he was arrested.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

2 KNF members killed in Ruma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two members of Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF) were killed during a raid by a team of joint forces in the Saikatpara area of Bandarban's Ruma upazila yesterday, said a press release of the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate.

According to the press release, the team has also recovered arms, ammunition, and other items.

The joint forces of army, BGB, Rab, police, and Ansar are conducting a drive in the area since the robberies of Sonali and Krishi banks in Ruma and Thanchi on April 2 and 3.

Earlier on July 13, five other members of the Bawm community were sent to jail yesterday on suspicion of being members of the KNF.

They were presented before a court on charges of bank robbery and arms theft that took place in Ruma.

25 killed in migrant wreck off Mauritania

AFP, *Nouakchott*

At least 25 migrants have died and dozens are missing after their boat capsized off Mauritania, the country's news agency AMI said yesterday, in the latest in a string of migrant tragedies off the coast of West Africa.

Approximately 300 people were on the boat, said the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

HC rejects Prof Yunus' plea to scrap charge framing

FROM PAGE 12

after holding a hearing on the petition.

Speaking to The Daily Star, petitioners' lawyer Abdullah-Al-Mamun said his clients will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC order.

He said the case was filed against his clients with an ulterior motive even though there was no allegation against them and they were not involved in any wrongdoing mentioned in the case.

The documents placed by the prosecution in the court did not have any prima facie evidence, he added.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told this correspondent that the HC summarily rejected the petition on the ground that the offences of misappropriation of funds and money laundering have been disclosed.

There is no legal bar to running the trial of the case against all the accused by the lower court concerned, he added.

During the hearing on the petition yesterday, counsel Abdullah-Al-Mamun told the HC that his clients did not commit any offence of money laundering or embezzlement or fraudulence in running Grameen Telecom, which was established as a non-profit and charitable organisation under section-28 of the Companies Act, 1994.

All the transactions of the organisation were done properly under the settlement agreement between the company and its workers, he argued.

Mamun said his clients have paid the money to their workers in accordance with law.

He said the case was filed against the petitioners, including Prof Yunus, in order to harass them and the allegations brought against them are completely fabricated and baseless.

The ACC officials submitted the charge sheet of the case without approval from the graft watchdog and therefore, the charge sheet and charge framing order against the petitioners are illegal. That is why the trial proceedings of the case can be scrapped, the lawyer argued.

ACC lawyer Khurshid, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik opposed the petition, saying that there are specific allegations against the petitioners.

During the trial of the case, the lower court concerned will examine whether the allegations are true, they argued.

Prof Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom on July 8 submitted the petition seeking an HC order to scrap the trial proceedings of the case.

On June 12, a Dhaka court framed charges against Yunus and 13 others in the case.

The 13 other accused are Grameen Telecom Managing Director Nazmul Islam, directors Ashraful Hassan, Naznin Sultana, Parvin Mahmud, M Shahjahan, Nurjahan Begum, and SM Huzzatul Islam Latifee, Grameen Telecom Sramik-Karmachari Union President Kamruzzaman, General Secretary Firoz Mahmud Hasan, and representative Mainul Islam, Jatiya Workers Federation Office Secretary Kamrul Hasan, and lawyers Zafrul Hasan Sharif and Yusuf Ali.

Economy with deep scars limps along

FROM PAGE 1

of inward remittances and payment of utility bills after a three-day general holiday announced in the wake of the unrest.

Despite the pressure, most banks were able to provide services by and large, said Selim RF Hussain, chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh.

The moribund stock market nervously resumed trade at 11:00am yesterday, but the key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange sank 1.76 percent, the steepest decline in almost two years.

Retail shops in Dhaka, the main hub of trade, reopened but salespeople were disappointed by the thin presence of customers.

Alam Sheikh, a salesman at a clothing store at Nurjahan Supermarket, opposite to Dhaka College, was one of them.

"Customers seems to be afraid of the risk of violence," he said.

Between 10:30am and 1:30pm, Alam Sheikh's sales stood at Tk 3,000, a third of his sales revenue on a regular business day.

All these bleak data point to Bangladesh's plunge into an economic stasis, however short-lived. Save for agricultural activity, trade, manufacturing and all other economic activities were almost suspended for a week.

In the months to come, consumer prices may go further up. New investments will be on hold and jobs will evaporate. Bangladesh also runs the risk of losing export orders and many companies will struggle to pay their employees on time.

"This is a huge loss for Bangladesh when the country is already facing an economic crisis. The latest unrest has a significant impact on the economy," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, sharing his estimate that the country lost around $1 billion a day over the last few days.

"Supply chain disruptions will fuel inflation, which is already high," he said.

His grim prediction has a basis as annual inflation rose to 9.73 percent in fiscal 2023-24, the highest in 12 years, overshooting the government's target of containing it to 7.5 percent.

Ahsan Mansur, a former economist at the International Monetary Fund, warned that export orders might be diverted to other countries in the wake of the recent crisis in Bangladesh.

Zahid Hussain, another noted economist, described the crisis as the nation's double jeopardy: a real-life lockdown and a virtual lockdown.

"Its impact will be more severe than the Covid-19 pandemic, as people could run businesses at the time. During the pandemic, online payments were unhindered. But this week, everything was closed due to internet outage," he said.

The unrest killed at least 154 people, according to The Daily Star's count based solely on hospital sources, although it could be higher as this newspaper could not reach all the hospitals where many critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many friends and families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved-ones from the scenes, and this newspaper could not contact them. Additionally, many hospitals did not even record the deaths, and asked the relatives to take them away.

All these will hit the confidence of foreign buyers and dent the image of the country which registered about 6 percent GDP growth over the last one and a half decades thanks to the political calm, Hussain said.

"The internet blackout was suicidal for the economy. How deep the injury is and how long it will stay remains to be seen," he said. "But we cannot count the loss of lives, which is countless."

With additional reporting from Sukanta Halder

Bus, train services may take days to normalise

FROM PAGE 1

Metro rail remained suspended and Dhaka Elevated Expressway remained closed since Thursday.

The elevated expressway will remain closed until the curfew is lifted fully, said Captain (retd) Hasib Hasan Khan, manager (operations and maintenance) of First Dhaka Elevated Expressway Company Ltd (FDEE), the operating company of the expressway.

"The expressway is operated by a consortium of foreign countries. So, the authority has decided to keep the expressway closed until the curfew is lifted fully," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the two ramps of the expressway where the toll plazas were torched would be kept closed even after lifting of the curfew.

The company is considering opening the Banani ramp where tolls will be collected manually, Hasib said.

He said the company incurred a loss of around Tk 50 crore because of the torching of the two toll plazas.

The Airport-Farmgate section of the first elevated expressway was opened to traffic in September last year. Another ramp of the expressway at the FDC gate was opened early this year, bringing much relief to the commuters.

Over 50,000 vehicles used the expressway daily and the authority used to collect Tk 40 to 45 lakh in tolls daily, Hasib said.

DMTCL FORMS COMMITTEE

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, yesterday said they formed a committee to evaluate when the metro rail operation could be resumed. The committee is supposed to submit its report within 10 days.

"The committee started works today [Wednesday]. We will act on the basis of its report," he told The Daily Star.

Siddique had told this correspondent earlier that it would take at least one year to make the two metro stations operational.

BUS SERVICES

Bus services to and from Dhaka resumed yesterday morning with a low number of passengers.

Md Kawsar, a staffer of Dola Paribahan at Sayedabad Bus Terminal, said at least eight to nine buses had left the capital for Chattogram, Sylhet, Barishal, and Khulna till around 12:30pm.

Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, said they resumed their services on all routes from 9:00am.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said buses will operate only when the curfew is in pause.

Railways Secretary Humayun Kabir told The Daily Star yesterday that the BR incurred a loss of around Tk 8 crore as criminals torched four carriages of a train and vandalised many coaches and other establishments of the railway.

The BR operates over 360 passenger trains daily.

Alamgir Kabir, joint director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, said only three launches left Dhaka between 10:00am and 5:00pm yesterday.

No launch left Dhaka for Barishal and other popular destinations as vessels on those routes usually leave Dhaka at night, he said.

"But we did not allow any launches to depart Dhaka after 5:00pm as curfew came into force then," he said.

Four more die from bullet wounds

FROM PAGE 1

As the news spread, a pall of gloom descended on the entire neighbourhood. As this correspondent visited the house, he saw family members and neighbours gathering at the house to console the couple. But Riya's mother was inconsolable after losing her only child. She just kept on wailing.

Golam Rahman, who has been working as a security guard at the residence of Dipak for over eight years, said, "Riya was the centre of the couple's world. We were all so happy after she was born. I saw her grow before my eyes. I feel I lost a child..."

Riya was among four who sustained injuries in previous days' clashes and died yesterday.

The others are Sajidur Rahman Omar, 22, an IT technician in the capital's Demra; Shahjahan, a salesperson of Mohakhali, and Tuhin Ahmed, 26.

Sajidur and Shahjahan died at DMCH while Tuhin passed away at Savar's Enam Medical College Hospital.

Sajidur was shot during clashes in Konapara area of Demra on Sunday, while Shahjahan was injured on Friday during a clash at the Mohakhali level crossing, police and family members said.

Tuhin was shot during clashes between agitators and law enforcers in Savar on Sunday, reports our Savar correspondent.

Yousuf Ali, the hospital's duty manager, confirmed his death.

With yesterday's count, at least 154 were killed since last Tuesday, when six people were killed in clashes between agitators, law enforcers, and ruling party activists.

The overall death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members and ruling party activists, may be higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

787 more arrested

FROM PAGE 1

27 cases were filed in Chattogram, 17 in Rajshahi, nine each in Narayanganj and Savar, eight in Natore and five in Tangail.

According to an analysis of 29 of the cases, 499 named and 74,055 unnamed people have been made accused in the cases lodged with 17 police stations on charges of attacking law enforcers and damaging and torching state properties.

The number of accused was not mentioned in 24 cases, which only stated "many unidentified accused".

Many of the arrestees were on remand and divulging important information about the financing behind the sabotage and those who gave the directives for the violence, said Biplob Kumar Sarker, joint commissioner (operations) of DMP, at a media briefing at the DMP headquarters yesterday.

The miscreants had attacked around 69 police establishments in Dhaka and set several traffic boxes on fire, he said.

DMP in a statement said they incurred a loss of Tk 61 crore due to the violence.

The main targets of this attack were the DMP and Bangladesh Police, according to Sarker.

"The violence and sabotage that took place in Dhaka over the last few days and the way the police and other government establishments were burnt cannot be a protest of the students in any way -- it is the BNP-Jamaat people who have done this and diverted the student protests to a different direction," Sarker said.

The sabotage was carried out by miscreants amid the quota reform movement, which turned into deadly clashes between the students and law enforcers. Ruling party activists allegedly joined in too.

At least 154 people were killed and several thousand were wounded, according to The Daily Star's count.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday dismissed the government's allegations involving BNP with subversive activities as baseless.

The party was with the movement but it does not mean that they patronised sabotage.

"[The govt] incited the violence and invited the trouble," he said while speaking at a press conference at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

At least 2,000 opposition leaders and activists were arrested across the country following the violent student movement, Fakhrul said, while demanding immediate release of their arrested leaders and activists.

Lifting curfew

FROM PAGE 1

Awami League leadership believes that there are risks of violence on Friday, and its activists will stay alert, said party insiders. The AL will hold a rally in front of its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue at 3:00pm that day.

At yesterday's meeting at the home ministry, reports made by deputy commissioners from across the country were discussed, said the sources.

The participants opined that the situation is satisfactory in all districts except Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi, and areas under the capital's two city corporations, Narayanganj City Corporation, and Gazipur City Corporation.

In other districts, primary schools may reopen in phases after the authorities evaluate Friday's situation, said the sources.

A minister present at the meeting said, "We want to bring primary school students back to the classrooms because the new activity-based curriculum requires their presence. We are considering opening schools everywhere except those in the four districts. We will decide about secondary schools afterwards."

Amid widespread violence, the government on July 16 announced closure of educational institutions. The education boards later postponed the Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent examinations scheduled for July 18, 21, 23, and 25.

After the meeting yesterday, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury told reporters that the situation was not conducive to reopening universities.

Completing the HSC and equivalent examinations is the priority, he said.

Participants at the meeting talked about the judicial commission formed to probe the killings on 16 July during the quota-reform protests. The government would wait for the commission, led by High Court Judge Khondker Diliruzzaman, to file a report, and then take action.

"The government will bring those responsible for the killings to book, no matter who they are," a minister told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

The participants agreed that curfew should be lifted in all places, except the aforesaid districts, unless there is an unless an untoward incident. Dusk-to-dawn curfew may remain in the four districts.

Even if daytime curfew is lifted, there will be strong surveillance on Dhaka's Shonir Akhra, Demra, Rayerbagh, Mohammadpur, Mirpur-10, Savar and Uttara because these places witnessed fierce clashes which resulted in high number of causalities.

Three missing

FROM PAGE 1

capital yesterday. Neither of them mentioned who took them.

Rifat wrote on Facebook that he "narrowly escaped" from being a victim of "enforced disappearance".

He said he was picked up from Mahanagar residential area of Hatirjheel around 11:00pm on July 19. He was asked to announce a suspension of the protests. When he refused to comply, he was given an injection that made him lose consciousness.

Whenever he woke up over the last few days, he was given another injection, he wrote, adding that he was left blindfolded at the place from where he was taken.

He mentioned that his family admitted him to a hospital and he would talk to the coordinators after getting better.

Baker wrote on Facebook around 6:00pm yesterday that he was picked up from Dhanmondi in the evening on July 19. He was locked in a dark room and asked to announce that the movement should stop.

"I am safe with my family now. I will tell you everything in details after receiving first aid," he wrote.

At half past seven, Rifat wrote on Facebook, "I am alive, not dead."

As per the decision of other coordinators, he had spent days hiding in homes of different people, he said, adding that his phone had been tracked.

On Friday, another coordinator named Nahid Islam was picked up from Nandipara in the capital. He said he was left in Purbachal area after nearly 24 hours of physical and mental torture.

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A man stands on a rickshaw, peering at the long line of traffic ahead. The ongoing curfew was relaxed between 10:00am and 5:00pm yesterday, leading to traffic congestions throughout the capital. The photo was taken in the Mohammadpur bus stand area.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

7-HR CURFEW BREAK

Gridlock returns to Dhaka streets

HELEMUL ALAM

Traffic congestions in different parts of Dhaka meant the capital returned to its usual self yesterday after almost a week of violence, along with curfew and a three-day general holiday.

City dwellers thronged banks, government and private offices to complete pending tasks during the seven-hour curfew break window.

However, they faced immense sufferings due to traffic jams at different points, as numerous vehicles hit the streets at once.

The suspension of metro rail and elevated expressway operations since Thursday, following large-scale damages during recent violence, added to the sufferings.

A shortage of public transport, particularly buses, forced commuters to wait for hours or walk miles to reach their destinations.

Long queues were observed at banks, while people rushed to government and other offices, which were open for four hours from 11:00am.

Major thoroughfares, including Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Mirpur Road, Airport Road, and Begum Rokeya Sarani, as well as key intersections like Mohakhali, Banani, Shahbagh, Tejgaon, Gulshan, and Kalyanpur, were crammed with vehicles.

Polas Miah, a resident of Mirpur-12, who usually commutes to his office in Dilkusha via metro rail daily, said he spent more than three hours on the road by bus for what used to be a 30-minute journey on the metro rail.

"The metro rail made our lives very easy, but its suspension has put us in serious trouble again," he said.

Anwara Begum's ordeal was different. She not only waited on the road for hours but also had to walk miles due to severe traffic congestion.

"It took four and a half hours to reach the court area in Old Dhaka from Kalyanpur due to severe traffic congestion at different points," she said.

Anwara left her CNG-run three-wheeler at Shahbagh after being stuck for half an hour and then walked to Gulistan, from where she hired a rickshaw to reach her destination.

Jhilan, a driver of a CNG-run three-wheeler, earned Tk 1,000 by yesterday evening despite starting his day at 8:00am due to traffic congestion in Uttara and Gulistan.

"I left Uttara with passengers at 8:00am

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

All BRTA services remain halted

Officials use makeshift tents at BRTA, Setu Bhaban following arson attack

Temporary Office
Bridges Division
and
Bangladesh Bridge Authority
অস্থায়ী কার্যালয়
সেতু বিভাগ
এবং
বাংলাদেশ সেতু কর্তৃপক্ষ

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

All kinds of BRTA services, including the issuance of vehicle registrations and driving licences, are suspended across the country after the entire electricity system of BRTA headquarters was damaged during the recent unrest.

The headquarters of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority in the capital's Banani area, which housed the data server necessary to provide these services, was torched and vandalised by miscreants on July 18.

"All of our services are suspended across the country and will remain so until the operation of data server can be resumed," BRTA Chairman

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Scenes of despair at CMM court

Family members throng its premises to find their arrested loved ones

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Bristy Begum went to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the old part of the city from Manik Nagar in Jatrabari to catch a glimpse of her husband Fazlur Rahman.

Fazlur, 40, who used to work as a manager at a courier service, was arrested by police early yesterday.

"Police arrested my husband from near our residence around 1:00am. I came to the court to see my husband. I am sitting here for over six hours, but could not find him," Bristy told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

When this correspondent met her, a seemingly distressed Bristy, 30, along with her child Fariha, 5, and two relatives, was waiting in front of the CMM court.

Failing to meet Fazlur, the only earning member of the four-member family, she returned home after 5:30pm.

"My husband is innocent. He did not engage in any violent activities, yet police arrested him," she said.

One of her relatives said, "Police checked Fazlur's cell phone and found a video clip of the clashes. This is why they arrested him."

Later in the day, Fazlur was sent to jail after police produced him before the court in a violence case filed with Jatrabari Police Station.

Fazlur was among the 413 arrestees produced

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PHOTO: **STAR**

While waiting to see her arrested husband, Joly, 21, feeds her 18-month-old son in front of the CMM court yesterday afternoon.

DNCC resumes household waste collection: mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation has removed around 10,000 tonnes of garbage, generated during the recent violence on different city roads in DNCC areas.

An official of DNCC said they started clearing up the garbage, including bricks, felled trees, and grilles of medians on Monday night and completed it by Tuesday noon.

DNCC has collected garbage from different roads in the Pragati Sarani, Badda, Rampura, Mohakhali, Banani, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Mirpur, Uttara, and Mohammadpur areas.

A total of 67 DNCC vehicles have been damaged. Of these, 29 garbage-carrying vehicles were completely charred, alongside 21 jeeps used by officers.

He said they also resumed collecting regular household garbage.

Meanwhile, DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam and LGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday visited the DNCC Zone-10 office at Mirpur-10 to witness the damaged vehicles.

Miscreants have vandalised various offices and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Markets open, but mostly deserted

SUKANTA HALDER

Shopping malls and markets in the capital opened yesterday, after being closed for four consecutive days, but the presence of buyers was very low.

The shops and malls were open from 10:00am to 3:00pm, as there was a break in the curfew during those hours.

Businessmen said due to the unrest over the last week, panic still persists among the buyers. So, many customers chose not to visit the shops.

Very few customers, who were in urgent need of certain products, visited the stores. It will likely take a few more days for the situation to completely return to normal, they added.

At least 150 people died in clashes between agitators and law enforcers and ruling party activists till Wednesday during the quota reform protest.

Ashraf Ali, manager of a retail shop at Noorjahan Super Market of the capital's New Market, said, "There is still a kind of panic among the people. As a result, even after opening the outlet on Wednesday, four days later, the number of customers is very low."

"Usually, products worth around Tk 10,000 are sold between 10:00am and 1:00pm on a regular day. However, yesterday we sold only Tk 3,000 worth of products. Hopefully, when the situation returns to normal, buyers will also increase," he said.

Khalid Mahmood Khan, co-founder of Kay Kraft, said some of their outlets were opened, and some were not. Not all outlets that were opened had visitors, he added.

However, most outlets sold some products, albeit very little, he said, adding that at least customers knew

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Although markets and shops were open from 10:00am to 3:00pm during the curfew break, there were very few customers. The photo was taken in Bailey Road area yesterday.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Publish actual number of casualties

Demands Garment Sramik Sanghati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati and Mahila Parishad have expressed concern over the current situation in the country.

In a statement, Taslima Akhter, president of Garment Sramik Sanghati; and Anjan Das, vice-president, condemned the killings, violence, arrests, and harassment.

Referring to media reports, they said approximately 197 people have been shot dead, 2,657 arrested, and numerous cases filed. They also criticised the government for shutting down the internet, which has restricted the public's right to information.

They demanded immediate publication of the actual number of casualties.

In a separate statement, Mahila Parishad condemned the elimination of female quota.

Normalcy returning gradually

STAR REPORT

Normalcy started to return across the country as the ongoing curfew was relaxed for several hours yesterday.

In Chattogram, a good number of vehicles were seen plying the city roads while people thronged the kitchen markets to buy essentials.

"Unlike the past few days, most vegetable items were available in the market today [yesterday], but the prices are still high," said Abul Bashar, who came to Kazir Dewri Kitchen Market for grocery shopping.

In Narayanganj, garment factories reopened yesterday after four days of closure, with hundreds of workers joining their work.

However, it has not been possible to communicate with foreign buyers as the internet connectivity is not smooth, said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"We were all stuck at home amid uncertainty. We are glad the factory reopened," said Farzana Begum, an RMG worker.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

A man unloads vegetables from a truck amid the curfew break in Sylhet city yesterday.

Different banks in Pirojpur saw a lot of activity upon reopening.

"Our bank opened at 11:00am, but people started thronging our premises by 10:30am," said Mohammad Sanaullah, manager of Rupali Bank Ltd in Pirojpur's Bhandaria branch.

Golam Mawla Nokib, general secretary of Pirojpur District Businessmen Association, said, "Traders faced huge losses in last one week. We hope normalcy will return soon."

In Sylhet, thousands rushed to recharge their prepaid electricity and gas meters.

"We had a hard time in past few days. As the banks reopened, I rushed early to recharge prepaid electricity and gas meters," said Abu Ahmed Showkat, a resident of the Majortila area.

Although many shopping malls and other shops reopened, there were not many customers.

"Only around 15 customers came in the whole day," said Anwar Chowdhury, owner of a cloth store in Zindabazar area.

Long-haul bus services also resumed and many people, who were stuck due to curfew, finally were able to travel long distances.

In Rangpur, banks, public offices and court activities resumed, while law enforcers and armed forces continued patrolling the thoroughfares in the city. Vehicular movement was also seen significantly more compared to the past few days.

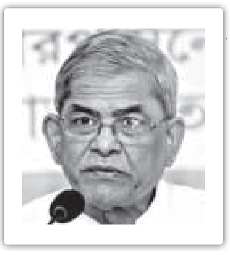
A similar scenario was observed in Khulna.

In Lalmonirhat, import-export activities at Burimari Land Port in Patgram upazila resumed yesterday.

"At least 55 trucks carrying imported goods from India and Bhutan arrived and 60 trucks carrying exported goods from Bangladesh left for India by 5:00pm," said Mehedi Hasan, assistant director of Bangladesh Land Port Authority at Burimari Land Port.

Movement won't end without political solution: Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the ongoing movement will not end unless there is a political solution to the persisting political crisis in the country.

Speaking at a press conference, he said the common people joined the student protests in an outburst of their pent-up anger.

He said the government could stop the protests temporarily by resorting to repression and using law enforcers and deploying the army. "But it'll never end if the problem is not resolved politically."

When asked what he meant by the political solution, Fakhrul said, "The political solution is that the government must resign and an impartial election has to be arranged under a neutral administration."

The BNP leader said the ordinary people and even teenagers took to the streets during the student protests as the government has failed to run the country, ensure job for people and control the growing hikes in essential commodities.

He said the government's statements involving BNP and other opposition parties with the violence are "baseless, misleading and politically motivated".

He claimed that at least 2,000 opposition leaders and activists were arrested across the country following the violence centring quota protests.

All BRTA services remain halted

FROM PAGE 3

Gautam Chandra Pal told The Daily Star yesterday.

He could not tell when the services can be resumed.

BRTA provides over 50 types of services, mostly online, from its 70 circle offices across the country, officials said.

Meanwhile, officials of BRTA, Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) and Bridges Division yesterday carried out some activities at makeshift offices built under tents.

Miscreants torched and vandalised the Setu Bhaban, which housed the office of BBA and Bridges Division, beside the BRTA headquarters, on July 18.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader visited both offices yesterday and talked to the officials there.

The BRTA chairman said apart from the damages to vehicles and other things, miscreants have entirely damaged the electricity system of the building.

"So, we have built a makeshift office using two tents on the office premises to carry out some urgent works. The committee formed to assess the damages also carried out their works from there," he said.

A similar scenario was found on the Setu Bhaban premises. Officials were seen sitting under the tents, with two banners -- one in English and another in Bangla -- which read "Temporary office of Bridges Division and Bangladesh Bridge Authority."

According to the ministry officials, miscreants burnt down at least 55 vehicles on the premises of Setu Bhaban, of which 32 were SUVs, nine pickups, one coaster, seven microbuses, and five motorcycles. One ambulance was burnt down outside its premises.

Almost everything, including computers and many important documents, on the ground and the first floors of the building was burnt down, said an official. Meanwhile, 12 vehicles were burnt down at BRTA headquarters. Miscreants also set fire to one to fifth floors of the building, he said.

They have damaged the water supply line of the building and AC and generator in the control room, alongside computers and other equipment, the official added.

Scenes of despair

FROM PAGE 3

before the CMM court yesterday in cases filed centring the recent violence in the city.

Yesterday, the court premises were full of relatives of the arrestees.

One of them was 21-year-old Joly.

Carrying her son Osman, she came to the court from Kunipara to find her husband Tuhin around noon.

She said Tuhin drives an auto-rickshaw for a living.

"Police arrested him from our residence on Tuesday noon. He did not participate in any movement," Joly claimed.

"My 18-month-old son is ill. He is coughing now. Despite this, I rushed to the court to see my husband," she said.

Meanwhile, Joy, 23, was the only son of Jhorna Begum, 40. He was picked up by police from their Kunipara residence.

"Police barged in without knocking. Joy was taking a shower at the time. They didn't even give him enough time before taking him away," Jhorna claimed.

She said she waited for four hours in a police station to see if her son was there. From there, she came to the court after someone told him she might find Joy there.

Even after waiting for hours, she could not trace her son.

Also, rickshaw-puller Baset was arrested by Jatrabari police early yesterday when he was just returning to his residence after parking his three-wheeler at a garage.

His wife Aklima Begum said, "At 10:00am, I arrived at the court to find my husband. It's almost 5:00pm, I still could not find him. I spoke to a lawyer and he said my husband may be released before sunset as he was not arrested in any violence cases."

"With my husband's meagre income, we cannot even manage one square meal a day at times. And now we don't even have that," said the mother of three children.

DNCC

FROM PAGE 3

facilities of DNCC aiming to make DNCC unable to provide services to the people of the city, he said.

"A total of 67 DNCC vehicles have been damaged. Of these, 29 garbage-carrying vehicles were completely charred, alongside 21 SUVs used by officers," he said.

As per the instruction of the prime minister they have increased working hours, and increased car trips to remove all the garbage, said Atiqul.

Meanwhile, Tazul said, "Already severe traffic jams have taken place today [yesterday] due to an arson attack on the metro rail. Those who carried out such sabotage will be brought to justice."

Govt playing double standard over quota issue: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader and Jatiyo Party chairman GM Quader yesterday brought allegation of double standard against the government in realising the demands made by students seeking quota reformation.

"On one hand, the government is saying that all the logical demands of students have been accepted and the safety of students has been ensured. On the other, some students are still missing while many have been arrested in cases, which is nothing but the government's double standard," he said.

He demanded release of the arrested students, an end to harassment of general students, and immediate withdrawal of cases filed against them.

Markets open

FROM PAGE 3

that the outlets were open.

Mohammad Habib Ullah, branch cashier of retail clothing outlet Gentle Park at Bashundhara City shopping mall, said after being closed for four days, they opened the shop yesterday morning.

"There were very few customers after opening. However, as the day progressed, the number of customers increased, he said, adding that from 11:00am to 1:30pm, 10 buyers visited their store.

"After opening the outlet, we only had two buyers till 2:00pm yesterday," said Jackson Dio, manager of Easy Fashion Limited of the same shopping mall.

Mohammad Nurul Islam, a retailer of children's clothes at Muktijoddha Super Market at Mirpur-1, said after opening the shop yesterday, only one customer visited the branch till 1:00pm.

Usually, products worth Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 are sold during this period, he said.

"Fear still persists among buyers about the situation created a few days ago. As a result, there are fewer buyers in the market," he added.

Gridlock

FROM PAGE 3

and reached Gulistan at 11:00am. I have to pay Tk 1,200 to the owner and need Tk 300 more for gas, but I could earn only Tk 1,000," he said.

Masudul Mazid, an official at a buying office in Baridhara, had to change two modes of transport to reach his destination.

"I walked from Dhanmondi to Farmgate as I couldn't find a three-wheeler in Dhanmondi. The situation at Farmgate was worse, and after waiting for an hour, I found a Cantonment-bound bus and hired a bike from there to reach my destination," he said.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 25

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন
উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র
টাইগার পাস
চট্টগ্রাম

স্মারক নংঃ ৪৬.১১.১৬০০.০০২.৩৮.৫৪৭.২৪.০৮ তারিখঃ ২৪/০৭/২০২৪ইং

ই-টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধনী

চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশনের এর স্মারক নং ৪৬.১১.১৬০০.০০২.৩৮.৫৪৭.২৪.১০, তারিখ ১০/০৭/২০২৪ মূলে পরিচ্ছন্ন বিভাগের (যান্ত্রিক শাখা) বারটি কাজের ই-টেন্ডার নোটিশ দৈনিক আজাদী, দৈনিক কালের কণ্ঠ, দৈনিক কালবেলা ও দ্যা ডেইলি স্টার পত্রিকায় গত ১১/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখে প্রকাশিত হয়। উক্ত নোটিশের ক্রমিক নং ০১-১২ এর ডকুমেন্ট সমূহ বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ, সময় এবং ডকুমেন্ট জমা দেয়ার শেষ তারিখ ও সময় অনিবার্য কারণে ২৪/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখের পরিবর্তে ২৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখ হবে। নোটিশের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী বলবৎ থাকিবে।

চসিক/জসা-০৩/২৪-২৫(৪x২)

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Dhaka-1208

মুজিব শতবর্ষ MUJIB 100

PRESS TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender are hereby invited from Reputed Suppliers/ Importer/ Organization for supply of following item at EDCL, Dhaka on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule
01.	EDCL(Dhaka)/Pur./Press Ten/2024/290 Date: 24/07/2024	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Thunder Protection System at EDCL, Dhaka. (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 750.00/set (Non-refundable)

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of **Essential Drugs Company Limited,** Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tenders may drop their offer in tender box kept at the Procurement Department, EDCL, Dhaka office till 12.00 noon on **11/08/2024** which will be opened on **11/08/2024** at 12.30 PM in Presence at the tenderers/Their representatives (if any).

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money @ 2.5% through of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of **"Essential Drugs Company Limited"** without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

Essential Drugs Company Limited authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For : Managing Director.

Size: 5.5"x 4 col.

এনএসইউ'র জরুরি ঘোষণা

অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নর্থ সাউথ ইউনিভার্সিটির ২৫তম সমাবর্তন ২৮ জুলাই ২০২৪ অনুষ্ঠিত হচ্ছে না। মহামান্য রাষ্ট্রপতির সদয় সম্মতিক্রমে সমাবর্তনের নতুন তারিখ কর্তৃপক্ষ যথাসময়ে জানিয়ে দেবে।

এনএসইউ কর্তৃপক্ষ 'ফুল রিফান্ড'সহ 'কোর্স ড্রপ' করার সময়সীমা ৮ আগষ্ট ২০২৪ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত।

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা
ঢাকা-১২০৮

সংশোধনী

গত ০৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং তারিখে "দৈনিক সমকাল" এবং "দি ডেইলি স্টার" পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/স্থানীয়/দরপত্র/২০২৪/২৬৫ তারিখ ০৮/০৭/২০২৪ইং দরপ্রস্তাবপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ২৯/০৭/২০২৪ইং নিম্নরূপ সংশোধন করা হল।

দরপত্র দাখিল করার সময় বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা এবং খোলার সময় বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটিকা হবে।

দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তীত থাকবে।

মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক, প্রকিউরমেন্ট
পক্ষেঃ ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক

(সাইজ ৩"x৩)

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: commerce@cddl.gov.bd, contact@cddl.gov.bd.
Website: www.cddl.gov.bd

23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.80 Dated: 23 July 2024

TENDER AMENDMENT NOTICE

Tender Ref No. 23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.57 Date: 07 July 2024 and 23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.68 Date: 16 July 2024 for purchase of **MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE-A)** has been published on 08 July 2024 & 17 July 2024 in The Daily Star and The Daily Jugantor shall be amended as follows:

1	Procuring entity	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd
2	Invitation for	Tender Documents for **MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE-A)** (Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned in Tender Document)
3	Tender Reference No.	23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.69 Date: 16 July 2024
4	Tender closing	01 August 2024 at 12.15pm
5	Tender opening	01 August 2024 at 12.30pm
N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website (www.cddl.gov.bd)		

Head of Commerce & Purchase Department
Tanvir Ahammad Talukdar
Commander BN
For Managing Director

GD-66

J&K FIREFIGHTS

Indian soldier, suspected militant killed

AFP, *Srinagar*

Separate firefights in India's Jammu and Kashmir killed a soldier and a suspected militant near the disputed territory's militarised unofficial frontier with Pakistan, India's military said yesterday.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947, and each side claims it in full.

The soldier was the 10th killed in the area this month following several deadly militant attacks on a southern Hindu-dominated part of the otherwise Muslim-majority region.

He died after a clash with a group of militants attempting to cross over the Line of Control from the Pakistan side at Poonch early on Tuesday morning, the Indian military's White Knight Corps said in a post on social media platform X.

The army offered its "deepest condolences" to the slain soldier's family.

Migrants of different nationalities walk along a road in a caravan towards the US, in Tapachula, Chiapas state, Mexico on Tuesday. Thousands of migrants fleeing violence and poverty travel across Mexico every year for the US border. PHOTO: REUTERS

SOUTHERN PAKISTAN

Over 100,000 schools remain closed due to extreme heat

AFP, *Karachi*

School summer holidays will be extended by two weeks in southern Pakistan because of high temperatures, affecting more than 100,000 schools, an education official said Tuesday.

Pakistan is increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions resulting from climate change, including heatwaves that are hotter and more frequent and monsoons that are heavier and longer.

"We decided to close schools for an additional 14 days for the children's well-being," Atif Vighio, a spokesperson at the education department in Sindh province, told AFP.

Planned power cuts, also known as load-shedding, happen frequently in Pakistan due to an ongoing power supply crisis.

The load-shedding varies from city to city, but in rural areas of Sindh they can last for more than 12 hours a day, leaving schools without fans.

Israel carries out new raids in Gaza

55 more Palestinians killed; thousands forced to head west of Khan Younis to seek shelter

REUTERS, *Gaza*

Israeli forces carried out new raids in the Gaza Strip yesterday, hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to address the US Congress.

The latest Israeli attacks destroyed homes in towns east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza and thousands of people were forced to head west to seek shelter, residents said.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said it had received distress calls from residents trapped in their homes in Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Younis, but were unable to reach the town.

Israel's military, which is trying to eradicate the Hamas, said it had been operating in areas from which fighters had been able to fire rockets into Israel and attack Israeli troops.

Gaza health officials said Israeli military strikes in the past 24 hours had killed at least 55 people, the latest casualties in an offensive that health authorities in the enclave say has killed at least 39,145 Palestinians.

"Where should we go? Shall we cross into the sea?" said Ghada, who has been displaced with her family six times during the offensive, said from Hamas City in northwestern Khan Younis.

"We are exhausted, starved, and want the offensive to end now, now not an hour later. Every day means more families are wiped off the registration book," she told Reuters via a chat app.

Local residents said they had been ordered to head west towards a designated humanitarian area, but that the area was now unsafe.

Israeli forces also carried out airstrikes on several areas of central and northern Gaza Strip, killing and wounding several Palestinians, health officials said.

Residents of Rafah, near the border with Egypt, said Israeli forces had blown up several houses in the west of the city.

Some Palestinians who gathered at a hospital in Khan Younis before funerals criticised the US for welcoming Netanyahu.

The Israel leader was due to address Congress later yesterday and to meet President Joe Biden at White House today. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said he would meet Netanyahu in Florida tomorrow.

Asean seeks to tackle Myanmar crisis

REUTERS

The Southeast Asian bloc Asean met in Laos yesterday as it seeks to advance a stalled bid to resolve a crisis in Myanmar and cool tensions in the South China Sea, days ahead of a gathering of top diplomats from the world's biggest powers.

The meeting of the foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will be followed by two summits in Laos on Saturday set to address key global issues that will be attended by officials from the US, EU, Japan, China, Russia and more.

Asean's foreign ministers will discuss so far fruitless efforts to end a conflict that has morphed into a civil war in Myanmar.

UAE did not impose restrictions

FROM PAGE 12

including a metro rail station in Mirpur, Setu Bhaban, Sarak Bhaban, health directorate building, and BTV Bhaban, that were vandalised or torched during the last week's violence centring the quota reform protests.

Representatives from the 49 foreign missions in Dhaka, including 23 ambassadors, visited the sites. The foreign minister led them.

Hasan said arrests were also made in some Middle Eastern countries, including in Saudi Arabia, over demonstrations.

Asked if Bangladesh would raise the issue before the UAE or Saudi Arabia, the minister said the expatriates were punished under their domestic law.

He said some Bangladeshis held protest rallies in front of Bangladeshi missions abroad and Pakistani citizens were also involved in those programmes.

"We have specific information on this."

About the diplomats' visit to the affected sites, the foreign minister said the envoys were shocked at the level of destruction. "They said they are with us."

"We had a plan to take them to some other places like the Data Centre. But due to traffic congestion and rain, we could not go there."

He said that many who were involved in arson attacks in 2014-15 were punished, but some others came out of jail due to legal loopholes.

"This time we are very tough. The prime minister said it. There are video clips of all those who attacked the BTV Bhaban. We are committed to take action against each of them."

Asked if there was any failure on the part of the law enforcers and intelligence agencies and if the government would probe the failure, Hasan said the army and law enforcement agencies are working and peace is being established now.

Foreign diplomats visiting a damaged room of BTV Bhaban in the capital's Rampura yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

"When I went to the BTV, I asked them how it happened. They said police had no permission to open fire that day...."

"If the police had the permission to shoot, the BTV Bhaban would not have been damaged. There are a few other factors."

On the UN's concerns of using UN-marked vehicles by the law enforcers during the violence last week, the minister said those vehicles belonged to Bangladesh and were rented out to the UN missions.

"However, the UN logos were not erased mistakenly. Those have been erased now," he said.

Sramik League leader

FROM PAGE 12

unidentified person of torching two BRTC buses on Saturday night.

After scrutinising the CCTV footage of the area, police first held Sohel Rana on Monday. After his confessionduring primary interrogation, police arrested Didar the same day. The duo was presented before the court on Tuesday evening.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Tuesday, Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Model Police Station, said, "Didar, the Sramik League president in Baizid Bostami thana, took the opportunity during the countrywide unrest triggered by the quota reform movement, and ordered his aide Sohel to torch the buses inside the depot."

In his confessional statement, Sohel said Didar offered to pay him Tk 4 lakh if he torched five buses and had given him an advance payment of Tk 500.

Sohel added that he was able to set two buses on fire as the security guards sensed his presence before he could torch the rest.

Hathazari police Sub-Inspector Rahmat Ullah, also the investigating officer of the case, told The Daily Star, "Sohel admitted to his crime before the magistrate saying Didar paid him Tk 500 advance money to torch the vehicles ... We will place a remand prayer before the court for Didar in this regard today."

Police and BRTC sources said Didar used to rent BRTC buses on contract from the depot. However, due to some incidents of irregularities, BRTC cancelled his contract and stopped supplying the vehicles to him, which infuriated him.

According to OC Anwar, Didar was accused in a murder case in 2022.

Court sources said the case is now under trial and according to the charge sheet, the victim Abdul Halim Rubel was stabbed to death by Didar and others over a feud over the appointment of BRTC bus officials.

Broadband restored

FROM PAGE 12

"Social media platforms, especially Facebook and YouTube, haven't been complying with Bangladesh's laws. They're also not taking into account the situation on the ground, violating their policy guidelines... Amid this, who will take the risk [of opening the social media platforms]?"

He said the government will send letters to the platforms seeking explanations as to why they are not complying with orders. These platforms' reopening will be considered once they promise to comply, he added.

While the government and the BTRC claimed that the internet shutdown occurred due to an attack on the data centres in the capital's Mohakhali, the sources said the outage was ordered by the government.

The Daily Star has visited the data centres in question and found no sign of damage to the building that housed them. Officials of these data centres also confirmed that the fire did not reach their offices.

However, they said the fire that partially burnt the adjacent building of the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) damaged several overhead cables connected to the centres.

On July 17, after the government ordered the shutdown of mobile internet, Palak had said the decision was made in light of the current unrest in the country and to stop the spread of fake news on social media.

On July 18, Grameenphone said the government had temporarily stopped the mobile internet services in the country due to the unrest.

"We're dependent on the authorities to restart the mobile internet services. We're in constant communication with the authorities in this regard," said a statement.

The same day, the fire at the Mohakhali's Department of Disaster Management occurred.

Around 8:00pm, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh, said the fire may cut 30-40 percent of bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

But around 9:00pm on July 18, entire Bangladesh was without internet.

How it all unfolded

FROM PAGE 12

Outside, around 15 motorcycles and private vehicles were set on fire.

Nazimur Rahman, the guard of the jail building's main gate, said, "When the main gate was being broken down with hammers, we tried to block it with sacks and tables but we failed. No one was helping us. We couldn't prepare the weapons we had to use in time and each of their lockers were locked. The miscreants looted them after breaking in."

Md Abul Kalam Azad, a jail superintendent who was suspended after the incident, said, "There are only 104 personnel working in three shifts. We repeatedly sought the police's help but they arrived at the scene around 10:00pm. If they had assisted us in time, this situation might not have been created."

Narsingdi District Commissioner Dr Badiul Alam told The Daily Star, "Jail super Abul Kamal Azad and Jailer Kamrul Islam have been temporarily suspended for negligence. Such a heinous incident has never occurred in the subcontinent before. Those responsible will be brought to book."

Meanwhile, 348 inmates, who had escaped or were forced to, surrendered to a court and police since the incident. Of them 155 surrendered yesterday.

"The escapee inmates who surrendered are being housed in various district jails. We are trying to repair the damages in the district jail to rehabilitate them."

Narsingdi Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman said, "102 people [suspected to be linked to the incident] have been arrested, while 39 out of 85 weapons, and 1,085 rounds of ammunition have been recovered. Efforts are on to arrest the rest.

"Four separate cases have been filed for obstructing government work, attempting to kill police officers, attacking the jail to free inmates, and looting weapons."

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Army Chief Waker-Uz-Zaman, and Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, along with other senior officials, have already visited the district jail.

'I apprehended such an attack'

FROM PAGE 2

and killings before and after the 2014 general election. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands injured at that time.

"I did not want to see any incident that might lead to an unwanted situation in the country. Their target was to destroy the country's economy."

She questioned the understanding of those people who supported the recent mayhem.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said that the only aim of the vested quarter is to harm the country's independence and halt the continuation of democracy.

She said that she never wanted to deploy army personnel. "We called in the army after they [students] declared that they were not involved in subversive activities."

The PM also said she did not want to impose curfew as the country has been seeing a democratic environment for 15 years.

She requested the people to resist those who have caused harm to the country.

"They have destroyed all the structures built to ensure the welfare of the people .... Who will be the worst sufferer? Of course the mass people. Now it is the responsibility of the mass people to resist terrorism and militancy."

Hasina said that the targets of the recent violence were the AL, freedom fighters, and pro-liberation forces.

She questioned why the students gave the scope to the militants for carrying out heinous activities even though all their demands were met.

Speaking at the meeting, editors and senior journalists demanded the perpetrators of the recent violence be punished.

They wondered whether there was any failure in executing the intelligence report to thwart the mayhem unleashed by the BNP-Jamaat in the name of the quota-reform movement by students.

They stressed the need for strengthening the AL, evaluating the activities of the public representatives alongside and taking effective measures to attract more meritorious students to Chhatra League.

PM's Press Secretary M Nayeemul Islam Khan moderated the programme.

Editors' Guild President Mozammel Babu, senior journalist Abed Khan, Bangladesh Pratidin Editor Nayeem Nizam, DBC TV CEO Monzurul Islam, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shymol Dutta, Jugantor Editor Saiful Alam, Jatiya Press Club President Farida Yasmin, Dhaka Journal Chief Editor Syed Istiaque Reza, Head of News of Nagorik TV Dip Azad, Amader Somoy Editor Mainul Alam, Bangladesh Journal Editor Shajahan Sarder, DBC News Editor Zayedul Ahsan Pintu, Ashish Saikat of Independent TV, Bangla Tribune Editor Zulfiquer Russell, Ekattor TV Head of News Shakil Ahmed, Editor of Energy and Power Mollah Amzad, Head of News of Kings News Nazmul Huq Saikat and Mamunur Rahman Khan of RTV were present.

'Mockery of justice'

FROM PAGE 12

the fairness of the judicial proceedings and amounts to an unfair trial, said the New York-based global rights watchdog.

"There is no way defendants can receive a fair trial when the investigation was launched and completed, trial commenced, and verdict rendered in less than 48 hours. These sentences make a mockery of justice and Emirati authorities should immediately release all those sentenced for peacefully protesting in solidarity," said Joey Shea, UAE researcher at the HRW.

Human Rights Watch verified six videos of the protests posted to TikTok and X (formerly known as Twitter) on July 19 or the days following. The videos, filmed in the evening, show peaceful protesters chanting and marching down streets across the UAE, including Abu Dhabi, Ajman and in two areas in Dubai: Al Satwa and Downtown Dubai.

From these videos and the others analysed by HRW, none of the protesters were engaging in violent acts or using language to incite violence in their chants.

The Bangladeshi authorities, especially the mission in the UAE, should call on the Emirati authorities to release the 57 detained, HRW said.

The UAE-based migrant workers from climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh are exposed to escalating climate risks, especially when working in the UAE's extreme heat without adequate protection.

Workers -- who are unable to protest these horrific labour conditions due to the abusive kafala system, the ban on trade unions and restricted freedom of speech and assembly -- are being convicted unfairly for peacefully protesting for a cause unrelated to the UAE, HRW added.

Protests and demonstrations are fully prohibited in the UAE.

Judicial body

FROM PAGE 12

commission] was issued. Till now, the issues of the six people have been stated [in the terms of reference]," he said.

Responding to a query about the inquiry into other deaths, Justice Diliruzzaman said legal steps will certainly be taken in this regard.

According to The Daily Star reports, at least 154 people have died across the country in violence since July 16.

Justice Diliruzzaman said the commission's first meeting was held yesterday and hoped that it could complete the probe within the stipulated time (30 working days).

How celebrities spent their time amid internet shutdown

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

ZAHID AKBAR

With social media activity at a standstill and the curfew ongoing, many are left wondering how celebrities are coping without the internet. Although broadband internet resumed on Tuesday night in a few regions, Facebook remains inaccessible, leaving many feeling disconnected.

We reached out to some of our favourite celebrities to see how they are handling this digital hiatus.

Dhallywood's glamorous actress Puja Chery feels completely lost without the internet. She shared, "Did anyone imagine that we, in 2024, would be left without internet? All our communication is now internet-based, and now we have to live without it. On top of that, there's a curfew, so we can't go out anywhere. What else can I do? I'm spending time watching TV, trying to understand the country's situation by watching the news. I'm also reading books. But still, it feels like something is missing."

The stunning diva Eamin Haque Bobby is feeling restless staying at home, yearning to spend her time shooting on set. "Everything feels so unfamiliar. It all seems so empty. All kinds of shooting are halted, and I'm spending my days sitting at home. What else can I do but watch TV to learn about the current situation? There's nothing else to do but wait for everything to get back to normal."

Musfiq R Farhan, one of the most popular faces on television, is struggling with the lack of connection. "It's a strange time without the internet and social media. During the pandemic, at least we could communicate with everyone. But now, everything feels so unfamiliar. We have to rely on television to grasp the ongoing condition of the country. All kinds of shooting are halted. I hope everything gets back to normal soon. Most young people now depend on the internet, so it's important to ensure its quick restoration."

Melodious singer Konal is trying to find comfort in books. "I never imagined we would find ourselves in such a situation. Everything feels so different and strange, with an eerie feeling of not knowing what might happen. I am keeping my eyes glued to the television to see whether the country's situation changes. There's nothing else we can do right now. I've tried reading several books. Other than that, there's nothing much we can do."

As the uncertainty about the curfew's end continues, celebrities, including singers, actors, and directors, are eagerly awaiting the chance to resume their work and bring joy to audiences once the country recovers from this massive challenge.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie to reunite at Venice Film Festival

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are set to make a grand return to the Venice International Film Festival, showcasing their latest films at the 81st edition of the prestigious event. The festival, which will run from August 28 to September 7 in Italy, revealed its star-studded lineup on Tuesday, including Pitt's ***Wolfs*** and Jolie's ***Maria***.

Pitt reunites with George Clooney in Jon Watts's directoial ***Wolfs***, marking their first on-screen collaboration since 2008's ***Burn After Reading***. The film also stars Amy Ryan, Austin Abrams, and Richard Kind.

Jolie stars as the legendary opera singer Maria Callas in ***Maria***, directed by Pablo Larraín. The drama also features Kodi Smit-McPhee, Pierfrancesco Favino, Alba Rohrwacher, and Haluk Bilginer.

Other highly anticipated premieres at the festival include ***Joker: Folie à Deux*** with Joaquin Phoenix and Lady Gaga, ***Beetlejuice Beetlejuice,*** starring Michael Keaton and Jenna Ortega, and Nicole Kidman's ***Babygirl***.

Tanjin Tisha mourns assistant's death

Actress Tanjin Tisha's assistant, Alamin, reportedly died due to gunshot wounds, inflicted during violent clashes following the quota reform protest last week. Tisha confirmed the heartbreaking news on her social media, stating, "I don't know how to begin writing. You might all know him as my assistant. But he wasn't just my assistant; he was like my little brother. For the past four years, he lived with me and my family."

The actress further added that she had great plans for his future.

Notably, Tisha has not provided specific details about how, where, or when Alamin was shot. Additionally, despite the nationwide internet outage, it's unclear how she got internet access to post this update on July 23.

ROHIT SHETTY promises to make all-women cop universe

After the success of ***Singham,*** its director Rohit Shetty is set to return with ***Singham Again***, which will be released on November 1. The film features major stars like Ajay Devgn, Ranveer Singh, and Akshay Kumar and introduces Tiger Shroff and Arjun Kapoor into the universe.

This time, Deepika Padukone enters into the cop universe, which already created stir among the audience after the film's first look was revealed. The director has announced that he is developing an all-women cop universe.

In addition to its male characters, the Rohit Shetty Cop Universe is committed to enhancing female representation. Deepika will appear as Lady Singham in the upcoming film, and Kareena Kapoor Khan is set to play a significant role as well.

Singham Again is the third instalment in the Ajay Devgn-led Singham franchise and the fifth film in Rohit Shetty's Cop Universe. The original ***Singham***, released in 2011, became one of Bollywood's most beloved films of the past decade. In 2014, a sequel, titled ***Singham Returns,*** was released, featuring Ajay Devgn, alongside Kareena Kapoor Khan.

CELINE DION set for comeback performance at Paris Olympics

Celine Dion is poised for a comeback at the Olympic Games, with speculation suggesting she will perform during the opening ceremony this Friday. This will be the pop icon's first appearance since she paused her touring and withdrew from the public eye following her Stiff Person Syndrome diagnosis in December 2022.

Dion arrived in Paris on Monday and checked into the Royal Monceau hotel, where Lady Gaga, another rumoured opening ceremony headliner, is also staying.

The opening ceremony, held outdoors for the first time, will feature a nautical parade along the Seine, ending near the Trocadero with views of the Eiffel Tower, and includes 3,500 performers.

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি,বাংলাদেশ
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ওয়েবঃ www.bsmrmu.edu.bd; procurement@bsmrmu.edu.bd

No. BSMRMU/Procurement-346//24/1667 Date: 24 July 2024

CORRIGENDUM OF SUPPLIER'S ENLISTMENT NOTICE

The Supplier's Enlistment Notice of Registrar Office, BSMRMU, Plot No. 14/06-14/23, Pallabi, Mirpur -12, Dhaka-1216 issued on 04 July 2024; No. BSMRMU/Procurement-346/24/1554/1 is amended as follows:

Corrigendum Subject	Previous Submission Date	Amended Submission Date
Application Submission Deadline	25 July 2024	01 August 2024

N: B: The other terms and conditions of the Tender Notice will be unchanged.

(বিজ্ঞাপন সাইজ 4"×4cl)

Procurement Section
BSMRMU, Bangladesh

GD- 68

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানি)
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

গ্যাস জাতির সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতির দায়িত্ব পালন করুন।

Ref. No. 28.20.9153.144.31.001.22 Date: 24-07-2024

CORRIGENDA OF TENDER

Tender No: SGFL/BGF/23-24/FP-13 dated 27-05-2024.

Tender for Procurement of Spare Parts for Man Gas Generator

The following Corrigenda in the tender document are hereby made in connection with the submission of tender:

1. Tender last selling date will be 29-07-2024 instead of 21-07-2024.
2. Tender closing/Receiving date will be 30-07-2024 instead of 22-07-2024.
3. Tender opening date will be 30-07-2024 instead of 22-07-2024.

All other information, terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

24.7.24
(Tarak Ahmed)
Deputy General Manager (Procurement)

GD-67

DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 25, 2024, SRABAN 10, 1431 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Star BUSINESS

Banks face cash withdrawal pressure

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

As banks reopened after three days of general holidays, most lenders had to contend with cash withdrawal pressure while some faced disruptions in conducting foreign transactions.

All over Dhaka, people were seen queuing in front of branches and automated teller machine (ATM) booths to withdraw cash.

Branches in Motijheel were crowded since the beginning of the day.

Even around 12:00pm, a large queue could be seen at the local office of Islami Bank Bangladesh in Motijheel. The number of customers only began to decrease in the afternoon.

Bank officials said withdrawals outpaced deposits the day after reopening following the general holidays amidst a nationwide curfew and internet blackout.

ATM Shahidul Haque, executive vice-president and head of Islami Bank's Motijheel office, said their banking activities were being conducted on a limited scale and would gradually be expanded.

Mainly, the bank was providing withdrawal and deposit services yesterday, he said, adding that foreign transactions for export and import activities also started on a limited scale.

Md Shafiqul Islam, general manager of Sonali Bank's Motijheel office, told The Daily Star they faced little pressure of customers.

Islam said foreign transactions for export-import activities and other foreign payments were disrupted as a key system was unavailable.

Although the internet was being gradually restored since the night of July 23, some banks could not access the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), which provides the main messaging network through which international payments are initiated, due to slow internet connection.

Agrani Bank was providing services through half of its branches. Its Managing Director Murshedul Kabir said all types of transactions, including foreign transactions, went smoothly.

Most garment and textile factories reopened yesterday after being kept shut for four days due to violence centring the quota reform movement and the imposition of a nationwide curfew. The units are now racing to meet the strict lead times set by international buyers. The photo was taken at a garment factory in the capital's Jurain yesterday.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Garment sector reeling from shutdown

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

DBL Group, a leading garment exporter, usually ships apparel worth around $50 million each month.

But this month, their shipment will fall by at least 30 percent since production had to be halted following a spell of violence centring the quota reform movement and the government's imposition of a nationwide curfew.

Being a large group, DBL has its own production facilities, including spinning and dyeing units alongside factories for production of garments and accessories.

However, all their units were shut because of the violence over the past four days. At the same time, a few goods-laden trucks were waiting at the Chattogram port to unload export cargo.

"So, the losses are enormous," said DBL Group Managing Director MA Jabbar, adding that the biggest blow was the dent to the confidence of international clothing retailers and brands.

DBL Group is not alone.

As production remained halted for four days, all small, medium and large garment exporters faced similar challenges.

Moreover, business owners could not contact international business partners because of an internet blackout since July 18. However, as broadband internet services gradually began to come back online since Tuesday night, the situation has been improving.

The impacts of the shutdown were felt more acutely by small and medium factories, which cannot afford big losses given their comparatively weaker financial strength.

A factory owner in Rupganj, who ships T-shirts and polo shirts worth $6 million each month to American and Canadian retailers, could not timely receive raw materials, sourced from both at home and abroad.

The unit needs at least $3 million worth of raw materials each month, including yarn, which accounts for 70 percent of the total raw material requirement, chemicals and fabrics.

Although the factory owner placed orders with a few local spinners and millers for yarn and fabrics, they could not supply the raw materials as transport operators stayed off the roads fearing violence.

Effectively, the shutdown put factory owners in a double bind because they could neither contact buyers nor continue production.

This is the peak time to confirm prices for goods to be shipped next summer and spring, but the owner could not send quotes online due to the internet blackout.

Now, more money will have to be spent since employees will have to work overtime in order to adhere to the strict lead time set by international buyers, the owner said, asking not to be named.

There were hopes that business would regain momentum from July onwards compared to previous seasons, when the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia-Ukraine war, and high inflationary pressures took a toll on business. Instead, a new disruption has shaken up the sector, the owner added.

Syed M Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans, a leading denim exporter based in Chattogram, shared a similar experience.

Tanvir declined to comment on details regarding losses, only stating that they were huge. He said their factories have been closed since Saturday, adding that the supply chain was also severely disrupted.

The lull in production at garment units has also adversely impacted those involved in the primary textile sector, including the main suppliers of yarn, fabrics and other raw materials.

Hundreds of tonnes of unsold yarn have piled up in mills due to the shutdown, transport operators' reluctance to carry goods and a fall in demand.

Fazlul Haque, managing director of Israq Spinning Mills, said he usually sells 100 tonnes of yarn each day. But unsold yarn began piling up before the beginning of the shutdown. At present, the situation has been exacerbated and there is a stockpile of over 2,000 tonnes of yarn at his factory.

Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), said huge losses were incurred, adding that an assessment was ongoing. The BTMA called a meeting of the mill owners today to get more information about losses from owners, he said.

However, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has already completed its primary assessment of losses, saying that they amounted to Tk 6,400 crore over the past four days.

BGMEA President SM Mannan Kochi said that garment factories would have to pay around Tk 1,000 crore to workers despite no work being done over the past four days.

The amount of losses in the garments accessories sector is also high, he added.

According to the BGMEA, nearly 950 trucks with exportable garment items were waiting at the Chattogram port to be unloaded.

Garment and textile mills resumed operations yesterday, with workers and officials using their official identity cards as curfew passes.

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Stocks dip amid jitters

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks plunged yesterday amid a sell-off, reflecting a downbeat investor sentiment as the market reopened after three days following the recent violence stemming from the quota reform movement.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), went down 95 points or 1.76 percent to finish at 5,350.

The trend was the same at Chittagong Stock Exchange. The CASPI, the general index of the CSE, dropped 145 points, or 0.93 percent.

Trading at the country's stock exchanges remained closed for the last three days of the week due to the internet blackout.

Stock market analysts are saying that the recent turmoil centring the quota reform movement prompted many general investors to go for selling shares.

The stock market index fell as institutional investors too did not buy shares.

Investors' participation was thin as most of them could not monitor stock trading through their mobile phones because of the absence of mobile internet, said a stock market broker.

Stock trading may improve with the restoration of internet countrywide, he hoped.

A top official of a leading stock brokerage firm, preferring anonymity, said there are many reasons for the depletion of confidence among investors although political instability was absent for many years.

Now, the violence has led to apprehensions that any type of small outburst may lead to large protests. So, investors will be cautious about their investments in the stock market, he said.

Frequent policy changes, presence of only a handful of listed companies with a good performance record, a lack of accountability and rampant manipulation are the main causative factors behind the apprehensions, he said.

Usually, political tension becomes a headache once in every five years during the national elections. But this movement showed that violence can erupt any time in Bangladesh and it can spook investors, he said.

The Shariah-based companies' stock index, the DSES, fell 21 points, or 1.83 percent, yesterday to 1,169.

At the same time, the DS-30, the index for blue-chip stocks, plummeted 37 points, or 1.91 percent, to 1,908. Some Tk 159 crore worth of shares changed hands, which was the lowest turnover since January 3, 2023.

Of the issues undergoing trade, 13 advanced, 352 declined and 14 remained unchanged.

KEY POINTS

- DSE's key index plunged **1.76**%
  CSE's major index dropped **0.93**%
- Investors' participation was thin due to a lack of mobile internet
- Recent unrest prompted many investors to sell shares
- Restoration of internet may improve trading
- Prospect of future protests spooks investors

Banks, NBFIs asked not to impose late fees

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) have been asked to refrain from imposing fees or interest on delayed repayment of loan and saving scheme instalments and credit card bills between July 18 and July 25.

The central bank made the call by issuing two separate notices on Wednesday saying that clients might have missed such payments due to unrest in the country.

Banks and NBFIs have been instructed not to impose fees or interest if the clients clear their dues incurred from July 18 to July 25 by the end of this month, as per one central bank notice.

Stating that banks and NBFIs will not be able to cancel deposit schemes, the BB also asked them not to provide lower profits or interest than the rates declared earlier if clients fail to pay instalments.

The instruction, which was to come into effect immediately, will be applicable for all credit card customers, general loan borrowers and savers.

Amidst the internet shutdown and nationwide curfew, people have been unable to conduct online banking since July 18. A lot of ATM booths have been kept shut while others have run out of cash.

A good number of banks already have decided not to impose any interest or fees on clients for delayed payment of loan instalments, including that against credit cards, amidst a nationwide curfew and internet blackout.

Deliveries from port, ICDs gain momentum

DWAIPAYAN BARUA *and*
MOHAMMAD SUMAN, *Ctg*

Delivery of import containers from the Chattogram port's yards and transfer of containers from the port to private inland container depots (ICDs) gained momentum since Tuesday evening.

This was due to the partial resumption of data transfers over broadband internet which enabled assessment and clearance of good.

Some 1,286 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of import cargo was received by consignees at the port yards in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

It was possible due to the recommencement of online assessments by customs following the resumption of broadband internet services on Tuesday evening, said CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk.

Meanwhile, 583 TEUs of import containers were transferred to export processing zones and 1,007 TEUs to private ICDs.

There were 41,459 TEUs of containers at the port yards as of 8:00am yesterday, whereas 41,620 TEUs a day ago.

The CPA secretary hoped the congestion would ease in the next couple of days.

Chattogram Custom House Joint Commissioner Tarek Hasan confirmed that they could get access to the Asycuda software on the server of the National Board of Revenue after partial resumption of broadband internet since Tuesday afternoon.

The Automated System for Customs Data (Asycuda) is a computerised customs management system that covers most foreign trade procedures. It handles manifests and customs declarations, along with accounting, transit and suspense procedures.

Clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents usually submit import and export documents with the NBR server from their respective offices.

Since internet services was yet to be available to individual users, the customs authority gave server connectivity to four computers at a room inside the custom house's office to allow the C&F agents to submit these documents since Tuesday afternoon.

Bangladesh Inland Container Depots Association Secretary Ruhul Amin Sikder informed that transport of export-laden containers from the private ICDs to the port had declined over the last couple of days.

This was due to a low number of trucks carrying export cargo arriving at the ICDs from Dhaka and elsewhere as factories had remained closed, he said.

ADB lowers growth forecast for Bangladesh

Inflation to creep up further, it says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has revised down the economic growth projection for Bangladesh but said inflation might creep up further during the current fiscal year of 2024-25.

According to Asian Development Outlook July 2024 published last week, Bangladesh's economy might grow 6.5 percent in this fiscal year, which is lower than its forecast in April of 6.6 percent, owing to sluggish growth of the industrial sector.

The Manila-based lender's projection is lower than the government's 6.75 percent growth target for the economy.

The ADB's forecast came just before the country witnessed five days of severe disruptions in economic activities amidst an internet outage, violence centring a movement for reforming quota at public jobs and subsequent curfew to control the situation.

The multilateral lender said monthly inflation rates in Bangladesh continued to be near double digits in the first 11 months of FY2024 and may persist due to high domestic food prices.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Dhaka hospitals need urgent support

They are struggling to provide optimal care to patients

The updates coming from several government hospitals in Dhaka in the aftermath of recent violent clashes are quite concerning. These hospitals, treating people injured during the unrest centring the quota reform movement, are struggling to provide optimal care due to the sheer number of incoming patients, as per a report in this daily. Clearly, these and other public hospitals in major cities need proper support from the authorities.

According to our report, the hospitals in Dhaka, especially the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), have been stretched thin since July 18, when violent attacks spread out across the city. People were injured with shotgun bullets or pellets as police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) troops shot at protesters and alleged infiltrators. At the DMCH, some 1,071 people wounded by sharp weapons, bullets and/or pellets sought treatment between July 15 and 22. Most of these victims—ranging from teenagers to middle-aged individuals—said they were merely bystanders or commuters and not associated with the protests or clashes. All the patients currently admitted at the DMCH were injured critically and had to undergo surgery. Overwhelmed by the surge, the hospital had to prematurely discharge those who had come in before the start of the violence to make room. The situation is similar at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital (SSMCH), NITOR, and the National Institute of Ophthalmology.

Healthcare services in general have been facing a massive disruption due to the ongoing situation. Due to the nationwide internet shutdown, which came into effect on July 18 night, private medical colleges, hospitals and diagnostic centres have been unable to provide services, according to another report in this daily. All online healthcare services have been out of reach as well. These facilities and services cater to a significantly large number of people in Bangladesh.

Given the unprecedented levels of violence, deaths and destruction seen over the past week, it is understandable that hospitals would get overwhelmed to some extent. However, as we have said numerous times before, an emergency service sector like healthcare must always have contingency plans anticipating all kinds of crisis. We urge the government to urgently mobilise all resources needed for the DMCH and other hospitals so that they can provide the best possible treatment to patients. The medical professionals who worked tirelessly in such a high-stress situation deserve some compensations as well.

The limited restoration of internet services is a positive turn of events; this means private healthcare facilities and online services can get back to doing their job. We expect the authorities to extend the necessary logistical and technical support to all healthcare service providers so they can help people without disruption.

Gaza faces threat of disease outbreaks

World leaders must prevent killing and displacement of Palestinians

The increasing deaths and displacement of Palestinians as well as outbreaks of diseases in Gaza demand a much greater pressure from the international community to bring Israel's genocidal campaign to an end. According to a report in this daily, a top World Health Organization (WHO) official recently said he was "extremely worried" over possible outbreaks in Gaza after poliovirus was detected in the sewage, warning that communicable diseases could cause more deaths than injuries. The WHO's head of health emergencies in the occupied Palestinian territories also said that the number of people now needing to be evacuated from Gaza for medical care may have risen to 14,000.

Meanwhile, the death toll in the ongoing war has risen to 39,090 since October 7, as Khan Younis suffered one of its bloodiest days on Tuesday, with at least 89 Palestinians being killed. Thousands of people fled southern areas of the territory following the Israeli army's temporary evacuation order for parts of Khan Yunis, including the Al-Mawasi humanitarian zone. The order came days after the health ministry in Gaza said that 92 people were killed in a strike on Al-Mawasi, when Israel claimed it was targeting a Hamas commander. Such mass casualties, under the guise of Israel targeting Hamas militants, has tragically become the norm in Gaza.

The evacuation order for Al-Mawasi comes just two months after the Israeli military directed Palestinians to go there for their own safety. As a result, thousands of Palestinians, who were in Khan Younis after being displaced multiple times already, are having to flee the area in panic, carrying whatever little belongings they have left. These endless deaths, displacement and injuries to Palestinians can only be brought to an end by the international community putting enough pressure on Israel. Worryingly, however, there has been little response from the former so far, despite a number of directives and rulings from the International Court of Justice, which, as recently as Friday, came down hard against Israel by calling its occupation of Palestinian territories illegal, and likening its laws in the occupied territories to "the crime of apartheid". This is deeply concerning.

It has been nearly 10 months since Israeli forces mounted the war against innocent Palestinians in Gaza. The population of the strip has already been through starvation; immeasurable amounts of violence has been inflicted upon them; and now with the threat of possible outbreaks hanging over them, we hope the international community will finally recognise the urgency with which it must act.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

First woman in space

On this day in 1984, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Yevgenyevna Savitskaya became the first woman to walk in space to conduct welding experiments on Salyut 7.

The irresponsible remarks of our responsible persons

THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal
is deputy head of editorial at The Daily Star. His Twitter handle is: @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

The events of the past week have jolted the nation. What started off with students of public universities peacefully protesting for the reformation of the quota system in public jobs, ended up with hundreds of people getting killed, thousands severely injured, and immeasurable damage being done to public properties.

When public university students first started taking to the streets, they repeated time and again that they had only one demand: for the executive branch of the government to reform the quota system—which it could have done in 2018 but refused to do—which even the High Court said it could do if it felt it was necessary. The students further said that as soon as the government agreed to their one demand, they would withdraw from the streets.

Law enforcement agencies were only properly deployed once the students managed to drive BCL back. And once deployed, the students alleged and there is evidence to suggest that they continued the attempt to silence the protesters using unnecessary force.

How did we get from there, to where we are now, with nearly five days of internet shutdown and a nationwide curfew?

Lest we forget, the issue of Razakars came up during a press conference held by the prime minister. That night, the students took to the streets and chanted various slogans. Among them, one slogan we found objectionable. But there were other slogans which indicated the students' clear disdain for Razakars.

Nevertheless, the next day, the Awami League general secretary, amidst a situation that was seemingly turning tense, said that Chhatra League would give these protesters a fitting reply. The first question that should automatically be raised is, why Chhatra League? Where does it say in any of the documents pertaining to the functioning of our state that Chhatra League has any role to play in such matters? Why could the responsible minister himself not give a direct reply to the protesters in regards to their demands?

The answer to why he referred to the BCL became evident the next day, when the student wing of the ruling party unleashed a shocking stream of violence upon the students, resulting in over 300 injuries, mostly to the protesters. It was that irresponsible comment that first gave rise to the violence.

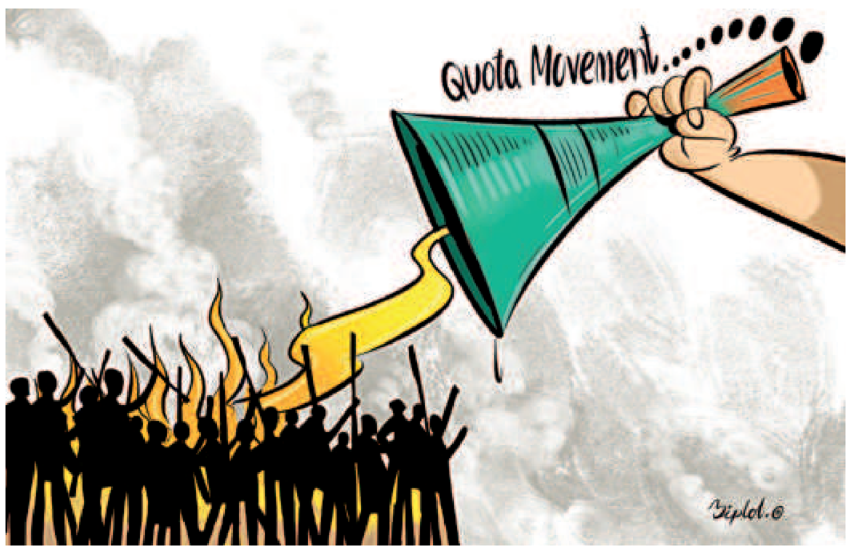
Before BCL took to the streets to once again quell peaceful protests using force—which had become the go-to tactic of this government as evident from previous instances of mass protests—the home minister told the media that law enforcers would take a hardline approach if the student protesters stepped out of line. But when the BCL unleashed its rampage, we saw law enforcers again stand by and watch idly. The students themselves called out law enforcement personnel for not stepping in to protect them.

Where was the home minister then? Is he not responsible for protecting the country's law and order? If so, when BCL members came out in droves with weapons in their hands, was the country's law and order not threatened? When they attacked the students, was the country's laws not broken?

Instead of admitting what was there for all to see, that the police did not protect the students nor oppose BCL's rampage, he hinted that the violence that took place was a result of disagreements among students. It was that failure to take responsibility to protect the students that led to a larger student movement the next day, when private university students also got involved. And the demand that the students added at that point—to investigate who was responsible for the attacks on them by BCL cadres, and to hold them to account—was also extremely reasonable.

Why was that so difficult? Why, instead, did the BCL take to the streets again the next day armed with weapons, to try and foil the demonstrations of the students? And why were law enforcers either unresponsive or joining in on the side of the BCL?

Law enforcement agencies were only properly deployed once the students managed to drive BCL back. And once deployed, the students alleged and there is evidence to suggest that they continued the attempt to silence the protesters using unnecessary force. And that's when things really started to take an ugly turn, leading to the deaths of six people on July 16, including the unarmed Abu Sayed.



VISUAL: **BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY**

In recent statements, several ministers said that while the students were waging a peaceful movement, BNP- and Jamaat-led forces took advantage of the tense situation and used violence to wage a parallel movement. Are the responsible ministers uninformed of how tensions initially escalated? Does the responsible ministers not know that the violence was started by the BCL, which gave rise to the volatile situation in which, undoubtedly, outside forces tried to add further fuel. Where were they when the "peaceful student protesters" that they themselves described, were being attacked?

Why did none of the responsible persons in the higher echelons of the government not condemn the attacks on students by BCL and law enforcers? When the coordinators of the quota-reform protests alleged on July 16 that state-sponsored attacks were being carried out against them across the country, why did none of them come forward to talk to them and provide them with protection?

On the next day, when the students had already been beaten and battered, and clearly afraid for their own security, why did the government decide to forcibly throw them out of their university campuses, without the least bit of consideration as to how they were going to get home safely? It was only after they were made to vacate their campuses, and the loss of more lives and thousands of injuries, that violence erupted across the country in all direction, bringing the total death toll to more than 170. But why did we have to get to such a point in the first place?

Are the irresponsible comments made by various responsible officials of our government, not in any way to blame for this? Despite various ministers now promising to carry out investigations into the incidents of violence, which they are blaming solely on the BNP and Jamaat, no mention of BCL's role, or the irresponsible comments that were made from within their own ranks, have been mentioned by any of them. Given the extremities that the entire nation has gone through in the last few days, is that the responsible thing to do?

The damage to public property that has been done, to businesses, the psychological toll this entire ordeal has placed on the old and the young, and most tragically, the huge loss of lives—mostly of students—and the terrible injuries that have been caused to people, whose lives have been changed forever as a result, deserved a more prudent reaction from the government. Because, what unfolded over the past week, did not just happen in a vacuum.

History and ordinary people in general will remember very well what happened over the last week or so. For the government to now try and avoid any responsibility for the tragedies that unfolded, and act with the same sense of irresponsibility that, at the very least, helped create the environment for these tragedies to occur, will not lead to the people or the nation getting any closure. And that, unfortunately, may only delay this horrific chapter of our history from ending.

I will not call them protesters

Naziba Basher
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

NAZIBA BASHER

Starting with Bangladesh Chhatra League's mindless attack on the peaceful movement by student protesters at Dhaka University on July 15, clashes took place almost every day the following week, not just on campuses but throughout the country.

At first, it was devastating to see the sheer brutality law enforcers and ruling party activists unleashed upon young students of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Barishal University, Begum Rokeya University, Brac University, and several other educational institutions. At one point, however, it was visually apparent that there were hardly any students involved in the mayhem.

When government establishments, like the Setu Bhaban and the Department of Disaster Management building, adjacent to which was a crucial data centre, were tactically burned down, it was again evident that the peaceful protesters who were demanding their rights did not carry out those arson attacks.

One could easily tell that the incendiarism involved long-term planning and supply of materials including gunpowder and other flammables. When the Narsingdi jail vandalism occurred, resulting in the jailbreak of over 800 convicts and the looting of hundreds of weapons, it was further proof that outside elements infiltrated the initial peaceful movement for equality.

The word protester, to me, is a powerful one. Every triumph of a nation came from rigorous and logical protests by humans asking for their rights. It was the protesters who ensured our right to speak in our mother language; it was them who led the country to its liberation. It was protesters of garment factories who asked for better wages. It was protesters who demanded road safety. It was protesters who asked for reform in the discriminatory quota system.

The infiltrators were handed the opportunity on a silver platter the moment BCL ensured that violence took over the movement.

I have since then been refusing to use the term "protester" whenever clashes occurred between groups of cops or ruling party men and, what can only be called, "rioters".

Myriad rumours are flying about—those involved in the current unrest are "Jamaat-Shibir men", they are "people of low-income groups that were hired as vandals and goons", they are "BNP men", they are this and they are that. Perhaps one of those rumours may even be true.

However, what they are not is "protesters".

Abu Sayed was a protester.

The lone breadwinner of a poor family, with aging parents and a younger sister, he took to the streets as a student at Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University for his right to a fair chance in getting a government job. He faced the police, who attacked the students indiscriminately and was shot for it, armed with nothing but sheer courage.

He was a true protester.

The girls and boys who were beaten mercilessly on the DU campus for protesting with no intent of violence, stopped only by BCL's "befitting reply", are true protesters.

The many, many who died in police firing and ruthless attacks just for having a voice, just for wanting a chance at equality—they are the true protesters.

The word protester, to me, is a powerful one. Every triumph of a nation came from rigorous and logical protests by humans asking for their rights. It was the protesters who ensured our right to speak in our mother language; it was them who led the country to its liberation. It was protesters of garment factories who asked for better wages. It was protesters who demanded road safety. It was protesters who asked for reform in the discriminatory quota system. And if we use that word so callously on the wrong kind of people, we undermine every protest and every triumph they brought.

Since the first quota reform movement and the road safety protest, which was organised mostly by middle and high school children, in 2018, the words "student" and "protester" have become almost synonymous for people of this generation, not unlike back in 1952.

In 2018 too, the road safety movement was foiled first by Chhatra League men, and then "vested quarters" who infiltrated the movement for their own separate agenda. Notice the trend?

The infiltrators then were also, at times, termed "andolonkari (protesters)", like they are now.

To me, being a protester comes with a responsibility towards the future of a country, but if you are hellbent on ruining that country, you are anything but a protester demanding rights. You are then only a rioter, a criminal, a saboteur.

I refuse to call these people—the rioters, the infiltrators that shamelessly take advantage of logical movements—protesters.

I shall not give them the same respect that is given to Abu Sayed.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

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Subscription:
01711623906

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The economic losses of a man-made disaster

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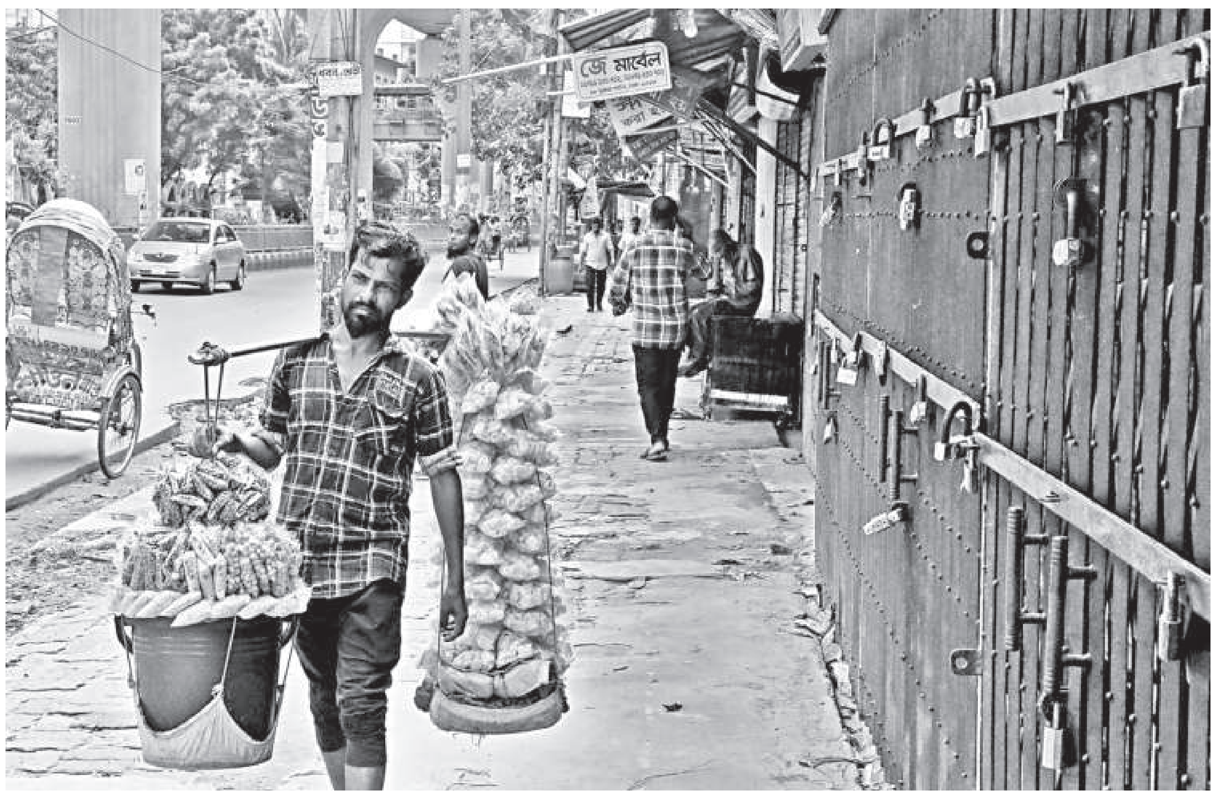
KHONDAKER GOLAM MOAZZEM

Bangladesh has once again experienced a major crisis, which has apparently ended with the announcement of a major reform in the quota system for public jobs. The whole country was locked down for almost two weeks—first with the “Bangla Blockade” and the “Complete Shutdown” movements of students which were later joined in by others, including political activists and extremists, and second, the country-wide curfew with the support of the army to counter the vandalism inflicted across the country. Although the government tried to defend that the quota reform is a legal issue to be resolved in the High Court and the Appellate Division, students had little confidence in this process. In fact, the crisis revealed several new realities regarding emerging popular demands (e.g. policy reforms), such as people's—particularly young people's—way of uniting and raising their voices, silent intrusion of different political and extremist elements in the movement, limitations of political methods of handing people's demands, weakness of the parliamentary system to address such major reform issues, and an increasingly low level of trust on the prevailing system to address policy related concerns. Unfortunately, in the backdrop of all these new realities, the economy has once again experienced a ‘man-made’ disaster which caused a lot of losses to the economy and the society.



The loss of income of people who work and earn on a daily basis in various jobs in the informal sector is an example of micro level losses in the economy. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The economy has experienced three types of losses: (a) “micro level” losses (at individual and organisation levels); (b) “messo level” losses (at sectoral and cross-sectoral levels) and (c) “macro level” losses (across the economy). While the micro and messo levels of losses are immediate and short term, macro level losses would be medium to long term. Hence, a clear accounting of all these losses is immediately needed to undertake necessary initiatives to reduce the damages caused by the crisis.

At the micro level, the country experienced at least 10 different types of losses. First and foremost, the loss of lives—a total of at least 146 people died, many of them students. This is not only a major loss, but also ruined future economic prospect of these families. Second, the loss of public property due to arson and vandalism at different public offices, vehicles, leading to the damage of important documents and other related assets. Different primary estimates indicate that the losses will be in the range of several thousand crore taka. For example, the Power Division indicated a loss of Tk 1000 crore; the ICT ministry a loss of Tk 500 crore; Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) a loss of Tk 205 crore, and Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) a loss of Tk 5 crore.

Third, loss of properties of private companies because of arson on motorcycles, buses, trucks and cars in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Madaripur, Gazipur, Chittagong and other districts. Fourth is the loss of income of people who work and earn on a daily basis in various jobs in informal sector including day labourers, transport workers, rickshaw pullers, small vendors, self-employed, SMEs and shop owners and other service providers. Fifth, loss of income in large and medium scale enterprises which are mostly export-oriented enterprises including RMG, textiles, food processing, light engineering, pharmaceuticals, leather and footwear and other industries.

Sixth, loss of income of large-scale service-oriented enterprises including transport, banking, entertainment, and healthcare, etc. Seventh, loss of income of internet-based service providers especially freelancers. According to BASIS (Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services), the loss of their member companies is approximately Tk 400 crore in five days. Eighth, loss of income of the tourism sector mainly in major tourist spots located in Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Kuakata, and other places. Ninth, risks in loss of jobs of overseas migrant workers if they could not return to their workplace on time due to the shutdown. And finally, tenth, the farmers and rural agro-based farming households were affected due to the collapse of the domestic supply chain of perishable products including vegetables and fruits.

At the messo level, the losses are mostly sectoral and intersectoral in nature. The collapse of internet-based communications within and outside the country caused major damage to the confidence of the buyers of goods and services. Such complete failure to provide even minimum online communication with the outside world may damage future business deals. This may happen in case of freelancing, online-based businesses, and exporters of different types of goods. Other than that, the damages to the data centre under the DPDC as well as the collapse of internet services have caused major troubles for internet-based public utility services including pre-paid bill payment system of electricity and gas.

Even banking and financial transactions through ATMs and MFS were hindered because of the shutdown of internet services. However, the government has tried to restore the internet-based communications and services by taking measures to repair the system. On the trade side, the collapse of the economy for over a week has damaged major supply chains based in export and import of different goods. Similar collapse of supply chains happened in case of domestic goods mainly those of perishable goods including vegetables, fruits, and other food items.

At the macro level, the losses may or may not be exposed immediately. Due to collapse of the supply chains, supply of goods in retail markets have reduced, which resulted in a price hike of goods. The inflationary pressure would further rise given the situation. On the other hand, the recovery of different public and private properties requires the import of valuable machineries and equipment which needs allocation of foreign exchanges on an urgent basis. Allocating foreign exchanges for such import will put the dwindling forex reserve into further pressure.

On top of that, the upcoming months may experience slow-down in inward flow of remittances due to adverse effect on export and workers outflow, which would put the forex reserve in further pressure. A consequent adverse impact is the further weakening of exchange rate of the Bangladeshi taka against the US dollar, which would make imports costly. Such political unrest may weaken the confidence of foreign investors to invest in the country as well. Finally, unless the economy returns to normalcy immediately and if there is tension that prevails among business communities, such a situation would have an adverse impact on overall macroeconomic performance.

The restoration of the economy from such a crisis, which is man-made in nature, depends not only on providing financial support, economic incentives and benefits, or identifying and taking actions against extremists involved in the arson and vandalism of public and private properties, but more on healing the wounds that were caused in the process of addressing people's demands.

Several weaknesses were revealed in discussions and decision-making processes regarding the core issue of quota-reform. In fact, the quota reform movement highlights the needs for many other reforms in public policies, plans, acts and operations which have been long due. These include banking reform, capital market reform, regulatory reform, reform in public services, reform in state-owned enterprises, reform in public procurement system, and institutional reform of public entities, etc. These reforms are either being done partially or by-passed by the incumbent government in successive regimes.

In the absence of such reforms, deprivation, inequality, discrimination and disparity have been widening in the society. Given the dynamic nature of the economy and the changing society with a more open and globalised outlook, Bangladesh's future journey would be faltered and may face similar types of crises unless necessary reforms are undertaken over the next few years.

The incumbent government needs soul-searching to address the crisis. It needs major reform measures to upgrade the economic system into a competitive, inclusive, transparent and market-oriented structure. An open mechanism of discussion and debate both within the parliament and outside the parliament is needed regrading various reform-related issues. A trust-worthy legal, judicial and administrative mechanism needs to be established where disputes and grievances of the people can be solved. Such a mechanism would work as a shield against any type of extremist activities. An effective operation of such a system will build confidence among local and overseas investors, large, medium, and small enterprises, self-employed, employers and employee of formal and informal sector, local and foreign buyers of goods and services, bankers, financiers, multinational development banks, local and international commercial banks. It is expected that the government during its current regime will be able to establish such a system in the country.

A student protest over a legitimate demand has been blown out of all proportions. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Government should take responsibility for its mistakes

Sharmeen Murshid
is a freedom fighter.

SHARMEEN MURSHID

On Friday, July 19, as I was trying to return home from Dhanmondi, I was stopped at Jahangir Gate and was not allowed to pass through the cantonment. On my right, Mohakhali was on fire and gun shots had people running helter-skelter. In that situation, I, an elderly citizen, was roughly denied access through the cantonment. Annoyed, I refrained from giving names. I decided to walk towards Mohakhali. Halfway on my journey, a low flying helicopter suddenly started firing and gassing the place. Frightened, we all pressed ourselves against the side wall. Within minutes of that, a white car zoomed by, randomly spraying gunshots at pedestrians through its windows. I could barely read the words “Metropolitan Police” spelled out on the car as it flew off. So, who was firing? The police. If they fired through the left window, we surely would have been hit. Stunned, I stood there dazed. My god! My city has turned into a battle field. But who were they fighting? Where was the enemy?

There was a young lad sitting on the sidewalk, hit by splinters that barely missed his eyes. His friends were helping him. After a moment of sympathy, I moved on, when a middle-aged man stopped me saying, “Madame, I know you. Please don't go that way. Three young people were shot dead. A young lad of 14 years was killed two minutes ago by the police, who was kicking him to check whether he was alive.”

The man almost broke down in tears. He said “Who are these people who have no compassion for us? Why are they shooting us?”

Will my government please explain on whose orders such horrific crimes were committed by our police? What I saw on the streets was beyond description.

On that one Friday, July 19, 66 people, that this paper could independently confirm, were killed all over the country—the highest in one day.

It was Thursday, July 18. Notun Bazar, Badda, Rampura, Banasree, and adjacent areas were some of the hotspots of violence. I live nearby. I go out every day like an observer to see if our children need help. I find them battling armed police and cadres with stones and sticks. On Thursday, they were thirsty and tired and asked for water and saline. Five people were killed, including one policeman, so said the young protesters. When I went towards Mohakhali, we found a policeman who took refuge on the rooftop of a building when hundreds of people, young and old, were guarding the place so that he could not escape. An older figure tried to calm the angry group of students and locals and requested them to let him go. A young girl shouted, “We don't want any police. They have been killing us. We won't let him go.”

I left the place deeply disturbed with the knowledge that people now perceive the police as their enemy.

Police, Chhatra league and the BGB will all have to come to terms with the fact that they have children, younger brothers and sisters, who are now fighting them.

Till date, reports from various sources say that over 2,500 people have been arrested, 146 have been killed, and thousands injured. Observers say that the number of casualties may rise even further.

A student protest over a legitimate demand has been blown out of all proportions. A peaceful gathering, a demand for right to equal opportunity, a demand for reforms in a quota policy has been ruthlessly and brutally repressed—turning a small issue-specific student movement into a bizarre national crisis. The utter lack of empathy and sensitivity to the needs of our children is shocking. This catastrophe could have been avoided at many levels.

Leaders in the government could have come down from their high horses and heard the children out. Not one minister, not one *neta* (leader), not even a local *neta*, met with the children. Instead, they unleashed armed cadres into the campus, who carried out a mayhem before our very eyes and before the eyes of our government. The university administration sat back and cowardly watched the mayhem. This was betrayal. From then on, things went out of control.

The government could have solved the quota issue without involving the court. The court clearly stated that this could have been resolved through the executive powers of the government. The government wasted time while the violence continued.

It could have called a halt to the police-BGB actions while seeking to negotiate concessions. It pretended to negotiate on Thursday, July 18, while killings reached a peak on Friday, July 19. What they achieved on Sunday, July 21, should have been followed by withdrawal of all armed forces and cadres from the field and from campuses, and withdrawal of the curfew so that children could return to their schools safely. The lives of these children will never be the same again.

The government should take responsibility for its mistakes. It needs to withdraw and ban all political cadres from the campus, whether they are Chhatra League, Dal or Shibir, and immediately call back home Chhatra League and bring them under disciplinary actions. A section of them have been dehumanised.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়
নেত্রকোণা

স্মারক নং ১৩.০১.৭২০০.০০৩.৩৯.০০৪.২৩.১৬০৩ তারিখঃ ১৮/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র/নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নেত্রকোণা দপ্তরের ঢাকা মেট্রো-ঘ-০২-১৬৩৯ নং অচল/অকেজো ইসুজু ট্রপার গাড়িটি যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সেই অবস্থায় বিক্রয়ের জন্য আগ্রহী ক্রেতাগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে দরপত্র/দর প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ/এজেন্সী	:	খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়/জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নেত্রকোণা
২	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তা	:	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নেত্রকোণা
৩	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	:	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নেত্রকোণা দপ্তরের ঢাকা মেট্রো- ঘ-০২-১৬৩৯ নং ইসুজু ট্রপার অচল/অকেজো গাড়ি বিক্রয় দরপত্র সিডিউল মোতাবেক
৪	দরপত্রের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ	:	১৬০০ তারিখঃ ১৮/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৫	দরপত্র বিক্রয় পদ্ধতি	:	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (OTM)
৬	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৮/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়
৭	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	:	১১/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
৮	দরপত্র গ্রহণ/দলিল/সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	:	খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড ঢাকা ও জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নেত্রকোণা
৯	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়/ উন্মুক্তকরণের স্থান	:	১২/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ১১.০০ ঘটিকা, জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নেত্রকোণা
১০	দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের স্থান	:	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের দপ্তর, নেত্রকোণা
১১	দরপত্রদাতা/প্রতিষ্ঠানের যোগ্যতা	:	প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান এর হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর পরিশোধ সংক্রান্ত সনদ ও ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র। তাছাড়া দরপত্র সিডিউলের শর্তাবলী অনুযায়ী অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা
১২	সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফরেতযোগ্য)	:	১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা
১৩	দরপত্র জামানত (টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি)	:	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক, নেত্রকোণা এর অনুকূলে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফশিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক থেকে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট আকারে উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% দরপত্র জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য) জমা দিতে হবে।
১৪	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	:	মোঃ মোয়েতাছেমুর রহমান, জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), নেত্রকোণা
১৫	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর	:	জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রকের কার্যালয়, নেত্রকোণা। ফোনঃ ০২-৯৯৮৮২৭০৮৮
কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যাতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ এ নোটিশ পরিবর্তন বা যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/প্রত্যাখান/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।			

১৮/০৭/২৪
মোঃ মোয়েতাছেমুর রহমান
জেলা খাদ্য নিয়ন্ত্রক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), নেত্রকোণা

GD-67

THE SHELF

6 books that shed light on student movements in Bangladesh

OLYMPIC DAY
POLICE

GPO intersection

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

As we attempt to grapple with the unprecedented turmoil Bangladesh experienced over the last few days, and particularly as we spend time away from digital devices, here's a list of books that might allow us to comprehend the inner mechanisms of movements, revolutions, and activism at large.

SADMAN AHMED SIAM,
AMREETA LETHE, NAZIA MANZOOR

Bangladesher Gono Obhyuthhan
SELINA HOSSAIN
Chandrabati, 2016

One of the movements which helped accelerate the Liberation War of Bangladesh was the Mass Uprising of 1969. Initiated by students, it gathered rapid popular support; not long after, people from all walks of life joined the protesting students. Enriched by the experiences of previous movements, the Mass Uprising had shaken the establishment of the time to its core, and the ruling regimen was forced to organise a general election for the first time in the country's (then East Pakistan) history. Selina Hossain chronicles the movement in her brilliant prose and takes readers back to those tumultuous times.

Bangladesher Obhudhyoy
BADRUDDIN UMAR
Baatighar, 2023

Badruddin Umar, a noted historian, has written multiple books analysing the movements of East Pakistan from a Marxist perspective, through the lens of workers and peasants from various regions. His book, *Bangladesher Obhudhyoy*is a scholarly work on several movements from this angle. Written in two parts, the first volume documents the struggles between 1947 to 1958 and the second covers the period between 1958 and 1971. The second volume covers a number of notable movements, including the Education Movement of 1962, the 6-Point Movement of 1966, and the Mass Uprising of 1969.

Umar's research shows how these movements were not limited to a specific section of society, but had truly transformed into mass movements as a result of the participation of all classes of people.

Bangladesher Chhatro Andolon Er Itihash, Ershader Shomoykal
DR MUHAMMAD HANNAN
Agamee Prokashoni, 2017

Students have always been the first to rise against dictatorships, whether in pre- or post-Liberation War Bangladesh. The mass movement against then-president Hussain Muhammad Ershad during the 1980s is a testament to that fact; students were the first to protest against his autocratic rule and many even gave their lives for the cause. Dr Muhammad Hannan is a prominent writer and has written extensively on the topic of student rebellions from different periods of Bangladesh's history. His experiences are highlighted in this book, where he not only documents the resistance movement against Ershad, but also covers the developments in Ershad's autocratic rule from its inception to its demise.

Arek Falgun
ZAHIR RAIHAN
Anupam Prokashoni, 1969

Set in the spring of 1955, three years since the Language Movement, *Arek Falgun* tells the stories of several people—primarily university students—as they navigate the tumultuous political scene in Dhaka in the movement's aftermath. The book broadly follows the students' attempts to organise and mourn those martyred in 1952 as the Pakistani regime continuously attempts to quash any and all signs of resistance. Mere acts of mourning, such as raising black flags, wearing black badges, and raising monuments to the martyred, are viewed by the ruling regime as dangerous and incendiary, but perhaps more importantly, as a sign of disobedience.

Arek Falgun ends on the often-quoted line, "Ashchhe Falgune, amra kintu digun hobo" ("Come next Spring, we will be twice as many"), which—although sometimes misquoted as a romantic gesture—is in actuality, a jab aimed at the deputy jailer who cannot find enough space in his prison to accommodate all the students arrested after a protest. It is a taunt that rings true as a beacon of hope, and both an assurance and a vow that, come what may, resistance will continue unimpeded.

Zahir Raihan's narrative unfolds almost as slice of life, following the personal and political lives of not only student organisers and protesters, but also those of the Pakistani law enforcement, collaborators, and people who remained apolitical. The stories of growing resistance that are intimately tied to and deeply impacted by the lives of their characters, are at once timeless and painfully human. Nearly 70 years on, readers might find resemblances between the occurrences of the book and current events incredibly striking.

Freedom Is A Constant Struggle
ANGELA Y DAVIS
Haymarket Books, 2016

Compared to most other entries on this list that focus on Bangladesh-centric movements, *Freedom Is A Constant Struggle* provides a more international and transnational look into movement building and collective organising. It touches primarily on the issues of Ferguson, Charleston, and Palestine. The book is a collection that features a number of interviews Frank Barat, its editor, conducted with Angela Davis over the course of several years, and speeches she, the thinker, delivered at various universities around the world.

Davis' accounts are meaningful and informed by her decades of work and activism in the field, for which she was not only stripped of her academic position at the University of California (on account of being a member of the Communist Party) during Ronald Reagan's governorship, but was also incarcerated after being put on the FBI's most wanted list. As such, her experiences in radical collective organising and activism, as well as her incarceration, lend significant weight to one of the strongest black feminist and Marxist voices writing on anti-colonial resistance, prison abolishment, and the prison industrial complex, relevant even today.

The book also speaks to the discouraging nature of an endless uphill battle: For those currently in the thick of social and political activism, the struggle against capitalism, colonialism, and corporate rule often proves to be overwhelming and seemingly unwinnable. However, rather than admitting defeat or dismissing the issue altogether, the book accepts the often demoralising nature of the struggle and attempts to build from there on. Its hopeful approach is reflected not only in the conversations present in the book itself, but also Davis' oeuvre and scholarship.

Complaint!
SARA AHMED
Duke University Press, 2021

Centered primarily around academia, Ahmed's *Complaint* takes a critical look at the conceptual apparatuses around the task of "complaining" at an institutional level. She points first to the marking of the complaint itself as a problem, and next to the ways in which the person making the complaint is marked as the problem. Referencing some of her earlier thoughts, particularly how negative affects stick to bodies and identities that are unwelcome or are considered extraneous, or even act as blockages to the smooth functioning of a system, Ahmed remarks how those that make complaints become the problem, instead of the problem they were complaining about in the first place. Getting stuck with such a marker prevents legitimate complaints from being registered. An astutely observed work detailing the inner mechanisms of institutionalised methods of silencing dissent, criticism, and mere disagreement, *Complaint* is a must-read for those feeling stifled by such processes.

Sadman Ahmed Siam *is a contributor to DS Books.*
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Dr Nazia Manzoor *is the editor of Star Books and Literature.*

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Otherness and invisible identities

Review of 'The Hippo Girl and Other Stories' (Hachette India, 2024)

NABILAH KHAN

Shah Tazrian Ashrafi doesn't shy away from telling it like it is. His debut short story collection, *The Hippo Girl and Other Stories*, holds up a mirror to a society that judges and ridicules those that do not adhere to its shortsighted vision of a homogenised culture.

Ashrafi's characters are defiant, unruly, nonconformist. They revel in their obvious differences, bravely holding themselves firm and unrepentant in a society that values conformity. They are an accepted nuisance, yet they are complacent in that societal viewpoint. Ashrafi's stories grip you by the shoulders and transport you through the grubby, seedy, and ruthless mohollahs of Dhaka, through pre- and post-Liberation War Bangladesh, and sometimes to serene and peaceful landscapes of remote villages as well.

***The Hippo Girl* is narrated by a group of students who are classmates of the protagonist. The storytelling using the collective point of view as opposed to the singular is clever and effective. It confirms the narrowmindedness of a hypocritical society and a gradual rise in egotism.**

Set mostly in Bangladesh, the stories are distinctly Bangali. They focus on otherness, on those who are ignored, neglected, and forgotten although they cohabit the very same space as the 'respectable' class; whose identities don't matter, who are shoved aside, under grass and hard earth and life, so much so that they tend to become invisible.

If "Brother", the first story of the collection is aggressive and uncomfortable, "Lucky", the second, is strangely entertaining, humorous, tragic, and shocking. One is dark, the other is darkly humorous. In the titular story, "The Hippo Girl", the protagonist Jhonaki's acceptance of her parents' death and her subsequent obsession with hippos is beautifully captured in a brief sentence, "It was as if grief didn't want to enter her body, so it gently stepped aside and made way for the obsession to settle instead."

Death is a constant in most of the stories. Deaths resulting from desolation and destitution—shocking, disturbing, bloody. Deaths of humans and animals alike. It almost appears as if the protagonists of Ashrafi's stories are stoic, indifferent, even apathetic. But delve a little deeper and there is a hidden, desperate plea. The following lines depict the apathy only too well: "We realized Jhonaki wasn't okay when relatives and friends of the two were simmering with sorrow but not a single tear rolled out of her eyes. Instead, she emptily stared at the bodies lying in pools of dark blood on the earthen floor, walked towards the big mound of hay beneath the neem tree where the one-eared hippo was snoozing, settled herself cozily against its wet belly, and like a baby in its mother's embrace, fell asleep."

PHOTO: **MAISHA SYEDA**

The Hippo Girl is narrated by a group of students who are classmates of the protagonist. The storytelling using the collective point of view as opposed to the singular is clever and effective. It confirms the narrowmindedness of a hypocritical society and a gradual rise in egotism.

While there is a distinct similarity between "Lucky" and "The Hippo Girl", both with young, orphaned, homeless girls with strange inclinations and an unusual kinship with animals, the latter is provided agency and succeeds in avenging the merciless murder of her animal 'friend'. Animal cruelty, especially humans' nefarious behaviour towards street animals, is a recurring theme. In "My Human", canine loyalty is challenged in the aftermath of the Liberation War of 1971. With this and the other stories, there is an underlying theme of violence throughout the short story collection with little reprieve. This, at times, especially at this time and given the atmosphere of violence spreading across the globe, contributes to an overwhelming reading experience.

In "Crescent Boat", a granddaughter tries to befriend her estranged grandfather to discover that had transpired between her mother and him to tragically drive them apart for life. Ashrafi utilises the second person narrative for "Indira Road" and "Unpleasant conditions", two disparate stories that pay homage to the motherland. In the former, the reader imagines themselves as the narrator travelling along the alleys and laneways of their old neighbourhood in search of their mother who was abducted by West Pakistani soldiers during a military raid in 1971. By far the most tragic and heartbreaking, the reader is taken into the mind of a young man grappling with a sense of unending loss. In the latter, readers are taken to Canada where a middle-aged woman challenges perceptions of motherhood through her own experiences as a single mother.

Ashrafi is a truly gifted writer and a promising addition to the South Asian literary scene.

Nabilah Khan *is a writer based in Sydney, Australia.*

Star SPORT
DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 25, 2024, SRABAN 10, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

Sports 18-1
Paris Olympics
Women's football
Live from 9:00 pm
Sony Sports 5
MLC
New York vs Texas

Live from 6:30 am
The Hundred
Manchester vs Wales (Women)
Live from 8:00 pm
Manchester vs Wales (Men)

Live from 11:30 pm
Star Sports Select HD1
GT20
Toronto vs Vancouver
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

Murshida leads 'attack from the beginning' mindset

Joty and Co set up Asia Cup semifinal clash with India

SPORTS REPORTER

For a while, Murshida Khatun had been on and off from the lineup of the Bangladesh women's cricket team. Even in Bangladesh's crucial Asia Cup opener against Sri Lanka, Murshida's name was missing from the lineup. However, she staked her claim as a resurgent opener this Asia Cup in their thumping 114-run win against Malaysia in Dambulla yesterday as Bangladesh ensured semifinal clash against India.

Her career-best 59-ball 80, continuing on from her fifty in the previous match against Thailand, paved the way for Bangladesh's second-highest total in T20Is as they scored 191 for two against Malaysia. The attacking approach shown illustrated the aggression the Tigresses were looking to produce with the bat for a while.

Dilara Akter and Murshida got Bangladesh off to a flyer, notching fifty in the Powerplay. Murshida would then gather wind and skipper Nigar Sultana Joty was able to take the opportunity to hit an unbeaten 37-ball 62.

Murshida said she was eager for an attacking start to set her own tempo, for in the previous game against Thailand, she needed 10 deliveries to open her account.

"I rectified the mistakes made in the previous game. From the beginning, I tried to carry the innings with singles. The start in the previous game was bad and I covered that later [with 50 off 55]. Today, the plan was to attack from the beginning," she said at the post-match press conference.

There were classy shots on offer and she reminded at the post-match ceremony that the cover drive was her favourite during the innings.

For Bangladesh and her, the biggest relief would be recovering from the continuous batting slump.

"It's good when batters return to runs in a stage like the Asia Cup. We will be trying now to put on a better performance [in semis] and recover from our lackings," she said.

The attacking intent from Murshida saw her smash 10 fours and a six, and although she regretted getting out on 80, the knock helped Bangladesh put on big partnerships on way to posting a mammoth total.

The essential piece of the puzzle for Murshida to make an impact on return was maintaining her process, also showcased in the recently-concluded Premier League in which she top-scored with 446 runs at an average of over 63.

"I tried to play the right way according to my process and I feel that's how it happened. Last six months, I worked really hard while playing the Premier League," she added.

Buoyed by the win, Joty and Co will be looking for something special in the semifinal against India.

"We're looking forward to playing good cricket, and executing game plans. I have belief in my team, I know how capable they are," skipper Joty sounded confident about their chances against a strong Indian side.

Cristian Medina bursts into celebration as he thought he scored a last-gasp equaliser in Argentina's opening match of the Olympics against Morocco at the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint Etienne on Wednesday. The goal was disallowed as Argentina eventually lost the match 2-1. The goal was under review by VAR when the decision was taken to suspend the match initially with a message on the screen, addressing the crowd in the ground, saying "your session has been suspended, please leave the stadium" before the match was eventually listed as "finished" by the organisers.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Sagor to start Bangladesh's Olympic campaign

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Paris Olympics 2024 campaign will begin today with archer Sagor Islam set to fight for his fate in the ranking round.

The curtains of the Olympics will be raised tomorrow but several disciplines, including football have already begun.

Sagor, who earned direct qualification to the event, will have the opportunity to navigate through favourable paths in the knockout rounds if he can manage a spot in the top 20 in the ranking round as such a finish will allow him to avoid the top seeds in the competition.

"It is true that good scores in the ranking rounds allow you to avoid the top players but you have to remember that 64 players will be taking part and they are all strong. So, I'm not really thinking about that and preparing myself for the knockout rounds," Sagor said yesterday.

Bangladesh shooter Robiul Islam will take part in the qualification round of the 10m Air Rifle single's event on July 28. Two days later, swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi will participate in the 100m Freestyle Heat and on August 3, swimmer Sonia Khatun will get to test her progress in the 50m Freestyle Heat. On the same day, Bangladesh's fastest man, Imranur Rahman will fight it out in the preliminary round of the 100m Sprint event.

Seeking personal bests a step towards 'dreaming big'

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

The year 2024 marks the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh's maiden Olympic participation in Los Angeles and its 11th successive appearance in the 'Greatest Show on Earth'.

The recurring theme for Bangladesh since its first outing in the Olympics has been the athletes returning home empty-handed.

Golfer Siddikur Rahman and archers Ruman Sana and Sagor Islam's direct qualification to the Olympics is still considered the highest achievement for Bangladesh in the Games' history, as other athletes have only participated through wildcards or quota places.

During a recent interview with The Daily Star, swimmer Sonia Khatun acknowledged that their participation in the Olympics is akin to "token participation," as they are happy just to get the opportunity to feature in the global event alongside top athletes of the world.

This year, a total of five athletes from Bangladesh will take part in four disciplines -- archery, athletics, shooting, and swimming -- at the Paris Olympics, and among them, Sagor qualified directly on his merit, while the remaining four -- shooter Robiul Islam, swimmers Samiul Islam Rafi and Sonia Khatun, and sprinter Imranur Rahman -- were handed wildcard entries.

Former Olympian and current BKSP shooting coach Asif Hossain Khan admitted the harsh reality of Bangladesh's chances in the Olympics, but he was hopeful that if these athletes can deliver their best individual performance in the meet, they can count their participation differently.

"To be honest, we are far behind other athletes from different countries. It's difficult to overcome the difference within a short time," said Asif, who won a gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle individual event in the 2002 Commonwealth Games and also participated in the Athens Olympics in 2004.

"I hope they deliver their best individual performance in Paris, so that they get the self-satisfaction of achieving what they previously had done," said Asif, whose opponent in the Manchester Commonwealth -- India's shooting legend Abhinav Bindra -- went on to win the first individual gold medal for his country in the Beijing Olympics 2008.

Asif added that it's a failure of the whole process that Bangladesh is unable to clinch a medal in the Olympics till date.

"I would say it's an overall failure. We need to dream big. And then comes the execution after four years... I think we need a big collaboration between our athletes, officials, BOA, and sponsors, so that we can have a long-term plan for the Olympics and get a good result there.

"We are currently stuck in the middle of dreaming and helping others dream. I think there is a gap between these two for which we can't go ahead."

However, Asif was optimistic that someday they will scale the heights that India has achieved regularly of late, a country where "everything is managed locally" and without reliance on foreign coaches.

"There is a saying that a person gets mature at the age of 40. Our country is still unripe for the Olympics. I think it will take time. But I am hopeful that we can achieve something here as we did in other games like the Commonwealth, SA Games, and Asian Games."

Nadal, Alcaraz play down expectations

AFP, *Paris*

Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz know they won't win anything on reputation alone playing together at the Paris Olympics but vowed on Wednesday to do everything in their power to overcome a lack of preparation.

Nadal, the 2008 singles gold medallist, will pair up with Alcaraz in a tennis dream team at Roland Garros, looking to also add to the doubles title he won with close friend Marc Lopez at Rio in 2016.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion was keen to play down expectations though ahead of his final Olympics, with Nadal and Alcaraz teaming up for the first time.

"I understand the fascination, the hope of seeing us play together, (but) let's not think that this translates into success, I think that's a mistake," said the 38-year-old Nadal.

"At the end of the day, Carlos hasn't played much doubles and I haven't played much in either doubles or singles," he said at a Spanish team press conference in the Olympic Village.

Both Nadal and Alcaraz will also compete in the singles at Roland Garros, where Nadal has won the French Open a record 14 times. Alcaraz captured the title in Paris for the first time last month.

"We're going to give our all to try and at least leave with the peace of mind of having done everything possible," added Nadal.

Alcaraz said it was "a dream" to be able to make his Olympic debut in doubles alongside Nadal.

He too sounded a note of caution and insisted their star power was no guarantee of a medal.

"What I can say is that we're going to do give the best of ourselves... with great enthusiasm, let's hope we can enjoy it and play well," said Alcaraz, who beat Novak Djokovic again in this year's Wimbledon final.

Sagorika hattrick saves Bangladesh's blushes

SPORTS REPORTER

Young forward Mosammat Sagorika came off the bench and scored a hattrick as Bangladesh women's football team came back from a goal down to beat Bhutan 5-1 in the first of two FIFA friendly matches in Thimphu last night.

The best player and top scorer of the SAFF Women's U-19 Championship, which was held in Dhaka in February this year, scored the equaliser early in the second half before adding two more goals late in the game as Bangladesh avoided a potential banana skin at the Changlimthang Stadium in Bhutan's capital.

It was the first victory under British coach Peter Butler, who saw his side suffer 4-0 and a 1-0 defeats against Chinese Taipei at home in his first assignment in May-June.

Buttler was full of praise of the young forward as she changed the game on its head after Bangladesh had conceded a sloppy girl in the first half and failed to mount a challenge against a side 23 places below them in FIFA ranking.

"Sagorika is a special talent. We've been warming her in the wings. The style of football that we want to play really suits her because she's very quick over 5-10-15 metres," Butler said at the post-match press conference.

Bangladesh conceded their first ever goal against the South Asian minnows – having gone 20-0 in the previous four matches -- in the 13th minute of the game when Bhutan captain Pema Tshering profited from some disastrous communication error between Bangladesh goalkeeper Rupna Chakma and the defence.

"We made a few sloppy errors, mistakes – self-inflicted. I think at times we tried to play in areas where there wasn't really on to play," the coach said, adding that he made some tactical changes in the second half after "a bit of prompting from the team management."

While Bangladesh turned things around in the second half with veteran skipper Sabina Khatun and winger Ritu Porna Chakma also getting on the scoresheet, they also wasted a few more chances late in the game.

Butler felt his side 'lacked cutting edge in the first half' and could not gauge the opposition's style of play.

"I think we misunderstood a team who play very different to what we play. They're big and strong and they play very direct. We work on more passing movement pattern," Butler said.

The British coach, however, was pleased with the result.

"Pleased with the outcome. It's one game down but we've got one more game and it could possibly be a completely different team. A younger team for the second game," said Butler.

The second match will be held at the same venue on July 27.

Bangladesh wicket-keeper batter Mushfiqur Rahim plays volleyball with teammates yesterday during the national team's practice camp at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram ahead of the Tigers' Pakistan tour. Mushfiqur arrived three hours before the scheduled starting time of the training session and trained for six hours. The 37-year-old will feature in a two-day practice match, starting today at the same venue.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

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UAE did not impose restrictions on visas

Foreign minister says UN logos were not erased from vehicles by mistake

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Arab Emirates has not imposed any visa restrictions on Bangladeshi migrants, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud confirmed yesterday.

"We saw news in the media that the UAE has restricted visas for Bangladeshis. This is absolutely incorrect. Those who broadcast the news did not do the right thing. They should have verified the information before broadcasting the news because the issue is very sensitive," he said.

Some media outlets on Tuesday reported that the UAE restricted visas for Bangladeshis over the protest by a group of Bangladeshi expatriates in the UAE.

He said 57 Bangladeshi expatriates were handed lengthy prison sentences for demonstration that is banned in the Gulf country.

The minister was briefing reporters at the State Guesthouse Padma on the diplomats' visit to the state properties,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

People queue up at a bank counter as services resumed after days. The photo was taken at the Sonali Bank in Motijheel yesterday.

'Mockery of justice'

Says HRW about punishment of 57 Bangladeshi protesters in UAE

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch yesterday condemned the harsh punishment meted out to the 57 Bangladeshis by the UAE following peaceful demonstrations.

On July 19, groups of mostly Bangladeshi nationals who live in the UAE carried out peaceful protests in multiple locations across the country in solidarity with the student protesters in Bangladesh.

The following day, the UAE's attorney general announced an investigation into the protests and just a day later, the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal gave life-term prison sentences to three Bangladeshi nationals.

It sentenced one Bangladeshi national to 11 years in prison and 53 to 10 years, according to the Emirates News Agency.

The court ordered the defendants to be deported upon completing their terms and their electronic devices seized.

The egregiously long sentences appear to have come after only one court session and within 24 hours, the HRW said.

The speed with which dozens of defendants were investigated, tried and convicted raises serious concerns about

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Sramik League leader 'offered' driver money to torch buses

Arrested driver tells court

FM MIZANUR RAHMAN, *Ctg*

The president of Chattogram's Baizid Bostami thana Sramik League allegedly made a "verbal contract" with a human-hauler driver, promising him Tk 4 lakh if he could torch five buses inside the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation depot in Hathazari upazila's Baluchara area.

Driver Sohel Rana said this in a confessional statement made to Chattogram Judicial Magistrate Awlad Mohammad Junaid on Tuesday.

The case was filed with Hathazari Police Station in connection with an arson case.

Police arrested Didarul Alam Didar, the Sramik League president, and Sohel Rana after BRTC Chattogram's manager Zulfikar filed the case on Sunday accusing an

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

NARSINGDI JAIL ATTACK

How it all unfolded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

It was around 3:30pm on July 19.

At least 3,000 people were gathered at Narsingdi's Velanagar intersection, a few yards from the district jail.

The day before (Thursday), two student protesters were killed in police firing in the same area.

Around 3:45pm on Friday, police lobbed teargas shells at the gathering from the main entrance of the jail. The agitators initially retreated slightly.

By 4:15pm, they chased away the police, who had to flee through the jail's southern entrance, giving the mob an opportunity to take control of the jail building.

Once they took control, they resorted to vandalism and arson inside, leading to the escape of all 836 prisoners.

The Daily Star spoke to five inmates who surrendered, nine witnesses and four jail guards.

A 26-year-old witness, who preferred anonymity, told this correspondent, "Around 2:00pm, the attackers first vandalised 7-8 CCTV cameras installed in the area. As time passed, the number of agitators grew. By 3:30-4:00pm, there were over 2,000 of them in the area as locals had joined in.

"Some cops threw teargas shells at them from the north gate or main entrance of the district jail. After retreating a little, around 4:15pm, they chased the police away. Taking advantage of this, they took control of the jail building and vandalised it. They also set motorcycles on fire."

Jibon Mia, a 25-year-old inmate from Alokbali Union, said, "Around 5:00-6:00pm, we heard sounds of gunfire and explosions. It was very hot and we were locked in our rooms. Then when hundreds of people came near our cells and began setting things on fire, a jail guard unlocked our doors. We then fled."

Several freed inmates said hundreds of crude bombs were detonated, adding that some of them were reluctant to leave but were forced out by the mob.

> **Several freed inmates said hundreds of crude bombs were detonated, adding that some of them were reluctant to leave but were forced out by the mob.**

Abdul Ahad, another prisoner from Karimpur area, said, "The attackers set our cell on fire. Some people broke the lock and forced us out by beating us, even though many of us didn't want to leave."

Khokon Chandra Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Narsingdi's Detective Branch of police, said, there were six Hiaces [microbuses] waiting in the Chinishpur area near the jail building. "We are suspecting those were stationed there to carry the escaped inmates away."

According to the Narsingdi's superintendent of police and the jail authorities, all of the 826 inmates either escaped or were forced to.

Meanwhile, 85 weapons, 9,000 bullets, and official documents were looted. Additionally, 15 spots on the jail premises, including offices and residences of the jail supers and the jailer, as well as the guards' quarters and vehicles used for jail operations, were set ablaze.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Judicial body to only probe deaths of 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman-led judicial commission will only probe the deaths of six people during the quota protest on July 16.

The commission will visit the scenes once the situation becomes normal and will seek information from citizens about the deaths and violence that took place between July 5 and 16.

People will be able to provide the commission with information directly or by email and registered posts until August 6, Justice Diliruzzaman told journalists after a meeting with some executive and judicial officers at the Supreme Court auditorium yesterday afternoon.

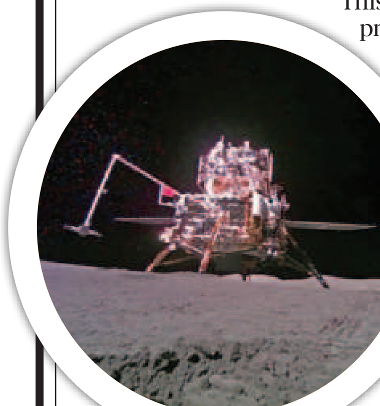
"We [commission] will work in accordance with the terms of reference where the issues of six persons [deaths] have been mentioned. The following incidents [of deaths] took place after the gazette notification [forming the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

Chinese Moon probe finds water in soil samples

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Chinese scientists have found a mineral "enriched" with water in lunar soil samples returned from the Moon by the Chang'e 5 mission.



This discovery "revealed the presence of trace water" from a "much higher latitude" than any previous missions and could power future missions to the Moon amid an ongoing "space race" between the US and China.

Researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences found that "water molecules can persist in sunlit areas of the Moon in the form of hydrated salts".

The findings, published recently in the journal Nature Astronomy, offer fresh clues about the chemical and physical form of Moon water, an advance that could shape how minerals are extracted for rocket fuel on the lunar surface.

While samples brought back by Apollo astronauts decades earlier suggested the Moon was likely completely dry, recent discoveries suggest the Earth's closest neighbour indeed has reservoirs of water.

HC rejects Prof Yunus' plea to scrap charge framing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summarily rejected a petition filed by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six other officials of Grameen Telecom, challenging a Dhaka court's order on framing charges against them in a case.

The case was filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission on May 30 last year against Dr Yunus and 13 others on charges of misappropriating about Tk 25.22 crore of Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund and money laundering.

Yesterday, the HC also ordered the lower court concerned to finish the trial of the case in next one year.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain delivered the order

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Emergency personnel work at the accident site of a Saurya Airlines plane that caught fire after skidding off the runway while taking off at Tribhuvan International Airport, in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. All 19 on board except the pilot died in the crash, police said. The plane was scheduled to fly to Pokhara.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Broadband restored on trial

Mobile internet still off, says Palak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday restored broadband internet on a trial basis across the country.

However, mobile internet will remain suspended for now.

All internet services were shut down on July 18 amid widespread violence centring the quota reform protests. On Tuesday night, broadband internet services were partially restored in selected areas.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for telecom and ICT, said efforts are on to restore mobile internet and they might be able to do so by Sunday or Monday. He said they would hold meetings with the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh on Friday and Saturday.

He made the comments at a press conference at the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission in Dhaka yesterday. Before that, he held a meeting with International Internet Gateway operators.

Asked about people's complaints of slow internet since its partial restoration on Tuesday night, Palak blamed it on technical issues.

However, those involved in the restoration process, requesting anonymity, said the telecom regulatory body has instructed the IIG operators to block some social media platforms.

Besides, the government instructed the internet service providers to shut down their cache servers, which speed up frequently accessed data, they said, adding that it slowed down some key services.

Asked when people can access social media platforms, Palak said they are taking experts' advice on the issue.

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QUOTA PROTESTS

Trauma, pain etched on their faces

Limbs of several injured had to be amputated after gunshot wounds

AHMED DEEPTO

Lying in a hospital bed, teary-eyed Md Rifat was staring at his right leg, rather where his right leg used to be. He could not look away.

The 10th grader of Badda Alatunnessa Higher Secondary School was shot around 10:00am on July 19 while he went out of his home to see what was going on in Rampura.

He had two surgeries. His leg was amputated from the knee.

"I don't know whether I will be able to go to school again," Rifat said softly at the Casualty Ward-2 of the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor).

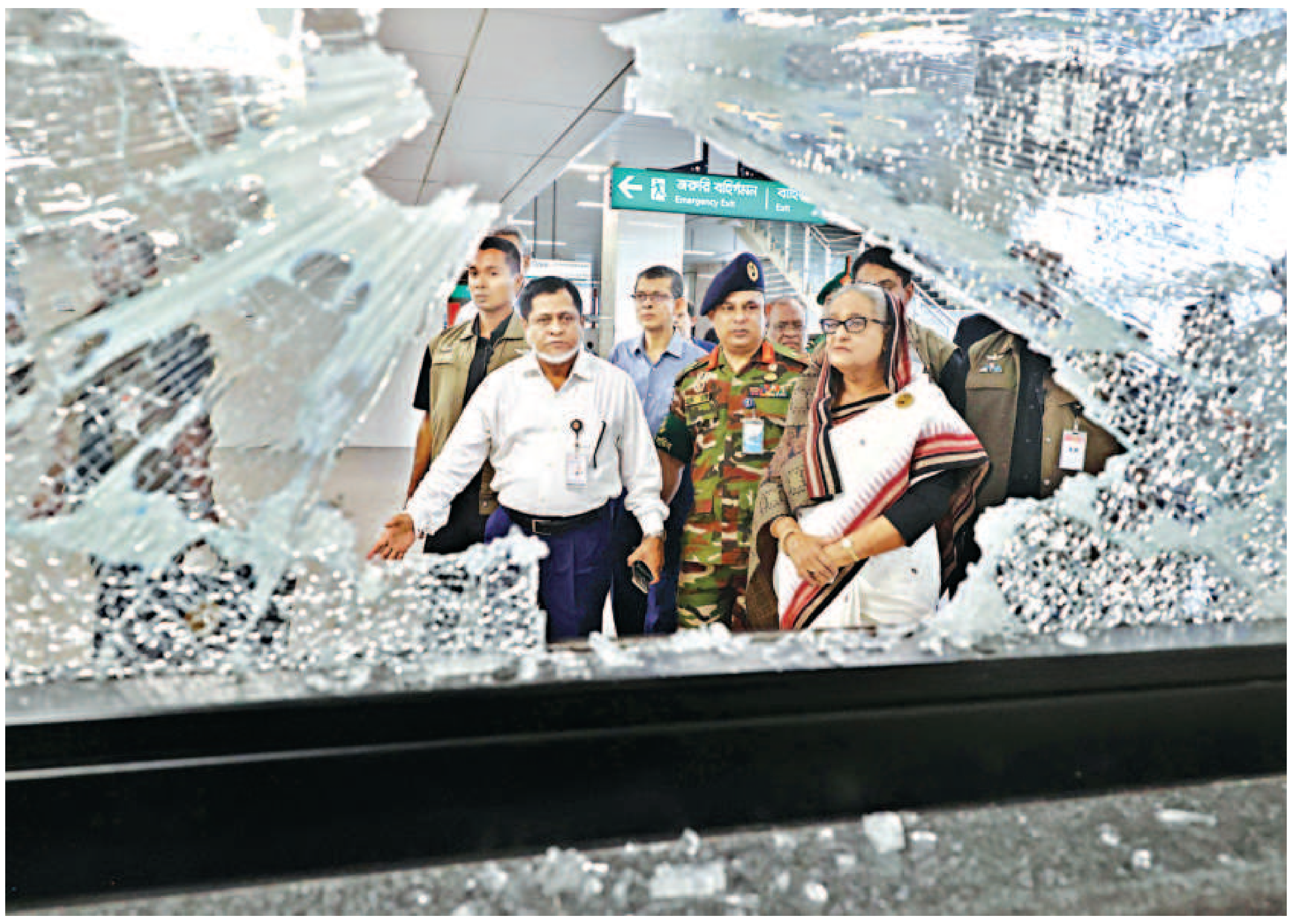
He was struggling to hold back his tears as he recalled the life-changing incident.

"I just wanted to see what was going on in my neighbourhood. I didn't go there to protest ... I was having a sherbet near the Rampura U-loop, suddenly a bullet hit my right leg, and I fell to the ground."

In the same ward, Imran Sarkar, a fourth-year student of philosophy at Dhaka College, was without his left leg. He was shot during a clash between the demonstrators and police in Rayerbazar area on July 19 afternoon.

"I was returning home after offering Juma prayers ... All of a sudden, a bullet hit my left leg and I passed out," said Imran.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits the Mirpur-10 metro rail station in the capital yesterday. The station was among two that were vandalised on July 19. The authorities said it will take at least a year to make the two stations operational again. PHOTO: BSS

ARSON, VANDALISM

'Play your part to bring the culprits to justice'

PM urges people

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people of the country must come forward to make sure that the perpetrators of the recent violence face trial and punishment.

"They [people] have to try the culprits. I am seeking justice from them," she said after visiting the vandalised metro rail station at Mirpur-10 in the morning.

Hasina said everyone involved in metro rail construction is now in tears after witnessing such destruction.

"Why did they do this? I am working tirelessly to improve the living standard of the people and I have done this. No one can deny it now."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

VIOLENCE CENTRING QUOTA PROTESTS

Andaleeve, David Hasanat arrested

At least 4,784 held in last 6 days

STAR REPORT

Police arrested Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Andaleeve Rahman Partho and top businessman KM Rezaul Hasanat David in a countrywide crackdown that saw the arrest of at least 4,784 over the last six days.

Besides, the BNP said Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anne, joint secretary general of the party, was picked up by the Detective Branch of police from Elephant Road area around 4:30pm.

Andaleeve

David Hasanat

Detectives arrested Andaleeve at his Gulshan home around 1:00am, and a Dhaka court later placed him on a five-day remand.

He and David, founding chairman and CEO of major garment exporter Viyellatex Group, were accused in a case filed over an arson attack on Setu Bhaban in Dhaka on July 18.

According to the Viyellatex website, David is a well known businessman and his company has diversified businesses ranging from end-to-end apparel solution to tea, engineering and power generation. It employs over 300 management staff and over 15,000 workers.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

CURFEW BREAK IN DHAKA FROM 8:00AM TO 5:00PM TODAY. STORY ON PAGE 2

Social media off-limits indefinitely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi social media users are unlikely to get uninterrupted access to the platforms anytime soon as the government has put in strict blocking mechanisms until the tech companies comply with its demands.

The international internet gateway (IIG) operators were instructed to block Facebook, the most popular app in the country with about 5.5 crore users, from the gateway devices by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, The Daily Star has learnt from people with knowledge of the matter.

Meta's other platforms such as Messenger and WhatsApp and ByteDance's TikTok -- the most popular social media and instant messaging apps -- are on top of the block list, they said.

Social media platforms, especially Facebook and YouTube, have not been complying with Bangladesh's laws, said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for ICT, on Wednesday.

"They are also not taking into account the situation on the ground, violating their policy guidelines... Amid this, who

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

'End crackdown on protesters, lift all curbs'

Urge UN rights chief, Amnesty, US, Canada

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN and Amnesty International yesterday urged the Bangladesh government to respect the right to protest, end violent crackdown on protesters and immediately lift all communication restrictions.

In separate statements, they also called for impartial, independent and transparent investigations into all alleged human rights violations during the recent violence in the country.

In a statement released in Geneva, UN Human Rights chief Volker Türk called on the government to urgently disclose full details about last week's crackdown on protests amid growing accounts of horrific violence.

"The government must provide the details of those killed, injured, or detained for the benefit of their families," he said.

The rights chief also offered his office's support in probing the alleged human rights violations.

He also urged the government to ensure that all operations of law enforcement agencies are conducted strictly in line with international human rights norms and standards, particularly regarding the policing of protests.

"This is important to begin to rebuild gravely damaged public trust and create an environment conducive to public dialogue on the underlying concerns that led to this wave of violence," reads the statement.

Latest reports indicate that more than 170 people were killed and over a thousand injured -- some of whom were denied medical care

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

19-yr-old crippled as cop shoots him point-blank

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Akash

As the July 20 mayhem centring on quota protest escalated on Dhaka-Chattogram road in Narayanganj, Mohammad Akash, 19, pulled down the shutters and locked the glass doors of the sweetshop, where he worked, to save his life.

But law enforcers broke open the shutters and the glass door and shot him anyway from close range to his left knee, he told The Daily Star.

Akash, a storekeeper of Bikrampur Mishtanno Bhandar, will now be a cripple man for the rest of his life, as doctors had to amputate his left leg on Tuesday.

Akash worked at the shop for the last two and a half years, That Saturday he was in charge of safeguarding the establishment.

"Police forcibly entered the shop, breaking all the doors," says Akash.

They accused him of concealing his identity and being involved in violence. Akash says he repeatedly denied these allegations, but police mistook him as a troublemaker trying to hide in the shop.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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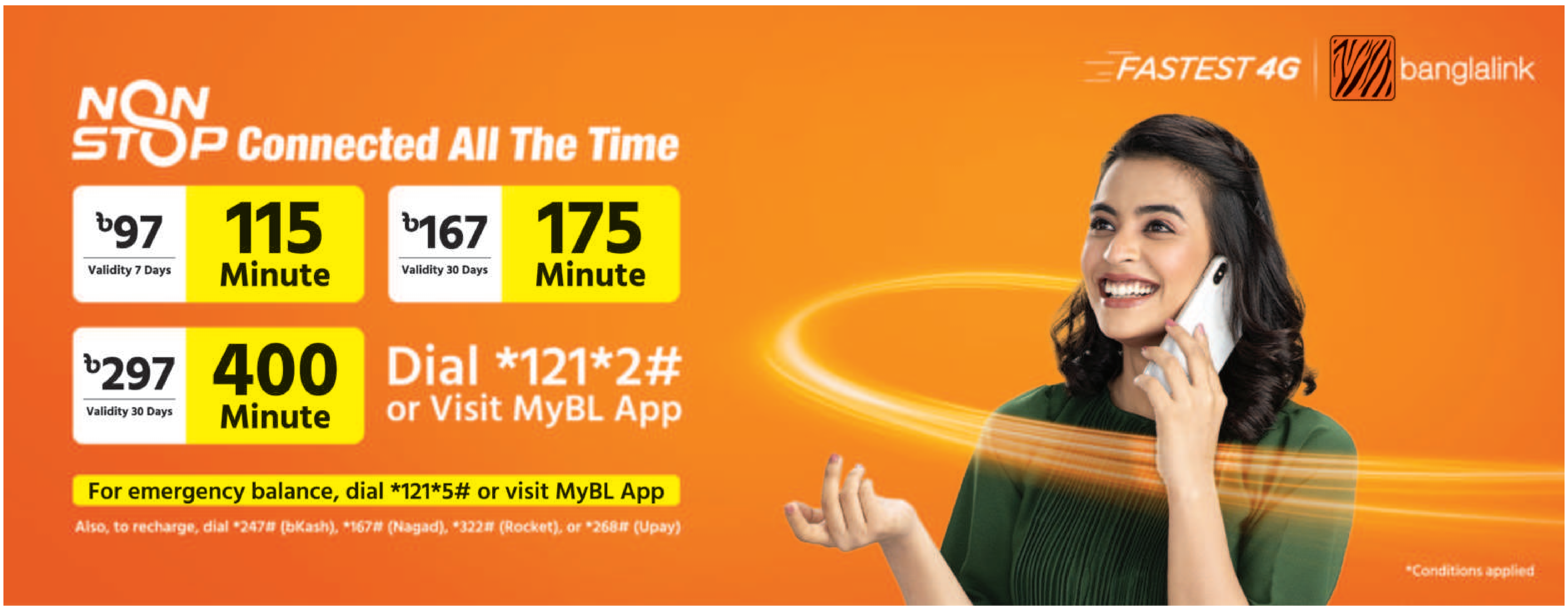
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Nine hour curfew break from 8:00am in Dhaka, 3 other dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided that the ongoing nationwide curfew will continue until further notice.

Curfew will be imposed in Dhaka, Narsingdi, Narayanganj and Gazipur today and tomorrow with a nine-hour pause from 8:00am.

The decision on the curfew in other districts will be taken by the deputy commissioners concerned.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said this after a one-hour meeting with the law enforcement agencies at his residence in the capital yesterday.

He said they will make a decision tomorrow about continuing the curfew on Sunday.

The minister said their drives against those involved in vandalism, setting fire to state properties, and killing police personnel and the PS of former Gazipur city mayor Jahangir Alam will continue.

Fishermen loading their deep-sea trawlers with slush ice as they prepare to venture out to the sea after the 65-day fishing ban ended early Wednesday. The photo was taken in the port city's Fisheries Ghat yesterday.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN**

TK 187CR EMBEZZLEMENT CASE

Sonali Life Insurance's ex-chairman, family sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against eight people, including the former chairman of Sonali Life Insurance Mostafa Golam Quddus, six of his family members, and one relative, over the embezzlement of Tk 187 crore.

Apart from Quddus, his wife Fazlutun Nesa, two daughters Fauzia Kamrun Tania and Tasnia Kamrun Anika, son Mostafa Quamrus Sobhan, Sobhan's wife Safia Sobhan Chowdhury, and relative Noor-e-Hafza, all of whom were former members in the board of directors have been named as defendants in the case.

The other accused is Tania's husband Mir Rashed Bin Aman, former chief financial officer and chief executive officer of the company.

The case was filed under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act-2004, ACC Public Relations Officer Aktarul Islam told The Daily Star.

Raqibul Hayat, an assistant director at ACC, filed the case, he said.

According to the case statement, the accused illegally withdrew Tk 187 crore from Sonali Life Insurance using forged documents.

Later, the money was transferred to different companies and bank accounts owned by them.

The case was filed against them for committing crimes punishable under sections 409, 420, 467, 468, 471, and 109 of the Penal Code and section 4 (2) and (3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

Russian drones attack Ukraine port for a second night

AFP, *Kyiv*

Russian drones attacked the southern Ukrainian port city of Izmail for a second straight night damaging infrastructure, Kyiv said yesterday, claiming several Russian attack drones entered Romanian airspace.

Moscow has repeatedly targeted ports in the southern Odesa region since it exited an accord last year brokered by the United Nations and Turkey allowing Ukraine to export grain via the Black Sea.

Local authorities in Izmail said "port infrastructure facilities were damaged" and two civilians were wounded.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched 38 Iranian-designed attack drones and that air defence systems had downed 25.

"Another three Shaheds were lost after crossing the state border with Romania," it said.

The governor of the Odesa region, which borders EU and NATO member Romania, said the attack had damaged an administrative building.

Three people were wounded in a Russian attack one day earlier on Izmail, local authorities had said.

Romania conducted searches for "possible objects fallen" on its territory for a second day yesterday, the country's defence ministry said.

19-yr-old crippled as cop shoots him point-blank

FROM PAGE 1

Eyewitnesses, including Raju Hossain, the storeowner, and others present corroborated Akash's version, confirming his occupation as a dedicated worker, not associated with any protests or unlawful activities.

But the police refused to accept these assurances and all of a sudden one of them just shot Akash in the left knee causing him to crumple to the floor. Profusely bleeding and in excruciating pain, Akash was rushed by his family from one hospital to the other, in a desperate attempt to save his leg.

According to Akash's father Dulal Miah, one private hospital agreed to take him in and took Tk 2 lakh to treat him, promising to save his leg. "But they couldn't and ultimately, Aksah was sent to NITOR [Pangu hospital] and the leg had to be amputated," he said.

Akash was all set to go to Saudi Arabia for work hoping to end his family's financial woes. A single gunshot ended that dream for good.

"Now, all financial resources intended for his future abroad are being drained because of the medical expenses for his treatment," says Akash's father.

The family has already spent Tk 3 lakh on medical bills, including Tk 35 thousand for blood transfusions, depleting their savings. The future looks bleak and uncertain for them.

Akash, lying helplessly in the hospital bed could not reconcile with the fact that he had become disabled for life. "What will I do now?" he asks, "Should I beg in the streets?"

He may even have to forgo his meagre salary of Tk 7,500 from the store as he struggles with the devastating physical and emotional toll of his ordeal.

As Akash's family seeks justice and financial aid for an artificial leg, the incident has ignited widespread condemnation in his community.

Trauma, pain etched on their faces

FROM PAGE 1

When he regained consciousness, he found himself in the hospital bed.

"How will I walk again?" he said before bursting into tears.

He had another surgery yesterday afternoon.

At Nitor, Rifat and Imran are among eight people who lost their limbs after being shot during the recent violence. Of them, six lost their legs while two lost arms.

According to the hospital authorities, 238 patients with gunshot wounds, sustained between July 18 and July 22, had treatment at the hospital. Some of them have been discharged.

Doctors there feared they may not be able to save the limbs of a number of patients under treatment.

Md Mamun, a trucker from Bhairab in Kishoreganj, was lying in a bed of

Casualty Ward-1 on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old was brutally hacked when he was heading to Bhairab from Dhaka on July 19 afternoon.

"I was caught in the middle of a clash. There was gunfire all around me. As I got down from the truck for safety, some people got hold of me and attacked me with knives. I don't know them," he told this correspondent on Wednesday.

He had seven stitches on his left hand. However, his right hand bore several marks of stabs that became infected.

"The doctors told me there is no other option but to amputate my right hand. How will I drive without my right hand?" Mamun said.

Doctors yesterday had to amputate his right hand, his family members told this paper.

During a visit to the hospital on Wednesday, this correspondent found 34 patients with gunshot wounds still under treatment at Casualty Ward-2.

Seven of them were shot in their arms and 26 in their legs.

The air was heavy with the cries of patients and their relatives. Some were looking for certain types of blood.

Many of them said they were running out of money since they had spent a lot to travel to Dhaka and had been to multiple hospitals before getting to Nitor.

Kazi Shamim Uzzaman, director of Nitor, said all the patients admitted there underwent surgeries and some had multiple surgeries.

"Even after surgeries, some of them still have bullets in their bodies," the director said.

The country witnessed unprecedented violence centring the quota reform demonstration. The non-violent movement turned violent after Chhatra League men attacked agitating students at Dhaka University and some other universities on July 15.

The violence escalated further in the following days after several students were killed in clashes. The government eventually imposed a nationwide curfew and deployed the armed forces.

According to the count of The Daily Star, since July 16, at least 156 people, including three police personnel, were killed. Several thousand were wounded in clashes between agitators and law enforcers, who were aided allegedly by ruling party activists.

The death toll may rise as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals in Dhaka and elsewhere where many critically injured were taken for treatment. Also, many friends and families reportedly took the bodies of their loved-ones from the scenes and this newspaper could not contact them. The Daily Star's count of the death toll is based solely on hospital and police sources.

Andaleeve, David Hasanat arrested

FROM PAGE 1

David, who is accused of financing the perpetrators, was also placed on a five-day remand by the court.

On Wednesday and yesterday, 1,367 were arrested in the country including 829 people in the capital; 254 of them were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka in 72 cases.

According to data, 3,417 were arrested previously.

At least 302 people were arrested on Wednesday and Thursday in 18 districts in 164 cases in which 2,148 named and 73,520 unnamed people were accused.

Besides, Rab arrested 228 across the country including 55 in Dhaka on the same charges, Rab said.

DB Inspector Abu Sayeed Miah, who is investigating the case filed over arson attack on Setu Bhaban, wrote in the remand application that Andaleeve expressed solidarity with the students who protested for quota reform and he was involved in arson at Setu Bhaban.

David played an active role in financing the students' movement, added the officer.

Andaleeve told the court he was innocent while David's lawyer said his client was abroad from July 13 to July 23, but didn't show any document in support of the alibi.

Upon hearing both sides, the magistrate turned down the defence pleas and placed them on remand.

Yesterday, another Dhaka court placed seven BNP leaders, including Saiful Alam Nirob, on a five-day remand in the same case.

On July 18, nearly 250-300 unidentified people stormed the Setu Bhaban, vandalised many vehicles, motorbikes, and ransacked different sheds and rooms. They later set those on fire.

At a press briefing, DMP Additional Commissioner (DB) Harun-or-Rashid said an arrested Juba Dal leader of Gaibandha Nure Alam Siddique Piton received a message from "high-ups" in London that if they can kill a Chhatra League member, the killer would receive Tk 5,000 and to kill a policeman, he would receive Tk 10,000.

Harun claimed that Piton engaged his brother-in-law Abdul Aziz to make this plan successful. In this regard, the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir men carried out vandalism and arson in Uttara and Abdullahpur areas, the DMP DB chief claimed.

Another DMP official, wishing anonymity, said police are identifying those involved in the violence and sabotage by analysing intelligence information and CCTV footage.

Social media off-limits indefinitely

FROM PAGE 1

will take the risk [of opening the social media platforms]?"

The government will write to the platforms seeking explanation for their non-compliance with orders.

"Access to the platforms will be reopened if they promise to comply," Palak added.

Palak though continues to use Facebook prolifically.

He was one of the first persons to take to Facebook after the government resumed broadband service on Tuesday in selected areas.

Since then, he has given dozens of posts on his verified Facebook page.

Palak could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, internet speed improved yesterday as the BTRC instructed the IIG operators to open the majority of cache servers that host Google content, such as YouTube videos and Google search results.

Besides, users will not experience free flow internet as traffic is going through deep packet inspection (DPI) through the Department of Telecommunications equipment placed previously in the IIG's system, according to people informed with the proceedings.

The DPI works like a security guard checking the contents passing through a checkpoint.

While the government and the BTRC maintained that the internet shutdown occurred due to an attack on the data centres in the capital's Mohakhali, people with knowledge of the matter said the outage was ordered by the government.

The Daily Star has visited the data centres in question and found no sign of damage to the building that housed them.

Officials of the data centres also confirmed that there was no fire in the building. However, the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) opposite the building was torched and that fire partially damaged some overheard cables connected to the data centres.

On July 17, Palak ordered the shutdown of mobile internet "in light of the current unrest in the country and to stop the spread of fake news on social media".

The next day, the DDM building was torched.

Around 8:00pm, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh said the fire might have cut 30-40 percent of the bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

An hour later, the entire Bangladesh was without internet.

The government reopened broadband internet in selected areas on July 23 and restored connections on a trial basis nationwide the next day.

However, mobile internet, used by around 14 crore subscribers, continues to be offline.

Play your part to bring the culprits

FROM PAGE 1

She said the infrastructures that provided services, comfort, and convenience to the people have been destroyed.

The premier said the government had to overcome so many obstacles to construct the metro rail and the job was completed ahead of schedule.

The metrorail eased the suffering of the people who earlier had to spend hours in traffic jams, she said, adding that the metro rail and its services are of international standard.

"But what a grave scene of destruction I have seen here! It is unbelievable that people of this country can do this."

Hasina accused the BNP-Jamaat of taking the advantage of the students' quota reform protests to unleash destruction.

She said she has done everything over the last 15 years for the welfare and happiness of the people.

"Who are the beneficiaries of the development? It is the mass people of the country. Why is there so much anger about the metro rail? That is my question."

The premier said the government made highest efforts to convince the quota reform protesters that the matter was in court and the government was doing its best to get a result that would not disappoint them.

"But they did not agree to have patience till the delivery of the verdict by the apex court. They are pressing their demands still now. At first it was one-point demand but now it is eight-point demand."

Hasina said a situation was created to give the BNP-Jamaat the opportunity to carry out the mayhem.

"Who are the worst sufferers? I don't know how long it would take to restore the metro rail stations."

The PM inspected different parts of the station.

Senior officials of the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) briefed Hasina about the destruction and the plan to reopen the Mirpur-10 and Kazipara stations.

Some unidentified people went on a rampage at the two metro stations on July 18 during demonstrations by students demanding reform of the quota system in government jobs.

Metro rail services were suspended that day.

End crackdown

FROM PAGE 1

-- and many are missing following protests by students and youth movements against government policies, the statement says.

The rights chief also urged the authorities to provide a guarantee that there would be no reprisals against those involved in the protests.

He emphasised longer-term, comprehensive security sector reform to prevent future abuses and safeguard the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

He called on the government to restore full internet access to allow all people, including journalists and media outlets, to communicate freely and in line with international law.

He hoped the Supreme Court's decision on Sunday, which allowed 7 percent of quota in government jobs, would help to open a space for confidence-building, leading to meaningful and inclusive dialogues to address underlying issues and grievances.

He appealed to all political actors to avoid any statements or actions that could constitute incitement to violence or lead to a further crackdown on dissent.

Meanwhile, Deprose Muchena, a senior director at Amnesty International, yesterday urged the Bangladesh government to "lift shoot-on-sight orders, fully restore internet access across the country and end the use of army and paramilitary forces in the policing of protests".

The rights group released the second part of its evidence analysis series on Bangladesh's quota-reform protest yesterday.

The authorities must also guarantee that shoot-on-sight orders and internet shutdowns will not be used in the future to suppress protests, Muchena said.

He said these repressive measures are a deliberate attempt to crush both these protests and any future dissent.

Amnesty citing media reports said there have been at least 2,500 arrests, nearly 200 deaths and several thousand injuries since the protests turned deadly on July 16.

At least 61,000 people have been charged over the recent violence, said the rights group.

In its evidence analysis, Amnesty said Bangladesh authorities cracked down on protesters, deployed armed forces, declared a curfew and issued a shoot-on-sight order during a six-day communication curb period starting from July 18.

Amnesty said it has verified videos of three incidents of "unlawful use of lethal and less lethal weapons" by law enforcement agencies while policing the protests.

The rights group said a video clip circulating on social media since July 20 shows an officer firing an assault rifle.

The seven-second video verified by Amnesty International was filmed in front of a bank on DIT Road in Rampura of Dhaka.

It shows several officers from the Bangladesh Police and Border Guard Bangladesh standing alongside an APC.

"One of the officers points a Chinese type 56-1 assault rifle towards off-screen targets and fires two rounds," Amnesty said.

Firearms are not an appropriate tool for the policing of assemblies; they must only be used when strictly necessary to confront an imminent threat of death or serious injury, it added.

Muchena said an independent and impartial investigation into all human rights violations committed by security forces must urgently be conducted and all those found responsible must be held fully accountable.

"Victims of unlawful police use of force, including those who have been injured and family members of those who have been killed, must also receive full reparations from the state," he said.

Meanwhile, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said the US is exploring all options to ensure the safety of US personnel in Dhaka, including authorising voluntary departure of nonemergency personnel and family members at the US embassy.

In a briefing on Wednesday in Washington, he said they want the people of Bangladesh to be able to exercise their fundamental freedoms but condemn violence by any protester who has turned their peaceful exercises simply into an excuse for violence.

"We continue to urge both protesters, private citizens, and the government to refrain from violence."

Meanwhile, Canada called on the government to hold those responsible for the violence accountable.

"We will continue monitoring the situation in Bangladesh," said the Canadian High Commission in a statement yesterday.

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'PM to take responsibility of their families'

Says Quader on people who died in recent unrest

BSS, *Dhaka*

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will take responsibility of the families of the people killed in the recent nationwide unrest.

"A committee has been formed for investigation and every culprit will be brought to book," he said while addressing a coordination meeting with the ward leaders of AL Dhaka north unit at AL district office in the capital's Tejgaon.

The minister said BNP-Jamaat carried out the arson centring the quota reform movement.

He said AL will stand beside the families of the deceased and injured.

"The foreigners became astonished to see the nationwide destructive activities carried out by BNP-Jamaat. They carried out the vandalism after bringing their terrorists, like in 2014," he added.

GRAMEEN KALYAN

HC verdict on two petitions July 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed July 30 for delivering verdicts on two separate writ petitions that challenged the NBR orders over the reassessment of around Tk 600 crore as income tax from Grameen Kalyan for different tax years.

Grameen Kalyan is a nonprofitable and charitable organisation founded by Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar and Justice SM Maniruzzaman set July 30 as the date for delivering judgement after concluding the hearing on the matters.

Senior lawyer Sarder Jinnat Ali appeared for Grameen Kalyan while Assistant Attorney General Tahmina Poly argued for the state.

DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY
HATIRJHEEL
FARMGATE

With the curfew being relaxed for seven hours, Dhaka continues to see the usual gridlock on most of its major roads. The photo was taken near Nabisco Mor in Tejgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Stop repressive

FROM PAGE 5

people, who died at point blank shooting or at their own home or rooftop, who were not in the protest be held accountable.

"On the other hand, the judicial commission will only investigate the six death incidents that happened on July 16. So, are the rest of the lives worthless? Should we accept dying by bullets at home and accept it as regular normal events?" TIB executive director added.

He also questioned the recent arrests and charges against the protesters and called upon the government not to turn it into a "festivity" of arrest and harassing people.

Citing media reports, TIB said the students who participated in the peaceful quota reformation protests are constantly under the fear of arrest, abduction, and physical-mental torture.

"The responsible ones of the government, including the ministers, have admitted that no student has been involved in any atrocities. Despite this, illegal abduction of the students by the law enforcement agencies is nothing but a total disregard for the constitutional right to civilian protest and movement," said Iftekharuzzaman.

The anti-corruption watchdog also called upon the government to immediately stop repressive measures against the students and announce acceptance of all the students' legitimate demands.

In addition, TIB called for holding a dialogue with the full group of coordinators of the student movement to develop a mutually agreed road map for enforcement of the government's commitments.

He also said the shutting down of internet to repress the movement is a suicidal decision. TIB urged the government to immediately resume the internet service of mobile and broadband in full swing to revive trade and commerce and ensure the free flow of information.

The organisation said the arson attacks, which took place at important government establishments, raised questions on the respective government institutions' capabilities, preparedness, and integrity in safeguarding those establishments.

The TIB called upon the government to take corrective lessons from the prevailing crisis.

DMCH, volunteers

FROM PAGE 5

patients at DMCH from July 19 to July 21.

Dr Rezwan, who worked with Rhythm Blood Centre at DMCH, said, "Bullet-hit patients experience acute blood loss due to external bleeding and internal hemorrhage. Even to this date, many patients are in need of blood transfusion at DMCH.

Due to excessive need of blood from July 19 to July 21, blood transfusion of previously admitted patients could not be done on time."

Now, blood transfusion of regular patients, which have been rescheduled, and those with bullet-injuries, who have recently gone through surgeries, are being done, said officials.

A long queue of blood donors and relatives of patients was seen in front of DMCH's blood bank and blood transfusion centre in the last couple of days. To tackle the crisis, the hospital authority has opened blood exchange provision for the patients in need of blood.

A notice in front of the blood transfusion centre reads, "To ensure availability of blood for all patients, according to the directives of the director of DMCH, we would like to inform that from 16/07/24, if you do not find donors that match your patient's blood group, you can collect blood for your patient from the blood bank by donating a bag of blood of any group."

A duty doctor at the transfusion centre said, "Thanks to the donors and volunteers, we don't have a blood crisis anymore. But we are going through an excessive workload. We are working day and night to serve our patients."

Injured, they

FROM PAGE 5

Madrasa teacher Mohammed Osman is one such victim.

A bullet hit him while he was seeking shelter in a warehouse to escape the violence around 6:30pm on Friday at Rowshan's boarding area in Chattogram. "Cops shot me while I was running away from them," Osman claimed.

He was on his way to a mosque from his house for prayers.

Mukleshur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (north division), told The Daily Star that he was not aware of such an incident. "There was no instruction to open fire during clashes," he claimed.

Another injured victim, Mohammed Akash, was shot while he was going to work from his home after lunch on Friday, July 19.

The 17-year-old is still having difficulties speaking due to a bullet wound in his abdomen. "We are a low-income family and do not have enough money to bear the expenses of my son's treatment," his father, Mohammed Anam, said.

He claimed that he was not receiving all the necessary medicine from the hospital. "I have to buy medicine from a shop to treat my son," he added.

However, Brig Gen Taslim Uddin, director of CMCH, said they are providing all facilities, including medicine, to victims of quota reform protests as instructed by the health department.

No train

FROM PAGE 5

Inter-district bus and launch services continued to operate during the curfew break yesterday.

"We operated buses from 9:00am to 6:00pm on long-route," said Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan.

Around 31 launches left Dhaka Sadarghat Launch Terminal during the curfew break for different destinations including Chandpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Shariatpur and Bhola. Besides, 16 launches reached Dhaka amid the curfew break, said Alamgir Kabir, joint director general of BIWTA.

Agonising

FROM PAGE 5

Shahadat, 56, who works at a private company and the sole earning member of his four-member family, was arrested from his Pallabi residence by police early yesterday.

His daughter Fatema said, "My father did not engage in any violent activities. During the clashes across the city, he stayed at home. We came to the court in the morning but failed to see him."

Fatema's aunt said, "The family has no money or food at home. How will they survive?"

Yesterday, like them, over a hundred relatives of those arrested in the ongoing police raids gathered before the CMM court as the curfew remained relaxed from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

Fakhrul demands international probe into deaths

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday demanded an international probe into the casualties centring the students' quota reform protests, saying that the judicial investigation formed by the government is an attempt to cover up the bloodshed.

In a statement, he also demanded proper compensation for the families of those who were killed, including members of the police and Ansar.

The statement was issued condemning the arrest of opposition leaders, including Bangladesh Jatiyo Party Chairman and former MP Andaleeve Rahman Partho. Fakhrul alleged that innocent BNP leaders and activists have been arrested, and their houses raided by law enforcers as part of the government's "evil efforts" to cover up state-sponsored terrorism and shift the blame onto BNP.

Fakhrul said a judicial inquiry committee was formed at the behest of the government solely to investigate the killings of six people.

"It's tantamount to concealing all the killings. So, the people demanded an international investigation into all the incidents of violence and murders," he added. He expressed grief over the killings of members of the policemen and Ansar and conveyed deep sympathy to their family members.

All saboteurs to be brought to book

Says home minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Terming the nationwide arson and violence centring the quota reform protests shocking, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said every person behind the attacks will be identified and brought to book.

"It's a reminder of past tragedies in the country. The nation is stunned and surprised," he said, adding that all the attacks were carried out by a vested group in a pre-planned manner but law enforcers successfully thwarted their efforts.

The ongoing operation against the saboteurs will continue until all of them are identified, he said while addressing a meeting with law enforcement members and local representatives, arranged at Rangpur Shilpakala Academy.

The minister warned local Awami League leaders and activists to stay alert to foil any kind of anti-state activity.

He further pointed out the weakness of ruling party leaders and activists behind their failure to stop the anarchy and destruction carried out by miscreants.

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Interested bidders are requested to note the addendum (time extension for submission of bid) in the following RFP:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/027 (Addendum-1):** Provision of Cleaning and Janitorial Services with other Messenger Service for WHO Bangladesh under Long Term Agreement.

Extended deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 05 August 2024 (Dhaka time).**

2. **RFP/BAN/2024/028 (Addendum-1):** Engaging TV Media buying agency to disseminate the 3D animation on Breastfeeding through Bangladesh TV Channels.

New timeline for pre-bid meeting: **14:00hrs, 30 July 2024.**

Extended deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 05 August 2024 (Dhaka time).**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:
https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House- SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD
Road Circle, Noakhali
Phone No. 02334491092
E-mail: senoa@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.7587.190.09.141.24-2364 Date: 25.07.2024

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender-01)

e-Tenders are invited in National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Superintending Engineer, RHD, Noakhali Circle, Noakhali for the procurement of following works:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of works	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)	Tender opening (date & time)
01.	1004639	SE/Noakhali/NRD/PMP-Road/2023-2024/01 (Re-Tender-01)	PMP work for DBS Wearing Course & Protective works at Ch. 21st (P) Km. to 28th (P) Km. of Lakshmipur-Dattapara-Chatkhil Road (Z-1510) under Noakhali Road Division during the year 2023-2024.	27/08/2024 at 16:00	28/08/2024 at 12:30	28/08/2024 at 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@www.eprocure.gov.bd).

25.7.24
Ranapriya Barua
ID No. 005155
Superintending Engineer, RHD
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GD-72

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সময় বর্ধিতকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গত ১০-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ তারিখে "দি ডেইলি স্টার" পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ৫৭/২০২৪ তারিখ ০৭-০৭-২০২৪খ্রিঃ এর খোলার তারিখ অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তক্রমে আগামী ০১-০৮-২০২৪খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত করা হলো। তাছাড়া, দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তীত থাকবে।

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GD-74

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০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮

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০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭
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গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

Memo No: 46.02.5600.000.07.259.24-3652 Date:24/07/2024

Invitation for Tender (works)

Corrigendum for e-Tender Notice No.01/2024-2025

Due to unavoidable circumstances, e-tender notice No.01/2024-25 will be changed as follows

Name of work with Tender ID	Field name	Existing Date	New Date
Improvement of Kaccol-Intajgonj Bazar via Jamunabad Road by BC at Ch. 3850-5735m Under Upazila: Shibalaya, District: Manikganj [Road ID No: 356784012](salvage Cost : Tk.1159168.00) (Tender ID-1000824)	Document Last Seilling date & time	24/07/2024 16:00	31/07/2024 16:00
	Last Date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	25/07/2024 14:00	01/08/2024 14:00
	Closing Date & Time	25/07/2024 16:00	01/08/2024 16:00
	Opening date & time	25/07/2024 16:00	01/08/2024 16:00

It is mentioned that other terms and condition will be remain same.

28/9/2028
(ABM Khorshed Alam)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Manikganj.
E-mail: xen.manikganj@lged.gov.bd

GD-71

27 Dhaka city AL units dissolved

Inactivity during quota reform protests blamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The committees of 27 units under Dhaka city (north) Awami League was dissolved yesterday following allegations of inactivity during the recent quota reform demonstrations.

These units are part of the Dhaka-13 constituency, which includes Mohammadpur, Adabor and parts of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.

The decision was made at a views-exchange meeting held at Mohammadpur Suchona Community Centre last night, sources said.

The meeting was attended by local AL lawmaker and Textiles and Jute Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Dhaka city (north) AL president Sheikh Bazlur Rahman, organising secretary Azizul Haque Rana, and the presidents and general secretaries of the AL's thana and ward units, along with local councillors.

Participants at the meeting accused the activists of failing to take to the streets during the quota protests, despite directives from the AL to form a resistance.

This decision came at a time when senior leaders of the ruling party have publicly acknowledged the organisational weaknesses within the AL. The lack of presence by AL leaders, activists, and associate bodies in many parts of Dhaka city (north and south) during the quota protests highlighted these deficiencies.

According to an AL leader, this dissolution is only the beginning. More units and thana committees in Dhaka may face similar consequences.

Mahbubul Haque passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Prof Mahbubul Haque, a linguist, essayist, and researcher, passed away at the Dhaka Combined Military Hospital on Wednesday. He was 76.

Dr Haque had been suffering from heart and kidney complications.

A recipient of Ekushey Padak, he retired as a professor from the Bangla Department at Chittagong University.

He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter, and a host of well-wishers who mourn his death.

Dr Anwar Sayeed, a professor in the Bangla Department at CU, said Dr Mahbubul Haque was instrumental in writing textbooks for Bangla language and literature across primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels.

Haque's body will be brought to Chattogram today. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Jamiatul Falah Mosque after the Juma prayers. Later, he will be laid to rest at the graveyard on the CU campus.

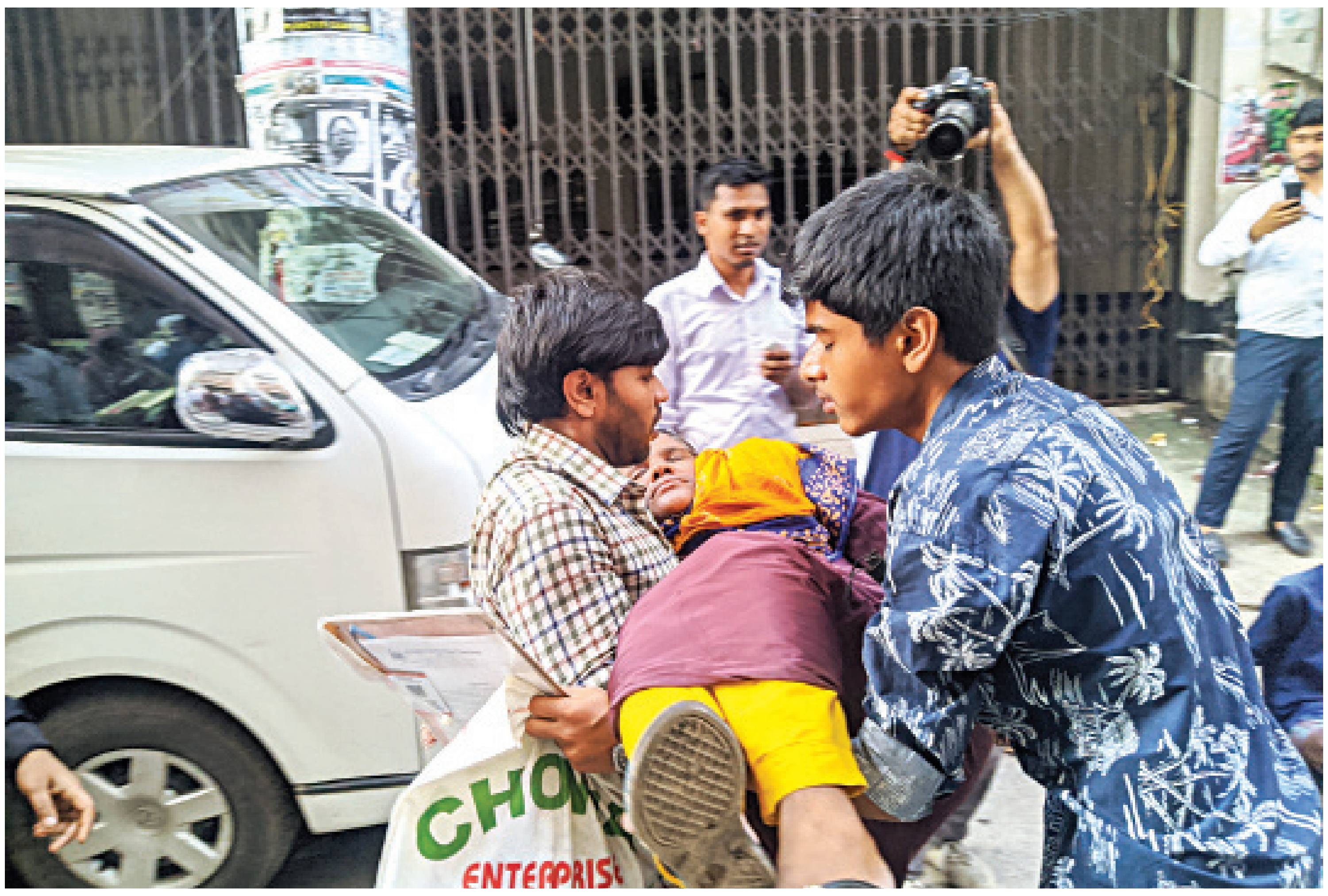
Born on November 3, 1948, in Modhukhali, Faridpur, Mahbubul grew up in Chattogram.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 26

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-30	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Nur Nahar Begum being carried to a hospital after she lost her consciousness in front of the CMM court in Old Dhaka yesterday. Her 20-year-old son Sakib Al Hasan was arrested by police on Monday night while he was going to attend his nephew's birthday in Gopibagh. PHOTO: STAR

DMCH, volunteers step up to save lives

Hundreds of bullet-hit patients get blood transfusion

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN *and* **SHAHEEN MOLLAH**

Md Ismail was waiting for passengers in his battery-powered auto-rickshaw in Jatrabari's Kajla area on July 18.

A procession of students demanding quota reform was marching along the road.

Suddenly, police opened fire at the protesters.

Ismail could have just disembarked from his vehicle and run for his life. But he couldn't abandon his auto-rickshaw as he recently bought it using all of his savings.

So, he tried to turn the vehicle around and drive to safety.

But before he could do so, several bullets pierced through his chest, hand and left leg.

He was bleeding so profusely that many thought he had already died. However, when some CNG drivers saw signs of life in his body, they quickly took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

According to duty doctors, eight bags of A+ blood had to be collected within two hours to save Ismail's life.

Ismail was only one of hundreds of patients who had received blood transfusion due to bullet wounds during the height of the quota reform protests.

According to an employee of DMCH's blood bank, "From Thursday night [July 18], we started receiving patients with bullet wounds, who were in urgent need of blood transfusion. The influx of patients was so high that we did not have any empty beds left for blood transfusion. Besides, our stocks of transfusion equipment dried up within a few hours."

"We along with some of our workers and doctors made makeshift beds with whatever we had and placed them in the motorcycle garage in front of the Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery and continued with blood transfusion," he added.

The DMCH authority started to make public announcements with megaphones so that volunteers step up and donate blood to incoming critical patients.

Thanks to the announcements, Sandhani Blood Bank, Rhythm Blood Centre and many people voluntarily came forward to donate blood.

According to Md Agibul Islam, an official of Sandhani Blood Bank stationed at DMCH, "The situation was simply unbelievable. We have seen hundreds of patients with bullet wounds. We have donated 115 bags of blood and donated numerous transfusion equipment. We could not even count the number of transfusion equipment we collected and donated."

"At one point, when we ran out of transfusion equipment at DMCH, we asked for help from common people. Many people purchased transfusion bags and equipment from wherever they could," he added.

Rhythm Blood Centre also donated 388 bags of blood to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Thanks to the donors and volunteers, we don't have a blood crisis anymore. But we are going through an excessive workload. We are working day and night to serve our patients.

A DUTY DOCTOR AT DMCH TRANSFUSION CENTRE

No train operations until 'situation improves'

Says rail minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) will not resume operation of passenger and freight trains until the "situation improves," Railways Minister Zillul Hakim told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, could not tell when the situation will improve and railway operations could be resumed.

"...We cannot allow the so-called protesters to destroy our trains, coaches," he said, adding, "All trains will be made operational once the situation is improved."

Rail ministry Secretary Humanun Kabir told The Daily Star and other media on Wednesday that they would resume operation of passenger trains on a very limited scale from yesterday.

But railway authorities on Wednesday night backtracked from the plan and decided not to resume train services.

Asked about the matter, the minister said the secretary might have taken the decision to resume operations "without considering everything".

The minister and BR director general returned to Bangladesh Wednesday evening after a foreign tour.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Agonising wait to see loved ones

People continue to gather at CMM court for a glimpse of arrested family members

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Everyone was ready to celebrate Surjo's sixth birthday at his Gopibagh residence on Monday night.

To take part in it, his 20-year-old uncle, Sakib Al Hasan, headed out from his Mir Hazaribagh home early that night.

But the celebration turned into a matter of great distress when the family learned that Sakib, an eleventh grader, got arrested by Wari police while on his way to his sister's house.

Yesterday morning, five of his family members, including Surjo, rushed to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the old part of the city to catch a glimpse of Sakib.

They could not see him till 5:00pm.

While crying for her son on the court premises, Sakib's mother Nur Nahar Begum lost her consciousness around 4:15pm. Ten minutes later, she regained her consciousness while being taken to a hospital.

"Where is my son?" she kept on screaming, "Police arrested my innocent son!"

"He did not do anything. Why was he arrested?" she continued.

Sakib's sister Rumi Akter told The Daily Star, "My brother is an intermediate first-year student in a college at Khilgaon. He did not join any protest. We feel so helpless."

Meanwhile, Sakib's elder brother Sakil, 24, desperately stared at the road in front of the court. Whenever a prison van left the court premises, he looked for Sakib in those.

Not just Sakib's family, many others who thronged the court premises faced a similar ordeal.

When this correspondent asked a sub-inspector working in the court, he said Sakib was sent to jail after police produced him before the court in a violence case filed with Wari Police Station.

He was among 260 arrestees produced before the CMM court yesterday in cases filed centring the recent violence in the city, according to the court record books.

Meanwhile, a seemingly distressed Fatema, 25, along with her two relatives, was waiting in front of the CMM court to see her father Mir Shahadat Hossain.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Stop repressive measures against the students: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Using force to suppress the recent quota reform protests and the unprecedented death and havoc exacerbated by the wrongdoings of the interested groups during the movement depict acute governance deficits, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday.

"We have become the witness of a massive loss of lives and mayhem on the state's properties revolving around the movement that has been described as peaceful by the government itself and this situation manifested the acute lack of good governance and accountability," TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said in a press release issued by the organisation.

TIB also emphasised that peaceful dissent and demonstrations to address demands are constitutional rights, not crimes.

It also mentioned that the peaceful movement with the logical demands suddenly turned into a violent and bloody one due the provocation of the high-level leadership of the government,

The anti-graft watchdog also raised the question whether the individuals responsible for the deaths of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

The judicial commission will only investigate the six death incidents that happened on July 16. So, are the rest of the lives worthless? Should we accept dying by bullets at home and accept it as regular normal events?

ARITRY'S DEATH

Court orders PBI to probe further

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Police Bureau of Investigation to conduct further investigation into the case filed against two former teachers of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College for instigating the suicide of ninth-grader Aritry Adhikary in 2018.

The two are former acting principal of the school Nazneen Ferdous and former morning shift in-charge Zinat Akhtar.

Yesterday was the sixth time the court was scheduled to deliver verdict in the case.

Judge Abdullah Al Mamun of Dhaka 12th Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court issued the order, said the victim's father Dilip Adhikary.

Dilip told The Daily Star that he appeared before the court to hear the judgment but the bench assistant informed him about shifting the date for judgement in the case.

Later, he came to know the judge had ordered further investigation into the case.

"I don't know when I will get justice for the death of my daughter," said Dilip.

The two accused, now on bail, were present at the court during yesterday's hearing.

Aritry was found hanging from the ceiling in her house in the capital's Shantinagar on December 3, 2018, hours after she and her parents were allegedly insulted by some teachers at the school.

The next day, her father filed the case with Paltan Police Station, accusing three teachers of instigating Aritry's suicide.

PATIENTS WITH PELLET, BULLET WOUNDS AT CMCH

Injured, they now stare at bleak future

SIFAYET ULLAH

Mohammed Rubel, a mason by profession, is the sole earning member of his family.

Instead of working, he now lies groaning in severe pain at the casualty unit of Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

His body bore the mark of recent violence -- shotgun pellet wounds in his lower chest -- inflicted during the quota reform protests.

Rubel, a 27-year-old from Rangunia upazila, lives with his five-member family in the Chandgaon area of the port city.

On July 19, around 8:00pm, he found himself caught in a clash between law enforcers, Chhatra League, and protesters in the Bahaddarhat area of the port city. He wasn't involved in the protests, he claimed.

He went outside to pay some bills when he came in the line of fire, he said.

His mother Jasmin Khatun was sitting beside him.

"My son is my only hope. But will he ever return to a normal life? What will happen to us if he doesn't?" she asked.

Rubel's case is one among many.

Alauddin Talukder, sub-inspector of Chattogram district police attached to CMCH, reported that eight individuals, including Rubel, are currently undergoing treatment at the hospital with bullet and pellet wounds. "They are now out of danger," Talukder said.

On Friday alone, 72 people with bullet and pellet wounds sought treatment at CMCH.

Over 30 injured individuals were admitted on Thursday, and five more on Saturday, according to Talukder.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Richest 1pc gained $42tn in a decade

Says Oxfam

AFP, *Paris*

The world's richest one percent increased their fortunes by a total of $42 trillion over the past decade, Oxfam said yesterday, ahead of a G20 summit in Brazil where taxing the super-rich tops the agenda.

Despite this windfall, taxes on the rich had plummeted to "historic lows", the NGO added, warning of "obscene levels" of inequality with the rest of the world "left to scrap for crumbs".

Brazil has made international cooperation on taxing the super-rich a priority of its presidency of the G20.

At this week's summit in Rio de Janeiro, the group's finance ministers are expected to make progress on ways to raise levies on the ultra-wealthy and prevent billionaires from dodging tax systems.

END ALL
GENOCIDE IS OUR RED LINE
Benjamin Netanyahu
FREE PALESTINE
LAND BACK
Pennsylvania Ave NW 300
Constitution Ave NW 300

Palestinian demonstrators display signs against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the offensive in Gaza, on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, US on Wednesday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Time to pass torch to 'new generation'

Says Biden in a historic Oval Office speech

REUTERS, *Washington*

President Joe Biden on Wednesday said abandoning his reelection campaign and endorsing his vice president, Kamala Harris, as the Democratic candidate was the best way to unite the country and save democracy, despite his ambition to win a second term.

Biden's announcement to end his presidential bid on Sunday followed a disastrous June debate with Donald Trump, which exacerbated questions about his ability to defeat the Republican candidate, or to serve another four years if he succeeded.

In his address to the nation from the Oval Office, the 81-year-old president said he believed he deserved to be reelected based on his record during his first term.

"But nothing, nothing can come in the way of saving our democracy. That includes personal ambition," he said. "So I decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new generation. That is the best way to unite our nation."

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said the speech was "barely understandable and sooo bad!" Shortly before speech, Trump laid into Democratic rival Kamala Harris in his first rally since she replaced Biden atop the ticket, signaling a bare-knuckled campaign ahead of the election.

ALASKA ZONE

US, Canada jets intercept China, Russia planes

AFP, *Washington*

American and Canadian warplanes intercepted two Russian and two Chinese bombers in international airspace near the state of Alaska on Wednesday, the joint US-Canadian North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said.

"NORAD detected, tracked, and intercepted two Russian TU-95 and two PRC H-6 military aircraft operating in the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone," it said.

The zone is a perimeter in which air traffic is monitored beyond the border of national airspace to provide additional reaction time in case of hostile actions.

Intercepts of Russian aircraft -- in which they are contacted visually by US or Canadian jets -- are relatively common in the area.

"Fighter jets from the United States and Canada conducted the intercept," NORAD said, adding that the bombers "remained in international airspace and did not enter American or Canadian sovereign airspace," and that their activity "is not seen as a threat."

ASEAN FMS' MEET IN LAOS

Russia, China FMs meet as talks get underway

AFP, *Vientiane*

The foreign ministers of Russia and China met yesterday on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) foreign ministers talks in Laos, Moscow and AFP journalists said.

The three-day meeting of the 10-member Asean bloc started in the capital Vientiane yesterday, with the South China Sea and the conflict in Myanmar high on the agenda.

Sergei Lavrov held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the meeting, Russia's foreign ministry said.

A schedule for yesterday's meeting seen by AFP showed that Lavrov was due to join Wang for a 40-minute "ministerial meeting". Lavrov left the venue at 7.15 pm local time (1215 GMT), without commenting on what the meeting had covered.

China is a close political and economic ally of Russia and Nato members have branded Beijing a "decisive enabler" of Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Their meeting came a day after Wang held talks in China with Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba.

Lavrov said before an earlier meeting with the foreign ministers of China and Laos that Asean was "one of the essential elements of a new, more just multipolar world order".

It must "ensure a stable and secure development, outside the blocs, of the Asia-Pacific region," he said.

IGN MINISTERS' MEETING AND RELATED
21-27 JULY 2024, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

The foreign ministers of Canada, India and the United Kingdom arrived in Vientiane yesterday to attend the talks as dialogue partners, AFP journalists said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is also expected to attend.

Asean ministers were thrashing out a common position on the civil war raging in member state Myanmar yesterday, a Southeast Asian diplomat at the talks said.

"Myanmar is not resolved yet but we're almost there," the source said, requesting anonymity in order to speak to the media.

A draft Asean communique seen by AFP said ministers "strongly condemned" the continued violence unleashed by the military's coup in 2021 that has plunged the country into turmoil.

The junta is struggling to crush armed opposition to its coup and has been barred from high-level Asean meetings over its crackdown on dissent.

It had previously refused to send "non-political representatives" to attend high-level Asean meetings but two senior bureaucrats are representing Myanmar at the talks in Vientiane.

The military's readiness to re-engage diplomatically was a sign of its "weakened position", the diplomatic source told AFP.

An ethnic minority armed group claimed yesterday that its fighters had captured a town and a military regional command in northern Shan state, although the junta denied the claim.

Typhoon Gaemi hits Chinese seaboard

Sinks freighter off Taiwan; 3 killed

REUTERS, *Beijing*

Typhoon Gaemi roared into southeastern China yesterday after sweeping across Taiwan, where it killed three people, triggered flooding and sank a freighter before barrelling west across the Taiwan Strait.

The typhoon, the biggest to hit China's eastern seaboard this year, made landfall at 7:50 pm (1150 GMT) in Fujian province, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The storm is forecast to unleash intense rainfall over much of China after fuelling severe weather from the Philippines to Japan's Okinawa islands with its giant cloud-bands which spanned most of the Western Pacific Ocean.

In Taiwan, the strongest typhoon to hit the island in eight years packed gusts of up to 227 kmph (141 mph) before weakening as it made its way across the island, according to the Central Weather Administration.

Some parts of southern Taiwan are expected to have recorded accumulated rainfall of 2,200 mm (87 inches) since Tuesday.

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Junta, rebels claim control of regional military HQ

AFP, *Yangon*

Myanmar's junta and an ethnic minority armed group both claimed yesterday they were in control of a town and regional military command in northern Shan state following days of clashes.

Fighting has rocked the town of Lashio, home to the military's northeastern command, since July 3 when an alliance of ethnic armed groups renewed an offensive against junta troops.

Local media run by the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) reported the group "fully captured the headquarters of the Northeast Military command in Lashio" yesterday morning and also captured Lashio town, home to around 150,000 people.

MNDAA spokesman Li Jiawen said the group's fighters had captured Lashio, without giving further details. But junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun told reporters the claim was "not true".

"The insurgents infiltrated the outskirts of Lashio so (the security forces) have been following and clearing them," he said, without giving details.

The northeastern command is located in the north of Lashio. A video uploaded to social media with a caption saying it was shot in Lashio yesterday morning showed deserted streets with no soldiers in sight.

AFP reporters geolocated the video to a site in the town around two kilometres (1.2 miles) from the command. Northern Shan state has been rocked by fighting since late last month.

Tanker capsizes off Philippines

16 of 17 crew members rescued; authorities battle to contain oil spill

REUTERS, *Manila*

A marine tanker carrying industrial fuel sank in rough seas off the Philippines yesterday, causing a large oil spill as coast guard rescuers search for a missing crew member, officials said.

Sixteen of the 17 crew members of MT Terra Nova have been rescued, Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista said, after the ship capsized off the coastal town of Limay in Bataan province. A search is underway for the missing sailor.

"There is already oil spill. Right now, we cannot dispatch our resources because of strong winds and high waves," Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista told a situation briefing.

The ship was carrying 1,494 metric tonnes of industrial fuel, Bautista said. Based on accounts of the rescued crew, Balilo said they encountered rough seas before the ship capsized.

Philippine coast guard spokesperson Armando Balilo told a separate briefing a 97-metre coast guard vessel had been deployed to search for the missing crew and combat the oil spill. Smaller vessels are waiting for the weather to clear before they could sail.

An aerial survey by the coast guard showed an oil slick spreading roughly two nautical miles and being driven by strong waves.

"We are racing against time. We will do our best to contain the fuel," Balilo said. He added the waters where the ship sank is close to Manila and there is "big danger" the spill could reach the capital. "That's part of the contingencies that we are preparing for," Balilo said.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had ordered the environment ministry to assess the damage and the country's environment ministry said its chief was on her way to Limay town.

An investigation is underway if the sinking is related to Typhoon Gaemi.

Boeing finalises 737 MAX guilty plea deal

REUTERS

Boeing finalised a guilty plea to a criminal fraud conspiracy charge and agreed to pay at least $243.6 million after breaching a 2021 agreement with the US Justice Department, according to a court filing on Wednesday.

The planemaker allowed potentially risky work at its factories and did not ensure key airplane record keeping was accurate or complete, the Justice Department said as it outlined why it believed the planemaker had violated the 2021 deferred prosecution agreement.

Boeing on July 7 agreed in principle to plead guilty to conspiring to defraud the Federal Aviation Administration after the government said the planemaker knowingly made false representations about key software for the 737 MAX.

Boeing confirmed on Wednesday it filed a detailed plea agreement with Justice Department.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, RHD
ROAD ZONE, RANGPUR
Phone : 02589962741
Email : acerangzn@gmail.com

Memo No.35.01.8549.013. 14.007.25-3371 Dated : 24-07-2024.

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concerned that e-Tender has been invited in the e-GP System Portal for procurement of following works. Interested person/ firms can see details by visiting the website http://www.eprocure.gov.bd.

Sl.	Tender/Proposal ID, Reference No & Name of works	Tender/Proposal Document last selling / downloading Date and Time :	Last Date and Time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission :	Tender/Proposal Closing &Opening Date & Time
1	**Tender ID No. 1004383.** **eGP-03/RHD/ACE/RZ/PMP-Roads/ 2024-2025.** Periodic Maintenance Program for Surfacing work by DBS-Wearing Course from 395^{th}(P) Km to 399^{th} Km, 400^{th}(P) Km, 401th(P) Km to 422th Km, 423th(P) Km of Dhaka (Mirpur)-Utholi-Paturia-Notakhola-Kashinathpur-Bogura-Rangpur-Beldanga-Banglabandha (N-5) Road under Road Division, Dinajpur during the Year 2024-2025	**27-Aug-2024 17:00**	**28-Aug-2024 11:45**	**28-Aug-2024 12:00**
2	**Tender ID No. 1004521.** **eGP-04/RHD/ACE/RZ/PMP-Roads/ 2024-2025.** Construction of Hard Shoulder at 441^{th}(P), 442th, 443th(P) & 452th(P) to 455^{th}(P) Km of Dhaka (Mirpur)-Utholi-Paturia-Notakhola-Kashinathpur-Bogura-Rangpur-Beldanga-Banglabandha (N-5) Road under Road Division, Thakurgaon during the year 2024-2025.	**27-Aug-2024 17:00**	**28-Aug-2024 12:00**	**28-Aug-2024 12:20**

N.B : This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted.

28/7/24

(Md. Suruz Mia)
ID No-007001
Additional Chief Engineer(CC),RHD
Road Zone, Rangpur

GD-73

DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 26, 2024, SRABAN 11, 1431 BS ● starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Star BUSINESS

Remittance collection disrupted

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The internet blackout for five days has affected remittance collection through banks and mobile financial services (MFS), which may put pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Bankers and officials of MFS providers said their remittance collection remained suspended from midnight of July 18, when the internet shutdown was imposed, to July 23, when broadband services were partially reinstated.

After the partial resumption of broadband internet services, overall remittance mobilisation by banks and MFS was lower than that on a regular day, they added.

Around $80 million to $100 million in remittances are sent to Bangladesh on a regular day, as per industry insiders.

The reserves stood at $21.78 billion as of June 30, according to calculations based on the International Monetary Fund's Balance of Payment Manual 6.

"We were unable to collect inward remittance for five days amid the internet shutdown but the remittance flow became normal when broadband internet was made available," said Selim RF Hussain, managing director of BRAC Bank.

Hussain, also the chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that overall remittance collection of July was likely to be low due to the overall situation but a better understanding can be availed next week.

A chief executive officer of a private bank said that liaison offices of the banks and MFS providers received remittance but were unable to send it to the local banks due to the internet outage.

However, some banks failed to collect remittance for the availability of banking services on a limited scale following the partial resumption of broadband internet.

Mercantile Bank faced difficulties in collecting remittance despite the resumption of broadband internet.

Its additional managing director, Mati Ul Hasan, said the bank faced problems collecting remittance as it could not access SWIFT due to slow internet connections.

There was a thin presence of visitors around the sea beach of Cox's Bazar yesterday as most tourists cancelled their bookings amidst the ongoing curfew. The situation is no different in other popular tourist spots like Tanguar Haor, Kuakata and Jaflong, with service providers and operators incurring huge losses.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

RMG exporters in a race against time to offset losses

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Local apparel exporters are in a frantic race to recover the losses they incurred during the latest spell of violence centring the quota reform movement and nationwide curfew, with international retailers and brands pressuring them to ensure timely delivery of goods.

Following the shutdown of factories and mills for four days, apparel exporters are planning to keep their production units open on Friday and pay overtime bills to meet lead times as they believe increasing productivity can offset a portion of losses.

Due to the situation over the past week, suppliers had to cancel hundreds of pre-scheduled meetings and factory inspections. They also could not communicate with foreign buyers due to an internet blackout, which began on July 18 and persisted until July 23.

The disruption in production, delivery and shipment took place at a time when the sector is struggling to recover its international trade.

Bangladesh's garment shipments fell 5.2 percent to $33.04 billion in the July-May period of the last fiscal year compared to the same period a year prior, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

International buyers are also piling pressure on apparel exporters to ship goods quickly as they have to fill their stores with new designs ahead of Christmas, the biggest retail sales extravaganza in the Western world.

The months of July, August and September are the peak time for the shipment of goods to be sold during Christmas.

"Buyers do not want to hear about any crisis. They want on-time delivery of goods," said a garment exporter who ships T-shirts and polo shirts to the US and Canada.

The global apparel supply chain has been struggling to recover from the severe fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and historic inflationary pressure on Western consumers.

It was dealt another blow this year in the form of the Red Sea crisis, which triggered commercial vessel operators to nearly double shipping charges.

The shipment of goods from Bangladesh to Europe is taking at least a month more than in previous times due to the crisis, which has forced commercial vessel operators to forgo the traditional route through the Suez Canal and navigate an additional 3,500 kilometres around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa.

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SAFEST UNDERGROUND POWER DISTRIBUTION

As such, in many cases, international clothing retailers and brands are asking for expensive air shipments so goods can reach stores timely.

If a kilogramme of garment is sent to Europe through waterways, it costs around 10 cents or less. But if the same shipment is sent through air from Dhaka airport, it costs more than $4.

An apparel exporter, asking not to be named, said: "I have planned to keep my factory open on Friday so I can ship goods timely and avoid work order cancellations and expensive air shipment."

However, another exporter said it would be difficult to cater to the work orders because of a raw material shortage, which happened because goods could not be transported to factories over the past week.

Faruque Hassan, managing director of Giant Group, said his American buyers could not place work orders during the past week. So, he sent two of his officers to the US so that he does not lose business.

It will take more than one month to overcome the losses of one week, he lamented, adding that port, customs and transport services should be expedited so the business can run smoothly.

"My buyers are yet to seek discounts or cancel orders, but I am sure that I have to make a lot of air shipments to meet deadlines," said another major exporter, seeking anonymity.

Overtime is the main measure to recover losses, he said, adding that customers are not willing to accept any delays in shipment as they need goods quickly to prepare for Christmas.

Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, said the primary textile sector, which includes spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing activities, lost $58.8 million over the last six days because of shutdown and internet blackout, which is about $9.8 million per day.

Although buyers are not cancelling work orders or seeking discounts, they are putting a pause on work orders or delaying them, which is creating a stockpile of yarn and fabrics in mills.

Khokon also sought a government waiver from extra port charges during the shutdown.

SM Mannan Kochi, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said he would sit in a meeting in a day or two with the international buyers and request them to not cancel work orders or seek discounts.

Tourism jolted by curfew

JAGARAN CHAKMA, MOKAMMEL SHUVO *and* **SOHRAB HOSSAIN**

Zahra Mayeesha, a 26-year-old private job holder, was preparing to return to Dhaka from a two-day vacation to Sreemangal with her husband on July 16.

However, due to the violence stemming from the quota reform protests, the couple decided to delay their journey back to Dhaka, hoping to leave after another day or two.

Those plans also fell through after the government imposed a nationwide curfew on July 20.

They had budgeted around Tk 18,000 for the two-day stay. As they were unable to return, their costs for hotel fare and food skyrocketed.

Further adding to their woes was the internet blackout starting on July 18, which forced the couple to go all over town hunting down an ATM that would dispense cash.

In the end, Zahra and her husband managed to book a flight to Dhaka on July 24.

The trip cost them around four times what they had estimated, with total expenses ultimately reaching around Tk 75,000.

The newlyweds were among a plethora of tourists who had found themselves stranded in various parts of Bangladesh over the past week.

Furthermore, most trips that had been planned by tourists over the past week were cancelled due to the volatile situation.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

A view of Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali.

"Neither tour operators nor tourists were prepared for the recent situation, which occurred suddenly," said Taufiq Uddin Ahmed, former president of the Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh.

He added that the unprecedented business shock had served as a bitter experience for tour operators, tourists, and tourism-centric businesses, but hoped the impact would not be felt for long.

Imranul Alam, owner of Tour Group BD, which operates houseboat services in Tanguar Haor in Sylhet, said July to August is the peak season for tourism in the region.

The natural beauty of Tanguar Haor as well as the tea gardens of Sreemangal and the waterfalls of Jaflong attracts many visitors during the period, he added. However, no tourists visited these spots over the past week after most bookings were cancelled.

According to Alam, there are at least 200 houseboats in Tanguar Haor, of which around 80 percent remain booked during the rainy season.

But all the houseboats are currently sitting idle, he said.

Alam said a houseboat brings in between Tk 3 lakh to Tk 5 lakh per week depending on size and facilities, estimating that houseboat operators and other service providers would miss out on at least Tk 2 crore in revenue.

Subrata Chakma, manager of Khasrang Hill Resort in Sajek, said around 200 tourists were stranded in the valley for three days after the government imposed a curfew and bus services from Khagrachhari to Dhaka were shut down.

However, law enforcement agencies helped the tourists leave by providing transport.

He said the tourists did not face any food shortages, but were worried as they could not contact family and relatives due to the internet blackout. Chakma added that there was no sign of nervousness among the tourists, who instead treated the situation as part of an adventure.

Businessmen in Kuakata lost around Tk 50 crore in revenue over the last seven days, estimated Rumman Imtiaze Tushar, president of the Tour Operators' Association of Kuakata.

Current account deficit narrows

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh's current account deficit dropped by half year-on-year to stand at $5.98 billion in the 11 months till the end of May of fiscal year 2023-24 as imports fell in tune with Bangladesh Bank's (BB) measures amidst a US dollar crisis.

Data made public by the central bank showed that the current account deficit was $12.02 billion during the same period a year ago.

The current account records a nation's transactions with the rest of the world—specifically net trade in goods and services, net earnings on cross-border investments, and net transfer payments, reads investopedia.com.

The current account may be positive (a surplus) or negative (a deficit); positive means the country is a net exporter and negative means it is a net importer of goods and services, it adds.

The downturn in exports continued in May and overall earnings declined 5.9 percent year-on-year to $37.34 billion in the July-May period of fiscal year (FY) 2023-24.

Meanwhile, import payments declined 12.6 percent year-on-year to $57.56 billion.

As a result, the overall trade deficit stood at $20.2 billion.

Bangladesh's current account turned negative in April of FY24 after the BB corrected export data and published new figures which showed that shipments had dropped instead of rising.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the deficit in current account increased further in May. It means that there is pressure on the country's external account, he said.

In July-May of FY24, Bangladesh suffered a $5.88 billion deficit in its balance of payments (BoP), down from $8.80 billion during the same period a year ago.

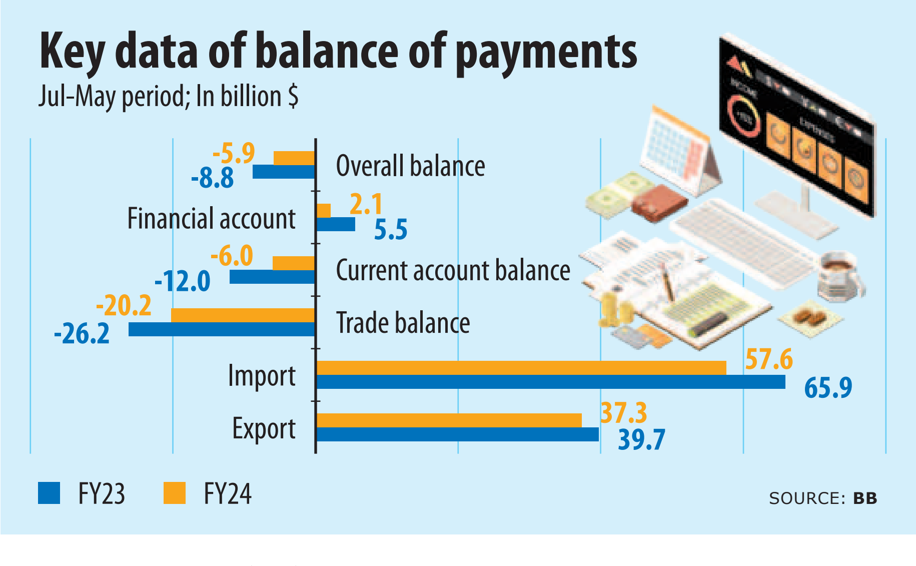
Hussain said the latest data indicates that there would be no relief in the upcoming days even though the financial account turned positive following corrections to the export data.

The BB data showed that the financial account stood at $2.08 billion during the July-May period of FY24, down from $5.51 billion in the same period of last fiscal year.

Hussain said Bangladesh received a good amount of foreign aid recently. As a result, the financial account showed a surplus.

"This might not continue in the upcoming days," he said.

"There is a lot of uncertainty regarding the economic situation in the coming days. This may adversely impact the country's exports and imports," he added.



SOURCE: BB

Stocks bounce back after a dip

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stocks in Bangladesh bounced back yesterday after falling by a large margin on the previous day.

The major index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), the DSEX, rose 1.17 percent from that on the day prior to settle at 5,413.64.

The market had been on a losing streak and it plunged another 95 points or 1.75 percent on Wednesday, when the bourse opened after an additional three days of general holidays.

The other two indexes of the DSE showcased a similar trend, with the Shariah-based DSES edging up 1.18 percent to 1,183.37 while the blue-chip DS30 growing 1.27 percent to 1,932.

Chittagong Stock Exchange also saw a rising trend as the Caspi, the main index of the premier bourse of the port city, went up 56.34 points, or 0.37 percent, to close at 15,415.37.

It is really tough to pinpoint the factors responsible for any day's rise, because such fluctuations are a part of the inner workings of the stock market, said an investor based in Dhaka.

After days of curfew and internet blackout, normalcy is gradually returning to the market with the restoration of broadband internet services, which helped investors regain confidence, he said.

The day's turnover, meaning the total value of shares changing hands at the DSE, stood at Tk 497 crore, a 212 percent rise from the previous day.

Block trades, meaning high volume transactions of privately negotiated securities outside the open market, contributed 4.4 percent to the overall turnover.

Port storage rent may be waived for unrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The government may consider waiving storage rent incurred for imported goods which could not be received and subsequently had to be left at ports for the unrest and curfew in the last few days, assured State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday.

The government had waived Tk 500 crore in similar charges during the pandemic shutdown, he said.

Importers need to submit proper documents to be eligible for the waiver, Chowdhury said, adding, "There is nothing to be worried about in this regard."

He made the comments at a ceremony organised by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) making the distribution of food items among jetty workers and financially insolvent people at a jetty of the Chattogram port.

Cargo and container delivery from the port yards gradually came to a halt on July 17 for violence centring the quota reform movement, which was followed by an internet blackout and curfew.

A lack of facilities to conducts goods assessment in the absence of internet and the countrywide curfew created a container congestion at the port.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Legal actions must follow due process

Allegations of crackdowns must be addressed

We're alarmed by the reckless and selective manner in which law enforcement authorities are going about arrests and cases in response to the recent violent clashes. While we certainly support appropriate legal actions to ensure accountability for the violence—which killed at least 156 individuals as per this daily, and destroyed or damaged dozens of public infrastructures and installations—it is absolutely essential that the accountability process remains unbiased and above board from start to finish. Otherwise, it may again slide into the kind of witch-hunt we saw after some of the protests and clashes in recent years.

According to a report by this daily, at least 3,425 people have been arrested in the five days between July 20 and 24 in connection with the clashes, attacks, vandalism, and arson witnessed in different parts of the country. Of them, 1,380 have been arrested in 154 cases filed in Dhaka, while at least 75 cases were filed in six other districts. A Prothom Alo report, which presents a more comprehensive picture of the cases and arrests over eight days across the country, says many of the arrestees were BNP-Jamaat men. This seems to align with the government's declared position, even before any investigation, that BNP was responsible for orchestrating the violence—an accusation that it denies, claiming that this is but a cover for the government to crack down on dissent. The truth of the matter will only be determined through fair and unbiased investigations.

The question is, will that at all be possible? Why are old cases against BNP-Jamaat men being revived? On what basis are the police and Rab preparing their lists of culprits? And why is so much of the investigative focus on vandalism in public properties? What about the indiscriminate police shootings that led to so many tragic deaths? In today's charged atmosphere, ensuring that all legal actions are conducted transparently and impartially is crucial to maintain public order and trust in the justice process. This will be harder to achieve if the present trends hold. Despite the government's admission that students participating in the quota reform protests were not involved with the vandalism and arson attacks—and its subsequent assurance that no legal action would be taken against them—a number of cases have been filed by police and even BCL leaders against students. This directly contradicts with the government's promise, and may further exacerbate prevailing tensions.

In all likelihood, many factors and elements may have been responsible for the unprecedented violence that has ensued since July 18, not excluding an outburst of popular anger over growing economic hardships, governance deficits and lack of democratic space in the country. Against this backdrop, it is paramount that the authorities do not indulge in mass arrests and cases targeting certain groups. Every arrest or prosecution must be grounded in solid evidence, and the judicial process must be transparent and free from political influence.

Jailed abroad for protesting

We urge UAE, our government to resolve the matter

The decision by the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal to sentence 57 Bangladeshi nationals to long prison terms is regrettable. The court gave life-term prison sentences to three Bangladeshis, 11 years' imprisonment to one, and 10 years' imprisonment to 53 others for protesting in public—which is prohibited in the UAE. While we do not condone the breaking of any law in foreign countries, we feel the context behind the actions of these Bangladeshis should be considered when deciding on their punishments.

Reportedly, on July 19, groups of mostly Bangladeshi nationals who live in the UAE carried out peaceful protests in multiple locations across the country in solidarity with the student protesters in Bangladesh. At that time, students on the streets of Bangladesh were being met with significant violence. Due to restrictions on the flow of information, these individuals were concerned about the plight of their fellow countrymen. Their own loved ones might have been put in harm's way. And so, their decision to peacefully protest was purely motivated by their own conscience.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) verified six videos of the protests. From these videos and others analysed by HRW, none of the protesters were found engaging in any violent acts or using language to incite violence. So, to grant them such long prison terms would be unreasonable. And as the HRW argued, the long prison sentences which appear to have come after only one court session and within 24 hours raises concerns about the fairness of the judicial proceedings.

The UAE court also ordered that the defendants should be deported upon the completion of their prison terms. While we accept that these Bangladeshis broke UAE's laws, we believe that deportation itself is punishment enough. For simply acting upon their conscience—and for demonstrating love for their countrymen—they should not have to spend the rest of their lives, or any significant portion of it, away from their own country and loved ones. So, from a human rights point of view, we request the UAE authorities to consider sending them back without imprisonment.

In that regard, we also urge Bangladesh authorities to immediately engage with UAE officials. In 2022, UAE became Bangladesh's third biggest migrant destination. In the first 10 months of the last fiscal year, Bangladesh received the highest remittance from the country. Migrants working in UAE have massively contributed in providing significant buffer to our economy at a time of serious crisis. Therefore, it is incumbent upon our government to not abandon them during their time of need. We hope this matter is urgently resolved through diplomacy.

Are we going to learn from our mistakes or keep repeating them?

What is said by the power and what is believed by the people may not be the same

THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

At the outset, we want to express our unambiguous condemnation of the mayhem created by ideologically and politically motivated groups whose aim was to destabilise our country, use the general discontent to instigate violence, and try to "topple the government"—as claimed by some ministers and which, if true, we vigorously denounce. This has made us realise that our country faces internal enemies opposed to our development and overall success. The destruction of public property and the setting of fire to essential government offices, transport facilities and part of internet infrastructure that greatly crippled trade, manufacturing and the daily life of citizens need to be highly condemned, and the perpetrators exposed and punished within the law. We in the media will assist the government in unearthing this move against Bangladesh. Those who opposed our birth in 1971 must be resisted, defeated and destroyed.

However, there is something else that concerns us. What we are witnessing right now is a classic struggle to control the narrative. The battle is on to direct the "truth" with all the state machinery at play to establish it. The regime beneficiaries are joining the parade to justify the charade. George Orwell, welcome to Bangladesh. Sorry you have been here many times before.

Slowly but surely, the story of the student movement for quota reform is fading from the official narrative and that of the BNP-Jamaat conspiracy to destabilise the country is gaining currency. In our view, both stories merit coverage and in-depth analyses. Why one is fading and the other is becoming bigger is because one suits those in power and the other embarrasses them. The blame game is on; demonising the other is in full swing. According to the new narrative, the students were mere "pawns" from the start and the whole episode was a part of an elaborate plan to destroy the economy and even "topple the government."

We are back to our old habit of never analysing events that shake us all and learn from our mistakes. How can we not immediately investigate how more than 150 people could be killed within a few days? We will perhaps never ask how the peaceful student movement went out of hand; why the government did not take steps in time to resolve the crisis; what triggered the students' anger; if there were any mistakes in handling the situation; why there were so many deaths; if the police made any attempt to control the crowd; if they had to shoot students when they did and if the shooting had to be so brutal; if bringing the "Razakar" issue was at all relevant; if anyone asked the students not to give that anti-liberation slogan (which they stopped the moment they realised their mistake); why with the deployment of BGB the death toll shoot up; if the BGB were given wrong instructions or if they turned out to be "trigger happy." On the political front, couldn't the Awami League—a party with such a long history and experience—have reached out to the students, instead of unleashing the Chhatra League to "take care of them"? Was the call to shoot at sight necessary, and did the police firing not inflame the situation further? Why were helicopters used to fire upon demonstrators? There are many more such questions that must be asked and answered through impartial investigation. Otherwise, we will never learn from our mistakes and keep on repeating them.

So much blood, such mindless brutality, such indiscriminate beating of students demanding quota reform, such twisting of narratives and dangerous and fallacious tagging of general students as "Razakars," attacking students in hospitals when they were receiving urgent medical assistance, such reckless shooting of demonstrators, and the ongoing indiscriminate arrest have created such ill feelings and deep suspicion that to expect an outright acceptance of the government's offer is unrealistic. Students' trust must be regained. A difficult task, but it must be attempted with sincerity and earnestness.

Simply put, there are two distinct phases of the story of the student movement for quota reform that we have been seeing till date. The first phase started on June 5, when the High Court set aside the government decision to abolish the quota system completely through a government circular, and lasted till July 19. The second phase started on July 19, when the BCL started violently attacking the demonstrating students that triggered violence, which spread throughout the country resulting in large-scale killings by the law enforcement agencies.

What distinguishes the two phases is violence: there was none in the first and tragically plenty in the second. The first was totally peaceful and in the hands of the students, and the second highly violent with political elements having entered the movement, especially members of Jamaat and Shibir (the student front of Jamaat) as emerging evidence indicates.

The government's attempt to totally ignore the first phase and put all its focus on the second is, we think, not reflective of what is uppermost in the public mind and, as such, not the most judicious of decisions. While attempt to unearth the deep conspiracy in the second phase must continue with utmost vigour—which we in the media will support and promote as long as it is evidence-based—ignoring the mistakes made in the first phase and not investigating how such a large number of deaths, injuries and physical assault on students occurred and not punishing those responsible will be a blunder of enormous proportions.

When the movement started, it was only about quota reform. By the time it ended, many issues became added due to the government's incompetent and harsh handling of the situation. When there was not a single death, not a single instance of violence, when thousands of students were holding peaceful demonstrations on their respective campuses throughout the country, when students were inviting quota reform talks—that was the time when any government would have reached out to the demonstrating students. Ours did not.

Instead, we saw more than 150 deaths, including that of demonstrating students, BCL cadres, police and the general public,in less than a week—highest ever in the history of independent Bangladesh—more than 3,000 injured (both highly conservative figures), and widespread beating of students and demonstrators under one guise or another. The government and the ruling party should not underestimate the depth of this feeling of the students of having been seriously wronged.

Our reporters and photographers met so many parents, relatives and guardians who have lost their dear ones. Their stories bring out the deepest sense of anguish and disgust at the needlessness of it all. So many of the students have such vivid memories of friends and fellow demonstrators being killed or severely beaten up and injured by BCL and law enforcement members; that emotional and psychological wound cannot be expected to be healed overnight. That healing will occur only if the subsequent attitude of the authorities is one of genuine understanding, concern and care backed by a credible commitment of total exoneration of the students from legal harassment. This needs to be so because many quota demonstrators of 2018 had to face police investigation, court appearances and bail formalities for years, at significant legal expenses that many could not afford. Students know it and remember it, and fear its repetition.

That anti-state elements riding on the shoulder of only a two-week-old student movement can destabilise us raises concerns as to how this could happen under a government that has been in continuous and unquestioned authority for the last 15-plus years. That a pro-liberation government, enjoying supreme power for a decade and a half, suddenly finds that anti-liberation forces have become such a threat that it needs the army to save itself—police, Rab and BGB having all failed—worries us immeasurably and raises the question as to whether the ruling party and the government need to revisit their policies and actions of the last 15-plus years, whether or not its own high-, mid- and lower-level leaders have served the party well, and whether cronyism and corruption inside the party needs a thorough looking into.

This period needs to be assessed as much for the sake of the people as for the ruling party itself. In our view, it was during this period that the greatest party in the history of Pakistan and Bangladesh combined, and the one that lay at the heart of all democratic movements here, lost its way and became a money-making machine whose stature at the grassroots level is a pale shadow of its glorious past; whose leaders frankly admit that their survival is guaranteed only by muscle power and no moral power of ethics, honesty, patriotism, and values of our freedom struggle.

It was during the same period that saw greatest harm being done to the most pivotal institution of democracy: free and fair elections. The last three elections—2014, 2018, and 2024 (the last one was a bit more competitive as AL dissenters were allowed to participate)—were mere rituals where voters were the least important elements, far outweighed by police, bureaucracy and money, and muscle power of the ruling party cadres. The "shooting in the foot" policy of BNP to boycott elections made election manipulation easier by the rulers.

The obvious result of controlled elections was a controlled parliament that never saw any lively debate on any of the vital challenges that the country faces.

As power consolidated and elections became largely predictable, the bureaucracy, police, intelligence community and all other state institutions—in fact, everyone holding government jobs—knew which side of the bread was buttered and acted accordingly. Favouritism and cronyism in business led to Bangladesh's corruption index hitting the roof and the rich-poor gap widening as never before. We saw the gradual but alarming erosion of accountability of state institutions, transparency of administrative processes, and politicisation of institutions of the state that crippled good governance.

None of the above crucial questions will be asked and the business-as-usual attitude of the "enemy" doing it all will dominate our thoughts and narrative. The only way the situation will be handled will be more arrests of the same clang and repetition of what we have heard over the years.

At this crucial moment, we must understand that "what got us here will not take us there" (borrowing from the title of Marshall Goldsmith's book), meaning to the higher level of development. We must change the way we think, act, and engage with people, especially with the younger generation. They are smarter, more knowledgeable, more tech-savvy, and far more confident than we ever were. They are citizens of the 21st century and will live and compete in the world of artificial intelligence. Our prime minister wants to build a "Smart Bangladesh." We all support her in that effort. But is killing, torturing, injuring, threatening and making students live in fear any way of making them proud participants of that "Smart Bangladesh"? We must be among the biggest fools in the world to think that we can beat them, torture them and frighten them into submission. We have to win their hearts and minds and not bang their heads. The way we have handled the student protesters of the quota reform movement will greatly exacerbate brain drain. The AI world will make a global village of talents and no oppressive measure can hold them back.

Focusing on the narrative of "conspiracy" and ignoring the one that involves students and the many lives lost may give some respite, but it is no way of creating confidence among the students about our future here. We really need to change our mindset. Otherwise, we will keep on repeating our mistakes. And given the fast-moving and competitive world, we are not likely to get too many chances.

We are back to our old habit of never analysing events that shake us all and learn from our mistakes. FILE PHOTO: **STAR**

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

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The shifting political field and the price of permanent war

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It has been a week in almost complete shutdown. Once again, a reasonable and peaceful student movement has ended in grotesque violence. This time, however, it seems that everyone bit off more than they could chew. The landmark verdict is now out: a 5 percent freedom fighters' quota, 1 percent for indigenous communities, and 1 percent for people with disabilities and those identifying as third gender. It has come at a hefty price; media reports suggest close to 200 deaths nation-wide, many of them students. The campus attacks, raids, beatings, and shootings definitively turned the tide against the government, and a dangerous section was clearly ready to seize the moment. The ensuing chaos has left thousands injured, massive destruction of public property and infrastructure, and over 4,000 arrests.

Many (including the BCL) expressed their solidarity with the movement just before the verdict. Many veteran political leaders and cultural activists who had become ensnared by the misconceived and unfortunate "Razakar" rhetoric and deemed it an anti-state, anti-Liberation War movement just days ago have now declared the verdict a victory for all. How fast the tables have turned! Such a dramatic reversal should make us wary for two reasons: one, our senior leadership's repeated inability to read the political field; and two, the foreclosure of any serious conversation about the issue of quota reform itself.

We are a nation with selective amnesia. The students taking to the streets today have known nothing but one-party rule. They have not seen the fight against autocracy or the AL-BNP cycle, and 1971 is in the distant past. But they did grow up with Shahbagh, no-VAT, quota-reform, and the fight for road safety. A new form of student politics has taken shape over this cascade of movements that explicitly rejects the party/student politics of old, which for them represent only campus violence and corruption; this is a generational shift that our leaders are still failing to grasp. Each of these movements has built on the last, producing leaders and carrying visceral memories. They remember being crushed and met with sheer indignity every time, left alone to fend for themselves in the face of repression, being tagged as pawns of enemy forces, and the repeated hijacking of their causes. Above all, they have learned to trust no one.

What did our students demand? The chance to have a dignified and secure life. What did they receive? The same delaying tactics, the inevitable othering and the wrath of the foot-soldiers. Only those with permanent blinders could see nothing but "BNP-Jamaat" when looking at the thousands of committed students; they could not see that it is the ruling party's intransigence and trigger-happiness that always provides an opening for their enemies. This regime has been in power for 15 consecutive years. No other party can claim as much experience in parliament and on the streets. Is it not enough time to start relying on consent over coercion? Is it not easier to defeat your enemies in parliament than to be permanently on the warpath against some shapeshifting enemy?

The people, state and civil society form an integral triad, and each node must understand their position within the shifting political field. Gone are the days of ideologically-led political movements. For over two decades, we have been witnessing a global wave of populist mobilisations, from the Arab Spring to our own Shahbagh uprising. These movements reflect a loosely-organised, issue-based transversal politics, often embodying majoritarian sentiments. Articulated as contests between "the people" and some "power elite," such sentiments can sway from left to right at any time and are just as amenable for absorption by the forces of "un-civil" society. State and civil-society institutions must be prepared to confront such sentiments with care or risk their weaponisation into the kind of all-out war we witnessed on Friday. Middle-class desperation has now been displaced by a "lumpen" class angst against a state/regime that many feel permanently excluded from, and who care nothing for mega structures. What allows such a rage against the machine and how it is being moulded are structural questions we need to address.

In all this madness, we have forgotten to take the significance of the quota-reform debate seriously. It is heartbreaking to see our students ready to die for the chance to be part of the same state apparatus that sees them as disposable, to join the same civil service whose corruption and incompetence we endlessly vilify. Quota or not, thousands of our graduates will not get government jobs; what will they do? Will our public universities be factories for producing clerks, still committed to the colonial ideal of the wage-earning middle class running the state? When will we dream of becoming scientists, artists, even industrialists?

It is also unfortunate to see a whole generation believe in the neoliberal magic of "meritocracy." From the beginning, misogynistic, majoritarian attacks on quotas for women and minorities had slipped in alongside the demand for reform. The fetishisation of "merit" allows those who lose out among the middle classes and dominant/majority groups to blame their misfortunes on the apparent preferential treatment of others. This is a convenient fantasy. "Merit" depends at least as much on environment and opportunity as hard work and talent, and the former are not distributed equally. Only 2 percent quotas for the structurally disadvantaged is not a fitting end for a "movement against discrimination." Based on what data did we dismiss the quota for women? Since when do all districts offer the same opportunities? Should such decisions be so amenable to popular pressure?

That is a fight for another day and by other means. This movement-repression cycle cannot be our only recourse, letting the space for democratic dialogue shrink even further. Toppling a government cannot be our ultimate yardstick for success. The state must learn to negotiate without unleashing its forces or cowering to majoritarian sentiment. All the millions invested in intelligence and surveillance technology could not prevent these deaths and the destruction of public property. Perhaps now this regime will understand that they cannot claim a monopoly over the nation-state, that their history and demonstrations of development do not automatically entitle them to reign.

Most of us are neither in positions of power nor capable of swindling banks to build a second home elsewhere. Some of us are sticking around, trying to build institutions and communities instead of giving in to despair. Those who claim to govern must realise that their power is on lease, no matter how long the terms. There are tectonic shifts happening beneath us. Many of our citizens are desperate and at the tipping point. They have no regard for their personal safety and are ready to unleash with the slightest instigation. Their collective agency is up for grabs for a favourable ideology or for the highest bidder. All of us need to wisen up while we still can. Many of us still believe in the People's Republic of Bangladesh. We have only one nation and only one lifetime to fix it.

FILE PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Is it not easier to defeat your enemies in parliament than to be permanently on the warpath against some shapeshifting enemy?

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IMF's assessment and the real risks for Bangladesh's economy

Dr Rizwanul Islam
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RIZWANUL ISLAM

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) occasionally makes headlines in Bangladesh, the most recent being in June this year. But that already seems to have been long ago. And this is simply because the work they did at that time appears to have been overshadowed—to some extent, at least—by recent events.

It may be recalled that against the backdrop of multiple challenges (viz., balance-of-payment deficit, depletion of foreign exchange reserves, depreciation of the taka, and rising inflation) faced by the economy, the government went for the easy solution of a loan from the IMF. And a credit programme for $4.7 billion was agreed upon in January 2023. The loan, whose duration is 42 months, is to be disbursed in seven instalments—subject to satisfactory review by the agency. In June this year, the second review was successfully completed and the third tranche of $1.15 billion was released.

The loan, of course, came with conditionalities that include attaining a certain level of foreign exchange reserves (four months' imports), raising tax revenues, periodic adjustments in the prices of petroleum products and electricity, scrapping of the fixed interest rate regime, moving to market-determined exchange rate, etc.

As part of the second review of the credit programme, the IMF came up with a risk assessment for the economy in which nine risk factors, local and international, have been identified. Such assessments are useful even under normal circumstances. And when the going gets tough, it is more so. The assessment, therefore, is welcome.

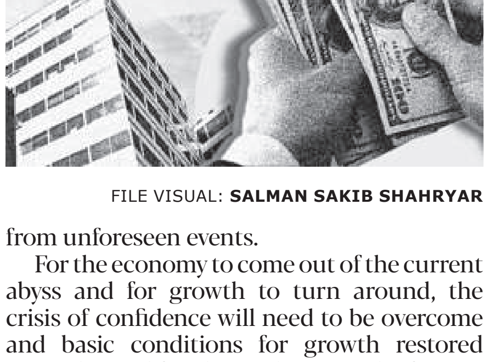
However, given the multifarious challenges, the complexity of the situation, and expectations from a partner like the IMF, a few questions arise. What, for example, is the value of the exercise? Does it remain focused on the key issues and attach priority to them? How well do they address the key challenges faced by the economy? More importantly, have the real risks been identified and ways of addressing them explored? While some of such risks are structural (to be discussed presently), some come as unforeseen shocks—like the current situation—whose roots are also structural.

Interestingly, risk assessments of the kind done by the IMF are not usually done by the government, although it would have been desirable to have a homegrown exercise reflecting the national context and priorities more closely.

To be useful, a review of challenges and risks faced by the economy would have to be cast against their genesis and evolution. It is by now well-known that wrong policies were pursued for several years in the areas of exchange rate determination and interest rates. They helped keep imports as well as capital cheap. Exporters were compensated in various ways. Credit at a low rate of interest encouraged capital flight. Uncertainty in the business environment led exporters to park their export earnings abroad.

Not only were wrong policies pursued, necessary corrective measures—and some half-hearted—were adopted with considerable delays. Even now, the uncertainty in the policy environment has not been overcome completely.

The situation was compounded by political economy forces and interests of influential groups. Valuable time was lost in 2023 in the run-up to the national election. Even after that, concrete steps to reform exchange rate determination were taken only in May 2024. The real risk for the economy lies in such policy inertia of the government and continuation of protection for its cronies. Add to that the possibility of sudden shocks from unforeseen events.



FILE VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

For the economy to come out of the current abyss and for growth to turn around, the crisis of confidence will need to be overcome and basic conditions for growth restored urgently. And for that to happen, the foreign exchange reserves will have to start rising, which, in turn, would depend critically on not just export flows but also on prompt and full return of the export proceeds and normal flow of remittances. Only then will the regime of import compression give way to normal business and growth. That is also needed to fight inflation, which is an issue of immense concern.

The rate of inflation has been rising steadily since 2021, and the annual inflation rate has been hovering near a double digit figure for some time. Inflation can be caused by a variety of factors operating from demand and supply sides, and Bangladesh is no exception. In fact, the recent IMF review of the economy (June 2024) acknowledges this and estimates that half of the recent price increases can be attributed to the "pass through" effect of exchange rate depreciation. And yet, the organisation recommends monetary tightening as the measure needed for fighting inflation.

The Bangladesh Bank has abandoned the policy of fixed interest rates—even though the decision came later than warranted. It started a policy of monetary tightening in 2023 and is continuing that stance. But that does not seem to be producing the desired effect on the inflation rate. The proponents of this approach are mentioning the delay in the adoption of this policy as a reason for its ineffectiveness, and are suggesting further tightening. Under the loud chorus produced by this group of policy analysts and the international backers of the approach, voices for pragmatic solutions to the problem are getting drowned. We are forgetting that even economists like Olivier Blanchard and Ben Bernanke are attributing inflation to both demand and supply side factors.

In Bangladesh, it has of late become customary to cite other countries and say that they have succeeded in containing inflation by raising the policy rate and Bangladesh has not because of not using the instrument at the right time. While doing so, we forget that one size does not fit all. Among the major developed countries, for example, the success the US has achieved is not matched by countries of Europe and the UK. Also, the latter have not been able to avoid slowdown in their economies and recession in the process. Even in the case of the US, the extent to which monetary policy has contributed to the success in fighting inflation is being debated by researchers. In India, although the policy rate has been raised substantially in 2022 and 2023, it did not have an adverse effect on credit growth because of a variety of factors.

While dealing with macroeconomic issues of immediate importance, major structural issues like employment—especially jobs for the youth and first-time job-seekers, and livelihoods of the low-income people have either been ignored or relegated to the category of "also." The potential risk from such a narrow focus has been ignored by the external agencies as well as by the government. And when issues come to a fore, the usual response is to bury them under the refrain of "destructive forces." The danger of doing so is illustrated by the shock inflicted on the economy by the current situation.

Unfortunately, the Bangladesh government has never come up with a clear thinking on either the macroeconomic issues like inflation, or on jobs and livelihoods of the poor and low-income people and approaches to fighting such evils. The real risks here are continued dependence on (or adoption of) "policy advice" from outside, adoption of half-hearted and one-sided measures, ignoring the potential shocks arising out of deeper discontent, and the lack of a clear and coherent approach on the part of the government.

For the economy to come out of the current abyss and for growth to turn around, the crisis of confidence will need to be overcome and basic conditions for growth restored urgently. And for that to happen, the foreign exchange reserves will have to start rising, which, in turn, would depend critically on not just export flows but also on prompt and full return of the export proceeds and normal flow of remittances. Only then will the regime of import compression give way to normal business and growth.

Bangla music loses its REBELLIOUS ICON

The iconic musician passed away at 6:50am on Thursday from a massive heart attack and multiple organ failure. The 63-year-old was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Virginia, where he was supposed to perform at a show.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"I cannot believe that we are seeing scenes like this on the streets of Bangladesh, our own people being treated like this, unbelievable," wrote Shafin Ahmed four days ago on his Facebook profile. Little did he know that this would be the last visual he would have of his beloved motherland. All his life, Shafin had raised his voice against whatever he perceived as injustice– which also led him to leave the band he helped make legendary, Miles.

The iconic musician passed away at 6:50am on Thursday from a massive heart attack and multiple organ failure. The 63-year-old was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Virginia, where he was supposed to perform at a show. However, right before the show, he fell ill and at one point, becoming unconscious in front of the organisers. According to his brother, Hamin Ahmed, Shafin had been battling heart issues for the past 15 years, overcoming multiple cardiac-related incidents.

The news of Shafin Ahmed's demise came as a total shock to Bangladesh's cultural sector. "I still cannot believe this," said Runa Laila to The Daily Star. "He was a musician of the highest level and was extremely popular among the youth. Owing to his parents, he had an unmatched musical pedigree and could sing Nazrul Sangeet as well as his own band compositions."

Miles keyboardist Manam Ahmed, who shared the stage with Shafin for decades, said, "I am lost for words. The memories of the good times that we spent together are all rushing back to me," he said, sharing that some of Manam's greatest compositions were given life by Shafin Ahmed. "***Dhiki Dhiki, Chaad Tara*** *and* ***Jala Jala*** were only a few of the songs that we collaborated on. May he rest in peace."

Fahmida Nabi told The Daily Star that she was supposed to collaborate with Shafin for a song in the coming days. "He was different, he had a swagger unique to only him. He was instantly recognisable to the people of Bangladesh, and had qualities of both Kamal Dasgupta and Firoza Begum in his voice."

Lyricist Latiful Islam Shibli believes that Shafin Ahmed's demise is the biggest blow to Bangla rock music since the death of Ayub Bachchu. "Besides being one of the best musicians in Bangladesh, he was a fashion inspiration for millions of young people, including me when I was growing up. His aviator shades, iconic hat and panache-filled shirts are fashion statements that only he could pull off."

"I can talk about hours about his groovy bass-playing, and how difficult it actually is to do that and sing at the same time," said Fuad Almuqtadir. "Sting sang and played bass, but his bass line was not nearly as complicated as when Shafin *bhai* did it, it was like listening to two people performing at the same time, I will miss him so much."

Musicians all around the country poured their tributes through limited internet access in the country yesterday, including James, Arnob, Rafa, Jon Kabir, Sharmin Sultana Sumi and Artcell, among others.

Born in Kolkata's Anthony Bagan Lane to legendary cultural duo of Kamal Dasgupta and Firoza Begum, Shafin started his musical journey at the age of nine. While he was trained in classical and Nazrul sangeet by his parents, Shafin, along with his elder brother Hamin, became exposed to Western music while studying in the UK, which led to the formation of Miles.

On his near four-decade stint in Miles, Shafin composed and sang evergreen hits like ***Phiriye Dao, Dhiki Dhiki, Jala Jala, Chand Tara Shurjo,*** among numerous others. He was also successful as a solo act, producing and voicing songs like ***Aj Jonmodin Tomar, Harano Shukh***and ***Legend.***

Shafin had left Miles on three separate occasions, the last of which was in 2021 due to disputes with his brother, Hamin Ahmed. He had continued performing as "Shafin Ahmed– Voice of Miles"– for the remainder of his career. Despite said disputes, Shafin performed and collaborated on every album of the band, starting with ***Miles*** (1982) and progressing to ***A Step Farther*** (1986), ***Protisruti*** (1991), ***Prottasha*** (1993), ***Prottoy*** (1996), ***Proyash*** (1997), ***Probaho*** (2000), ***Protiddhoni*** (2006), ***Proticchobi*** (2015), and ***Proborton*** (2016). Besides being a musician, he was an adept cricketer in his youth. He also forayed into politics, being elected as the vice chairman of Jatiya Party in 2021.

Shafin Ahmed's name will be synonymous with Bangla rock music as an instantly recognisable icon, who never shied away from speaking his mind.

"He was a sensation amongst the youth, a musician of high pedigree"

Runa Laila

"We made some magical memories together, I am in shock"

Manam Ahmed

"He was a fashion icon for youths when I was growing up"

Latiful Islam Shibli

"I am grief-stricken, he will live forever with his music"

Fahmida Nabi

"The way he played bass and sang, it was like seeing two people perform"

Fuad Almuqtadir

NEWS

Indian union govt sole authority

FROM PAGE 12

External affairs ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal told a weekly media briefing, "I can confirm that we have received a diplomatic note, a communication from the Bangladesh side protesting the comments made by the West Bengal CM. It is essentially on the lines described in the reports you must have seen today."

He cited the Indian constitution to point out that the union government has the sole authority regarding foreign affairs.

Asked about India's stance on the quota reforms agitation and the violence, Jaiswal said India considers the situation as "an internal development of that country".

Asked about anti-India slogans raised during the protests, he said, "Our ties with Bangladesh are very strong and warm ... we are hopeful that the situation in Bangladesh will return to normal very soon."

Jaiswal said that over 6,700 Indian students returned from Bangladesh since the violence erupted and mentioned the "excellent cooperation from the Bangladesh government" in repatriating them safely.

Mamata in a post on X also said, "Hundreds of students and others are returning to West Bengal/ India, from the trouble-torn Bangladesh. I have asked our state administration to render all help and assistance to the returnees ..."

"I cannot make any comments on the situation in Bangladesh as it is another country and only the Indian government has the right to speak about it. But if helpless people (from Bangladesh) knock on Bengal's doors, we will give them shelter," she said.

Quota reform protesters

FROM PAGE 12

organisers and announce a programme, Asif said.

Asif told The Daily Star in the afternoon that they will announce a fresh programme after a meeting with other leaders of the protests.

Around 7:15pm, Asif said he and Nahid were cornered by the law enforcement agencies, adding that they would hold a press briefing between around 8:00pm to 9:00pm.

This correspondent saw a policeman in uniform at the entry to the hospital around 9:00pm.

On the third and seventh floors, at least seven men introducing themselves as detectives did not let this correspondent talk to them.

The men were in front of the two cabins, where Nahid and Asif were being treated.

Wishing for anonymity, one of the men said, "We have strict instructions from higher authority to restrict the entry of anyone in these cabins.

Abdul Hannan Masud, a coordinator of the protests, said on the phone that he and others were also stopped by the men.

"We left the hospital without meeting with Nahid and Asif," he said.

On Saturday, Nahid was picked up allegedly by law enforcers from a house in the capital's Sabujbagh. He was found the next day with injuries.

Asif earlier said he was abducted and kept in confinement for five days.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they were not involved in the matter.

Mohibullah Khandakar, a doctor at the hospital, said policemen in plain clothes had been at the hospital's waiting room since morning.

He denied that the internet had been disconnected.

Putin meets Syria's Assad amid calls to defuse tensions with Turkey

AFP, *Moscow*

President Vladimir Putin held talks with Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad in Moscow amid calls for Russian mediation to cool tensions between Turkey and Syria.

Wednesday's talks between the pair -- the first since since March 2023 -- come after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan flagged the potential of a three-way meeting to discuss normalising ties between Ankara and Damascus.

Putin highlighted his concerns over the situation in the Middle East, which he said was "tending to escalate," in opening remarks between the pair which were aired on state television yesterday.

Moscow is Syria's most important ally, having effectively saved Assad's government through its military intervention in 2015 during a civil war.

"I am very interested in your opinion on how the situation in the region as a whole is developing. Unfortunately, it is tending to escalate, we see this. This concerns Syria directly," Putin said.

Assad said his visit to Moscow was a "very important" opportunity to discuss "events that are taking place today in the world as a whole and in the Eurasian region", according to a translation into Russian.

Arrives a show like no other

FROM PAGE 12

ensuring the safety of the ceremony and events throughout Paris.

Against the backdrop of the War in Ukraine, athletes from Russia and Belarus will compete as neutrals. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict in Gaza, coupled with France's significant Muslim and Jewish populations, has led Israel to implement unprecedented security measures for its teams.

While the essence of any Games is that it brings many nations to a focal point, promising several records and milestones, this edition of the Olympics in Paris could be a bit more than just that.

The Argentina-Morocco game in Saint Etienne in the men's football tournament, which began two days before the opening ceremony, had already seen chaotic interruption from the crowd which led to the game being suspended for about two hours before Morocco were declared eventual winners.

Meanwhile, claims of a spying scandal using drones have been made by the New Zealand women's football authorities, accusing unauthorised surveillance during a training session from their Canadian rivals. Both these incidents are now being investigated by the relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, New Zealand women's football has accused their Canadian rivals of unauthorized drone surveillance during a training session. Both this incident and the disruption of the Argentina-Morocco match are currently under investigation by the relevant authorities.

The logistical and security challenges reflect a world grappling with uncertainty and conflict. Yet, as Paris stands on the brink of hosting the 33rd Summer Olympic Games, the famed city promises a spectacle unlike any other.

ACC fails to estimate value

FROM PAGE 12

According to the progress report, the ACC could not determine the value of some assets found during the investigation. Their records will be collected, and the value will be measured by engineers or experts if necessary.

Of the assets, Benazir has 25 acres of leased land in Sualak Mouza of Bandarban Sadar upazila, two plots of 14 kathas in the name of Jissan Mirza in Dosarpara of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan and Dhaleshwari Cooperative Society of Baluchar Mouza of the upazila, a seven-storey building on 3 kathas in Bailjuri Mouza of Uttara in Dhaka and six flats in PC Culture Housing of Adabor in the name of Jissan.

"If the value of these properties is fixed, the amount of Benazir family's wealth will increase further. There is a possibility that they have assets abroad. The ACC will collect the information in phases," said an ACC official, seeking anonymity.

According to the progress report, Benazir has movable and immovable properties worth Tk 9.25 crore, Jissan Mirza worth Tk 21.34 crore, Farheen worth Tk 6.10 crore, and Tahseen worth Tk 4.75 crore. The value mentioned in the deeds of immovable assets has been taken into consideration, the report said.

Responding to three petitions of the anti-graft body, a Dhaka court had ordered the authorities concerned to seize and freeze the movable and immovable assets worth Tk 63.46 crore in their names in three phases.

Israeli forces advance

FROM PAGE 12

Reuters via a chat app.

Deir Al-Balah, where tanks haven't yet invaded, is currently overcrowded with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, displaced from other areas of the enclave, home to 2.3 million people. "Netanyahu spoke in a play, he spoke to clowns," said Burai.

Diplomatic efforts by Arab mediators, backed by the United States, to conclude a ceasefire deal, seemed to be on hold, as Israel was expected to send a delegation for more talks next week.

In northern Gaza, an Israeli air strike on a house in the Sheikh Radwan suburb killed four people, medics said, while seven Palestinians arrived at a hospital in central Gaza who had been detained by Israeli forces and released in an area close to the border.

2 more hurt in previous clashes

FROM PAGE 12

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Flash floods, landslides kill seven in Vietnam

AFP, *Hanoi*

Flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy rain have killed seven people in northern Vietnam and swept away homes, disaster officials and state media said yesterday.

Five people died in Son La and two others were killed in Dien Bien following the downpours.

Rescue workers are also searching for 10 others reported missing in the mountainous provinces, officials added.

According to Tuoi Tre newspaper, flash floods early yesterday swept away 10 houses and damaged eight homes in Muong Pon commune of Dien Bien province.

Star SPORT
DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 26, 2024, SRABAN 11, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Women's Asia Cup
Semifinals
Bangladesh vs India
Live from 2:30 pm
Pakistan vs Sri Lanka
Live from 7:30 pm

GT20
Mississauga vs Montreal
Live from 8:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
MLC
Washington vs San Francisco
Live from 6:30 am

England vs West Indies
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 4:00 pm
The Hundred
Northern Superchargers vs
Trent Rockets
Live from 11:30 pm

Let there be heaps of sporting spirit

The long-awaited quadrennial sports extravaganza is here at last. From the opening ceremony—set to start today at 11:30 pm (Bangladesh time)—to its conclusion on August 11, around 10,000 elite athletes and an estimated 10 million visitors will gather in Paris for the 33rd Summer Olympic Games, marking the first time in 100 years that the City of Light has hosted the world's grandest spectacle. The primary athletics events will take place at the Stade de France, the nation's largest stadium, located on the northern outskirts of Paris. Additionally, there will be 15 Olympic and 11 Paralympic venues scattered throughout the city in existing buildings.

In a historic first, the opening ceremony will be held outside the stadium, with the River Seine also hosting the marathon swimming event and the swimming leg of the triathlon, a century after it held events during the first Paris Games in 1900. Swimming had been banned in the Seine from 1923 until recently due to water-quality issues, but Paris organizers assure that the water will be clean enough for Olympic events.

The official mascot is the Olympic Phryge, a traditional hat once worn by French revolutionaries, representing freedom and highlighting important historical figures of the French Republic.

KEY FIXTURES

There are a dizzying number of medal events—329 in total—with 49 and 48 medals reserved for aquatics and athletics, respectively. The first medal is expected in shooting on July 27, and the last in women's basketball on August 11. The following are the fixtures for 14 of the 32 disciplines likely to capture the interest of Bangladesh audiences:

- **ARCHERY:** July 25 to August 4
- **ATHLETICS:** August 1-11 (The men's 100m sprint final is slated for August 4, a day after the women's corresponding event lights up Paris.)
- **BADMINTON:** July 27 to August 5
- **BASKETBALL:** July 27 to August 11
- **BOXING:** July 27 to August 10
- **FOOTBALL:** July 24 to August 10
- **HANDBALL:** July 25 to August 11
- **HOCKEY:** July 27 to August 9
- **SHOOTING:** July 27 to August 5
- **SWIMMING:** July 27 to August 4
- **TABLE TENNIS:** July 27 to August 10
- **TENNIS:** July 27 to August 4
- **VOLLEYBALL:** July 27 to August 11
- **WEIGHTLIFTING:** August 7-11.

Romanian artistic gymnastics participants pose during women's podium training at Bercy Arena, while Dutch skateboarder Roos Zwetsloot trains at La Concorde 3, in Paris yesterday. PHOTO: **AFP/REUTERS**

WORLD RECORDS WAITING TO BE BROKEN

Athletics: All eyes are on Jamaican sprinter Shericka Jackson, who has the potential to break the women's 200 meters world record set 36 years ago by American legend Florence Griffith Joyner.

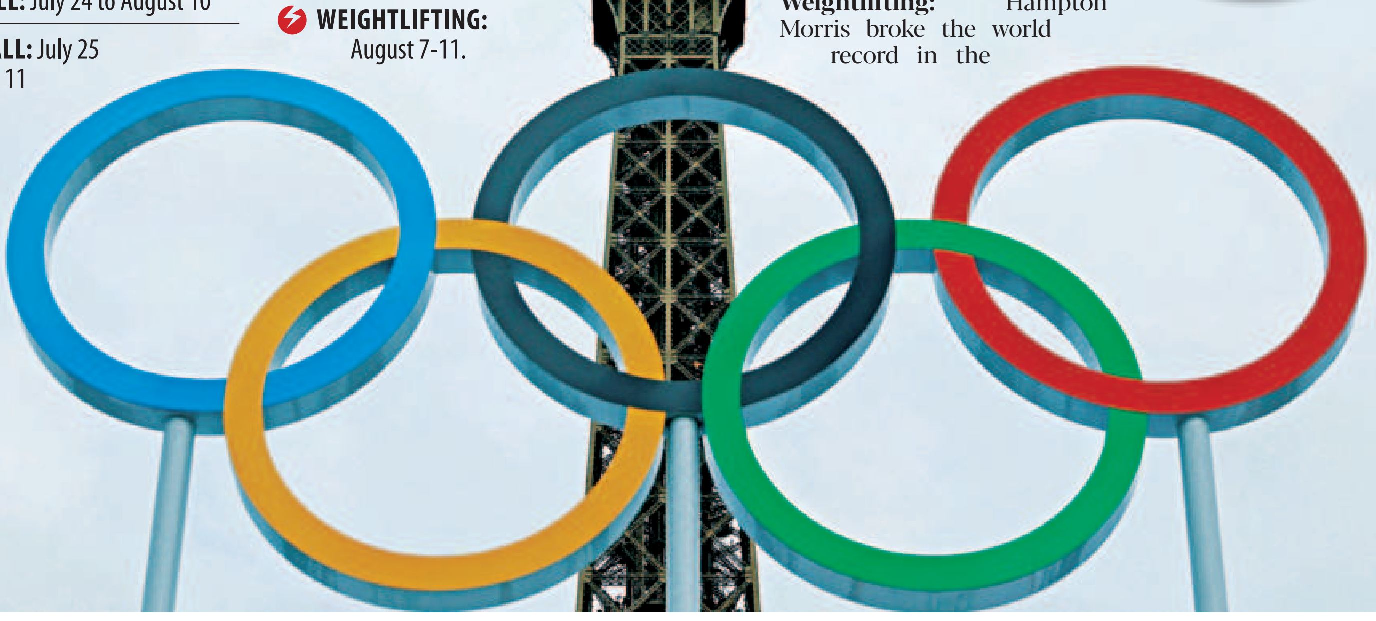
Shericka Jackson

Swimming: Backstroke queen Kaylee McKeown shattered all three backstroke world records in 2023, but the Aussie will be wary of USA's three-time Olympic medalist Regan Smith, who claimed the 100-meter backstroke record this year.

Weightlifting: Hampton Morris broke the world record in the clean and jerk in the 61kg weight class by lifting 176 kilograms at a World Cup in Thailand. The 20-year-old American, coached by his father, is primed for further milestones.

Pole Vault: Swedish pole vaulter Armand Duplantis has broken the world record eight times, and Paris might witness the ninth instance.

Climbing: Sam Watson, only 18, made his mark by breaking the speed climbing world record twice in a single tournament this year. The American teenager is poised to set new benchmarks in this newly added Olympic sport.



TRANSCENDING TRADITIONS

The 2024 Olympics will be the first in history to feature an equal number of male and female athletes, with 5,250 men and 5,250 women participating in the same number of sports and events.

Paris will showcase 32 sports disciplines, including four non-traditional sports: surfing, climbing, skateboarding, and breaking -- a competitive form of breakdancing which originated in New York in the 1970s -- with the latter set to make its Olympic debut, while the other three will make a second appearance after the 2020 Tokyo edition.

A litmus test awaits Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's side are set to take on in-form India in the semifinals of the 2024 T20 Asia Cup in Dambulla today. Despite making the semis with two back-to-back wins over Thailand and Malaysia, concerns over the batting unit are far from being removed with India bowlers expected to provide a steeper challenge.

The two teams have met 22 times in the shortest format and India have gone from strength to strength, winning 19 of those games. The gargantuan nature of Bangladesh's task is not only highlighted by Bangladesh's batting inconsistencies but also by the prospect of facing a side that won the Asia Cup seven times and are the defending champions.

Bangladesh have beaten India just thrice in 22 T20Is and two of those wins came in the Asia Cup during the 2018 campaign when the Tigresses won the trophy by beating India in the final.

In fact, if the last home series against India which the visitors swept 5-0 in Sylhet is anything to go by, Bangladesh would have to bring out their A-game to grind out a positive result.

Only skipper Nigar Sultana Joty and openers Dilara Akter and Murshida Khatun could make some decent contributions in that series, but even they averaged below 20 in that five-match series.

Bangladesh put on 191 for two in the last game against Malaysia, their second-highest score in the format. It came as a sweet relief when Murshida put on a show with a career-best 59-ball 80 while Joty struck a quickfire 62. Plenty of dropped catches from Malaysian players, however, had aided the Tigresses, who would need more vigilance in their batting plan to cause an upset today.

The Tigresses, however, could take heart from the recent performances of Joty and Murshida. Joty averaged 48 in her last five innings while Murshida's willow has smiled in this Asia Cup with back-to-back fifties that ensured two crucial wins. India's Deepti Sharma is the highest wicket-taker in the tournament so far and Bangladesh would look to both Joty and Murshida to thwart the off-spinner.

Going up against India, who have remained unbeaten so far and cruised to the semifinal after being group champions, Bangladesh will most certainly face a litmus test as the Tigresses lost their only encounter against a top opponent -- their opener against Sri Lanka.

However, Joty sounded optimistic ahead of the crucial semifinal, trying to take inspiration from their triumphant 2018 Asia Cup campaign in which they beat India to lift the trophy for the first time.

"All of us will be looking forward to making it into the final. The last time we played and won the final in 2018, it sort of revolutionised women's cricket in our country," Joty said.

Lim Si-hyeon delivered an emphatic statement yesterday that she is the woman to beat at the Paris Olympics as the 21-year-old shot a world and Olympic record 694 in women's individual ranking round at the stunning Esplanade des Invalides venue, breaking the previous mark of 692 held by compatriot and 2020 Olympic champion Sang Chae-young.

PHOTO: **AFP**

Nayeem, Mushfiqur star on Day 1 of practice game

SPORTS REPORTER

Off-spinner Nayeem Hasan and pacer Khaled Ahmed starred with the ball while veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim hit a half-century in the opening day of the two-day practice match between BCB Green and BCB Red at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Thursday.

Nayeem claimed 4-40 while Khaled finished with 3-30 as BCB Green dismissed BCB Red for a mere 131 in 45.2 overs in their first innings.

Mushfiqur was the top scorer for BCB Red with 50 off 84 balls but he eventually fell to a Khaled delivery after completing his fifty, with his side reduced to 101-9.

Shafiqul Islam, who came to bat at number 10, then hit a brisk 30 off 38 balls with three sixes and a four, providing some late entertainment.

In reply, BCB Green's Mominul Haque made an unbeaten 47 while Naim Sheikh scored 34 as they finished the day on 146-4, with a slight 15-run lead over their opponents.

Pacer Shafiqul was the most successful bowler for BCB Green with two scalps while Nahid Rana and Miraz took one wicket each.

SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh archer Sagor Islam finished 45th out of 64 participants in the ranking round of the men's individual event of the Paris Olympics 2024 after scoring 652 yesterday. Olympic gold medallist Kim Woo-jin of South Korea topped the ranking round, scoring 686. "I actually started well today [Thursday] but due to the weather condition, I made a mistake with an arrow. Overall, I'm satisfied with today's performance," Sagor, whose career best score is 671, said after yesterday's event. PHOTO:PRABIR DAS

Afghan cyclist sisters defy Taliban to fulfil Olympic dream

The Hashimi siblings are the first cyclists - male or female - to represent Afghanistan at the Games. The Taliban government does not recognise the female athletes – the Hashimi sisters and sprinter Kimia Yousofi. Although the Hashimis are the first cyclists to represent their country, they are not the first Afghan women cyclists to compete in the Games. That distinction goes to Masomah Ali Zada who raced in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 as a member of the Olympic refugee team.

Sri Lanka suffer injury blows ahead of India T20Is

Sri Lanka's fast bowlers Dushmantha Chameera and Nuwan Thushara will miss their home T20I series against India due to illness and injury. Thushara has been ruled out of the T20I series against India after sustaining a fractured thumb on his left hand during a fielding session on Wednesday while SLC confirmed that Chameera is recovering from bronchitis and respiratory infection.

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HSC exams postponed till Aug 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HSC and equivalent exams under all education boards scheduled for July 28, 29, 31, and August 1 have been postponed.

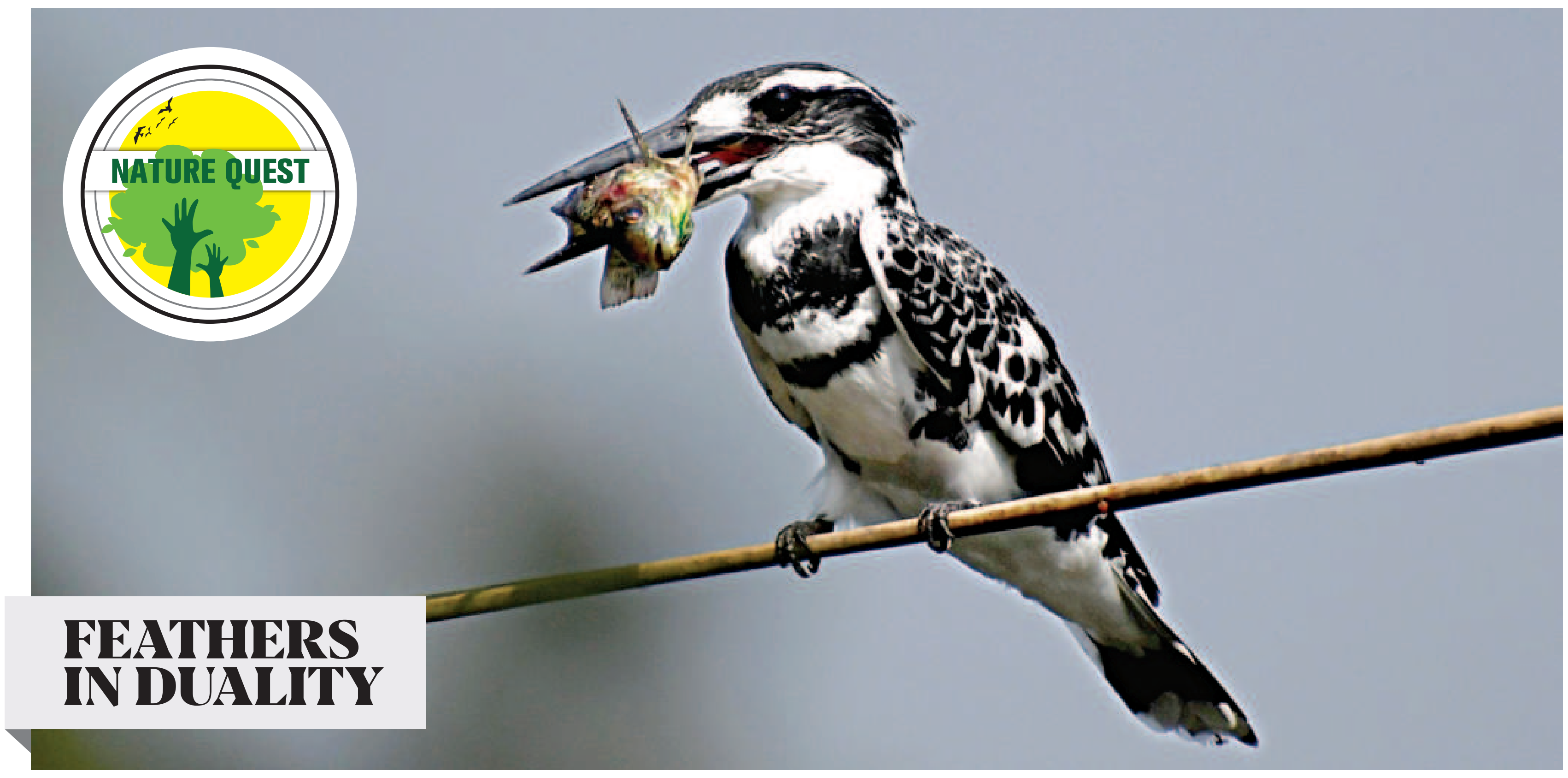
Mohammad Abul Khair, the public relations officer of the education ministry, confirmed the matter to The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier, the authorities postponed the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exams of all education boards scheduled for July 18, 21, 23, and 25.

These newly postponed exams will be scheduled after the previously postponed exams are held, said Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of the Bangladesh Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and the chairman of Dhaka Education Board.

Earlier, all public and private universities had been declared closed due to the violence surrounding the quota movement.

Additionally, all secondary and higher secondary level educational institutions (schools, colleges, madrasas, and technical institutions) under the Ministry of Education, polytechnic institutes, and all primary schools in city corporation areas were been declared closed until further notice.



FEATHERS IN DUALITY

A male pied kingfisher with his catch of the day, spotted recently in Gaibandha's Gobindaganj upazila. The only black-and-white species of kingfishers are widely distributed across Africa and Asia. The males have two black stripes on the breast, while the females have one single broken line. What further distinguishes them further other kingfishers is their habit of hovering over clear lakes and rivers before diving for fish, which they usually swallow mid-flight. However, they also prey on frogs, insects and even snakes sometimes. They are fast-moving (flying at speeds up to 50kmph) and also have specialised vision systems to detect movement. They are able to see in wide angle views and can also see into the ultraviolet range due to their excellent colour vision. They are sociable and tame birds and prefer staying in groups.

PHOTO: **MOSTAFA SHOBUJ**

Remembering rock legend Shafin Ahmed

Bangladesh's music industry is reeling from the sudden loss of Shafin Ahmed, the iconic bassist and vocalist of the renowned band Miles. The rebellious rock star passed away at 63 in Virginia, USA. A musical prodigy born to legendary artistes Kamal Dasgupta and Firoza Begum, Shafin's journey from classical roots to rock stardom captivated generations. His untimely death has left fans and fellow musicians in shock, with tributes pouring in from across the country. As Bangladesh grapples with this significant loss, Shafin's enduring legacy continues to shine.

STORY ON PAGE 10

BENAZIR, FAMILY

ACC fails to estimate value of some assets

Plans to collect info on their properties abroad

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission could not determine the value of some of the properties amassed by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed, his wife, and two daughters.

It is planning to collect information about their assets outside the country.

The commission has mentioned this in the progress report prepared for submission before the High Court. The report was supposed to be submitted last week, but it could not be done due to the ongoing nationwide curfew and general holidays.

A senior ACC official told The Daily Star that the progress report is likely to be submitted next week.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told this correspondent yesterday, "I have received the progress report prepared by the ACC. It will be submitted if the High Court sets a date."

According to the report, an investigation began on April 22 against Benazir and her family members following allegations of amassing wealth beyond known sources of income. Benazir, his wife Jissan Mirza, eldest daughter Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and second daughter Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir have amassed illegal properties worth Tk 43.46 crore. It has been determined by the government value of land, houses, flats registered, and other assets.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Quota reform protesters to pray for the dead today

Key coordinators 'unreachable' at hospital

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Quota reform protesters yesterday said they would pray at mosques and temples for those killed in recent violence.

They will also form emergency health forces to ensure proper treatments to around 15,000 protesters who were injured across the country, said a press release sent around 12:15am today by Abdul Hannan Masud, a coordinator of the protesters.

The fresh programme was supposed to be announced yesterday, at the end of the protesters' four-day ultimatum.

Two key organisers, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, were supposed to make the announcement at a hospital where they are admitted.

The internet and telephone connections to the hospital were snapped by law enforcement agencies, making it impossible for the two to contact other

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Israeli forces advance in southern Gaza

Tanks active in Rafah; 30 more Palestinians killed in airstrikes, shelling

REUTERS, *Cairo*

Israeli forces advanced deeper into some towns on the eastern side of Khan Younis in southern Gaza yesterday and tanks advanced in central Rafah, with airstrikes and shelling killing 30 Palestinians over the past day, health officials said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who told US lawmakers on Wednesday he was actively engaged in bringing hostages home, was expected to meet US President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris later yesterday.

Fighting in recent days has centred around the eastern towns of Bani Suaila, Al-Zanna, and Al-Karara, where the army said on Wednesday it had found the bodies of five Israelis.

Later yesterday, Gaza's health ministry said Israeli military strikes on areas in eastern Khan Younis had killed 14 people, taking the death toll across Gaza over the past 24 hours to 30 people with 146 injured. At least 39,175 Palestinians have been killed since the Israeli offensive began on October 7.

Several were wounded in the eastern towns during Israeli tank and aerial shelling, while an airstrike east of Khan Younis killed four people, Palestinian health officials said.

Israeli bombardment intensified in several areas in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, as tanks operated north, west and in the town centre, residents and medics said. Several Palestinians were also wounded in Israeli fire earlier yesterday.

In a speech to the US Congress, Netanyahu said his government was actively involved in seeking the release of remaining hostages and was confident they would succeed.

- Netanyahu says working for a hostage release deal
- Hamas describes comments by Netanyahu as "pure lies"
- Gaza death toll rises to 39,175

Hamas described the comments by Netanyahu as "pure lies" accusing him of thwarting efforts to end the offensive.

Netanyahu's comments also disappointed many displaced Palestinians who had hoped for a clearer signal of an imminent end to the fighting, which has laid the overcrowded enclave to waste and created a humanitarian crisis.

"It was depressing, he didn't even mention ceasefire at all, not even once," said Tamer Al-Burai, a resident of Gaza City, now displaced in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

"People awaited some surprise, a ceasefire announcement by Netanyahu as a gift to (US President Joe) Biden, but they slept with much disappointment, as Netanyahu said he was determined to pursue offensive," Burai told

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

QUOTA PROTESTS

2 more hurt in previous clashes die at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more people, who suffered bullet wounds during the recent clashes centring the quota protests, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The deceased are Zaman Mia, 19, a garment worker in Narshingdi, and Zakir Hossain, 29, an employee of a tailor shop in Dhaka's Rayerbagh area, according to the DMCH death register and the victims' family members.

Zaman suffered bullet wounds in his abdomen on the afternoon of July 21. He was rushed to DMCH and admitted to the High Dependency Unit, where he died around 6:00am, said his brother Raihan Mia.

Zakir was shot during the clashes in Rayerbagh area on July 19. Pedestrians rushed him to DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries around 12:30am, his brother Monir Hossain said.

With the two deaths, at least 156 lives have been lost since July 16, when six people were killed in clashes between agitators on one side, and law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh, and ruling party activists on the other.

Thirty people died on Thursday, 66 on Friday, 25 on Saturday, 14 on Sunday, six on Monday, three on Tuesday, and four on Wednesday.

The overall death toll from the violence may be higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Indian union govt the sole authority on foreign affairs

Says spokesman after Delhi gets Dhaka's note protesting Mamata's comments

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

The union government of India has the sole prerogative when it comes to matters of foreign affairs, said a spokesperson of its external affairs ministry acknowledging Dhaka's note issued after Mamata Banerjee's remarks.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata on Sunday said her state government would provide shelter to people from violence-hit Bangladesh "if they come knocking on our doors".

Following this, Dhaka issued a diplomatic note to Delhi.

India confirmed that it received the note from Bangladesh which protested Mamata's remarks on Bangladeshi students' quota protest and ticked Mamata off by suggesting that she remains within her state government's jurisdiction.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

People of the low-income group lined up near a TCB centre in the capital's Shahjahanpur ward-11 to purchase kitchen essentials at subsidised prices during the curfew break yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: **FEROZ AHMED**

Arrives a show like no other

AGENCIES

In the midst of its own political upheaval and rising global tensions, France is set to host an unprecedented Olympic showcase, marking a significant departure from traditional stadium settings for the first time since the Summer Olympics began in 1896.

As athletes and visitors converge on Paris, the City of Light aims to shine through its storied past and ambitious present, hoping to leave an indelible mark on Olympic history.

In the presence of 300,000 invited guests, a staggering 10,500 athletes will parade along a six-kilometre stretch of the Seine -- set to host several swimming events after the ban to swim there since 1923 was lifted recently -- concluding in front of the Trocadero, opposite the Eiffel Tower, in an opening ceremony laden with security concerns.

France will deploy its largest post-war security operation for today's opening ceremony. A stringent security perimeter has been established along the Seine, with up to 45,000 police officers, thousands of soldiers, and private security guards

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

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REGD. NO. DA 781 VOL. XXXIV NO. 184 SRABAN 12, 1431 BS www.thedailystar.net MUHARRAM 20, 1446 HIJRI 12 PAGES : TK 15.00

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ABU SAYED'S DEATH IN POLICE FIRING

Cops' FIR runs counter to known facts

Says the Rangpur student was killed in firing, throwing of bricks by protesters

SHARIFUL ISLAM *and* **MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR**

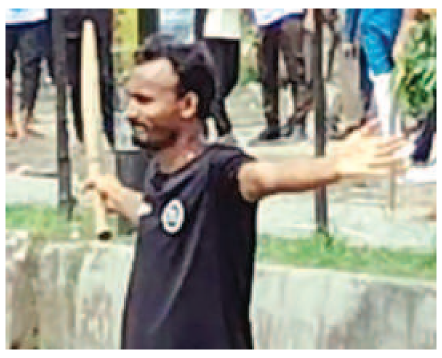
Video footage shows police shooting at Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed, who posed no physical threat to the law enforcers, during the quota reform protest near the campus on July 16. He died soon afterwards.

But contradicting what is evident, the First Information Report (FIR) filed by police says Sayed was not a victim of police firing.

"The protesters fired weapons and threw chunks of bricks from different directions, and at one stage, a student was seen falling to the ground," reads the report, adding that classmates took Sayed, 23, to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

Sub-inspector Bibhuti Bhushan Roy, in-charge of the campus police camp, wrote the report.

In the FIR filed with Tajhat police station on July 16, the SI accused 2,000-3,000 unidentified people, including BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists, of the killing.



When SI Bibhuti was contacted and asked about the footage, he said, "I have just filed the case. The officer carrying out the investigation will verify it."

In two video clips, verified by the Amnesty International, at least two police officers fired 12-gauge shotguns directly at him from across the street. Sayed clutched his chest on impact, and the officers fired at least two more times.

Amnesty International used satellite images to geolocate the positions of Sayed and the police officers and found that they were at a distance of about 15

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Holding her baby in her arms, Alo breaks down in tears in Old Dhaka's CMM court area yesterday as she waits to see her husband Rony Howlader. Police were to produce Rony, a pickup driver, before the court in a sabotage case. Alo is worried whether she would be able to secure bail for her husband, who was picked up from Badda on Thursday, as she cannot afford to hire a lawyer. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Loss of so many lives very painful'

Says PM as she visits the injured at DMCH

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said appropriate punishment should be meted out for the recent violence across the country to stop the criminals from playing with the lives of the people.

"The situation is very painful. So many people have been killed and injured," she said in an emotion-choked voice while visiting the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the afternoon.

Hasina went to the hospital around 4:30pm to see the injured who came under attack during the recent violence. She visited the emergency unit of the DMCH and inquiredabout the health of the injured.

The premier reiterated her call to the people to find the culprits behind such heinous acts.

She said she never wanted to see anyone lose their dear ones.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

QUOTA PROTEST

DB picks up three organisers from hospital

Says they 'sought security' from cops

Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday afternoon picked up Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumder, three key organisers of the quota reform protests, from a city hospital where Nahid and Asif were undergoing treatment.

Junaed Alam Sharker, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Brach of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the three were taken into DB custody as they sought security.

"We will interrogate them about the incidents that took place in the last two days," he told The Daily Star around 12:15 today.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Over 5,500 held in one week

Arrestees include many BNP, Jamaat activists

STAR REPORT

At least 738 more people were arrested in the capital and several other districts in 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday in connection with the recent violence across the country.

As of yesterday, over 5,522 people, including many BNP and Jamaat leaders, were held in different parts of the country over the last seven days.

So far, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 2,357 people in 209 cases filed with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson at government establishments and other places, said sources in DMP.

Of them, 148 were held yesterday.

According to court documents, 211 people, including several BNP and Jamaat leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, in 67 cases yesterday.

A total of 4,784 people were arrested earlier in Dhaka and other districts.

Police held 324 people in 12 districts in 36 hours between 6:00am Thursday and 6:00pm yesterday.

Of them, 154 were arrested in Rajshahi, 64 in Narayanganj, 41 in Chattogram, 1 in Patuakhali, three in Gazipur, seven in Mymensingh, 15 in Kishoreganj, seven in Sylhet, eight in Bogura, two in Gaibandha, 15 in Savar, and seven in Manikganj.

As of Thursday, 173 cases were filed in 18 districts, including eight in Narayanganj and one in Chattogram. Nine of them were lodged on Thursday.

Rab yesterday morning said they arrested 266 people across the country, including 63 in Dhaka, in connection with the violence.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday sent former Ducsu VP Nurul Haque Nur to jail after his five-day remand in a case lodged over vandalising and setting fire to Setu Bhaban on July 18.

In a press release yesterday, Gono Odhikar Parishad alleged that Nur, also the president of the organisation, was tortured during remand.

"When Nur was produced before the court, he could not walk properly. He limped towards the dock. He told his

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BNP calls for 'national unity' with one-point demand

Urges democratic parties, social and cultural orgs to unite for ousting govt

UNB, *Dhaka*

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday called for national unity among all democratic political parties and socio-cultural organisations to press home a one-point demand -- resignation of the government.

At this critical moment of the nation, the aim of the unity will be restoration of democracy and voting rights, Fakhrul said in a statement sent to the media last night.

"We call for national unity among the parties and alliances involved in the simultaneous movement under BNP's leadership; left and right-wing political parties; Jamaat-e-Islami and other Islamist political parties and organisations."

This announcement on national unity will expedite the movement for people's freedom, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

'End crackdown, restore full access to internet'

UN experts urge Bangladesh govt

STAR REPORT

UN experts on Thursday called upon Bangladesh government to immediately ensure accountability for human rights violations, end the violent crackdown against protesters and political opponents, and to fully restore people's access to the internet and social media.

In a statement on the website of the Office of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the experts said, "We have been alarmed by the large number of unlawful killings, possible enforced disappearances, torture and the detention of thousands of people.

"We are deeply concerned by reports of targeted attacks, threats, intimidation and retaliation by the authorities and government-aligned groups against protest leaders, political activists, human rights defenders and journalists."

Citing local media in Bangladesh, the statement said at least 170 people, including police personnel, were confirmed dead in the violence centring the quota reform movement, with the actual death toll likely to be much higher. At least two journalists have been killed and several others injured. There are also

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inquires about the health of a youth during a visit to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. The young man sustained injuries during the recent violence in the country. PHOTO: BSS

BID FOR US PRESIDENT

Barack, Michelle Obama endorse Kamala Harris

REUTERS

Former US president Barack Obama and his wife Michelle endorsed Kamala Harris' bid for president yesterday in a roughly one-minute long video that captured a private phone call between the couple and the current vice president.

"We called to say Michelle and I couldn't be prouder to endorse you and to do everything we can to get you through this election and into the Oval Office," Obama told Harris.

"I am proud of you. This is going to be historic," the former first lady told Harris. Talking into a cell phone and cracking a few smiles, Harris expressed her gratitude for the endorsement and their long friendship.

"Thank you both. It means so much. And we're gonna have some fun with this too," Harris said. The campaign said the video was the actual call, not a reenactment.

Harris's surprise bid against Republican rival Donald Trump continues to gain steam from supporters, donors and politicians less than a week after President Joe Biden bowed out of the race amid slumping poll numbers.

Obama, the first US Black president, remains one of the most popular figures

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Take steps to restore people's faith in political system

ICG urges govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League government should take steps to restore people's confidence in the political system in Bangladesh after widespread violence rocked the country, said a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG).

The ruling party's 15-year rule has made the country ripe for political upheaval, the ICG report added.

"It should lift martial law, restore internet access and ensure that those responsible for the killings during the protests are held accountable. It also needs to manage the peaceful reopening of universities and free the scores of students arrested over the last week," it said.

Pierre Prakash, programme director of the ICG Asia division, said the biggest challenge the Awami League government faces is how it handles the situation after the party's heavy-handed response to the protest.

"After fifteen years in office, Prime Minister Hasina is facing her most

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Some tamarix trees (jhau gachh) were uprooted during the erosion near the Laboni point of Cox's Bazar beach. The banks of Bay have recently been facing the impact of the rough seas. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

VANDALISM AT METRO STATION

Journo, five others placed on remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed six people, including a journalist, on a five-day remand for interrogation in connection with a case filed over the vandalism of the Kazipara Metro Station in the city's Mirpur.

The six are Hafiz Al Asad, Sanaul Haque Niru, Alamgir, Mohiuddin Ahmed Bhuiyan, Abdul Aziz Sultan, and Mayeen.

Hafiz, alias, Saeed Khan, is the organising secretary of a faction of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arobia Khanam passed the order after case investigating officer Asaduzzaman Munshi, an inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, produced the arrestees before her court with a 10-day remand prayer.

The magistrate also rejected a bail petition filed for Saeed Khan, said a sub-inspector working in the court.

According to the case documents, some 5,000-6,000 people attacked the Kazipara Metro Rail Station in Mirpur between 4:30pm and 7:30pm on July 19.

Armed with local weapons, they broke into the Kazipara Metro Rail Station. They vandalised the station, looted valuable machinery and equipment, and torched the place, the investigator said in the police forwarding report submitted before the court.

According to the report, the damages to this metro rail station are estimated to be Tk 100 crore.

95 Libyans detained at suspected military camp

Say South African police

AFP, *Johannesburg*

South Africa authorities rounded up 95 Libyans in a raid yesterday at a farm that appeared to have been converted into a military training base, police said.

The early morning raid was near the town of White River in the northeastern province of Mpumalanga, about 360 kilometres (220 miles) east of Johannesburg, they said.

"The place, which was initially designated as a training site, appears to have been converted into an illegal military training base," police said in a statement.

"The 95 individuals taken into custody are all Libyan nationals and are currently being questioned by the relevant authorities."

BNP

FROM PAGE 1

Fakhrul said that parties and organisations can express their willingness to join the call through issuing statements due to time constraints and difficulties in communications.

A joint statement, signed by all those who would express their willingness to join the call, will be issued soon, he said.

Four more die

FROM PAGE 12

Rampura Police Station.

Doctors of the forensic medicine department at DMCH conducted autopsies on the four bodies yesterday, said sources at the mortuary.

With these four deaths, at least 160 lives have been lost since July 16, when six people were killed in clashes between agitators on one side, and law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh, and ruling party activists on the other.

Thirty people died on July 18, 66 on July 19, 25 on July 20, 14 on July 21, six on July 22, three on July 23, four on July 24, and two on July 25.

The overall death toll from the violence may be higher, as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken. Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Barack, Michelle

FROM PAGE 1

in the Democratic party even after more than a decade has passed since he was last elected.

Obama has lent his support to Biden during big-money fundraisers, which were among some of the biggest blockbuster events of his campaign.

The endorsement could help activate and sustain energy and fundraising for Harris' campaign and it signals he is likely to get on the campaign trail for Harris once she is officially the presumptive nominee.

Obama initially withheld his endorsement even as Biden, his former vice president, anointed her as his heir apparent. Obama reportedly did not want to put his thumb on the scale as the party worked through the process of determining its nominee.

Cops' FIR runs counter to known facts

FROM PAGE 1

metres during the shooting. Also, Sayed posed no apparent physical threat to the police, Amnesty International said in a statement on July 18, adding that the police's attack on Sayed was reckless and unprovoked.

Sayed's death certificate said he was "brought dead" to the hospital.

Tuhin Wadud, a teacher of the university who saw Sayed's body at the hospital, said there were shotgun pellet wounds all over the body.

Razibul Islam, head of the forensic medicine department at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said he died of internal haemorrhage caused by the pellets.

He said an autopsy report will be prepared soon but declined to give details.

Asked about the FIR, Deputy Commissioner (Crime) of Rangpur Metropolitan Police Abu Maruf Hossain said many non-students, including Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men, reportedly used firearms during the protests. The matter will be clear once the investigation concludes.

WHAT IS IN THE FOOTAGE?

Sayed had his arms wide open with a stick in his right hand. He appears to dodge a brick chip. Gunshots were heard. A man, possibly the one filming, shouted, "He got shot."

Sayed again stretched his arms, and a second later, he took a few steps back and sat on the ground.

A man rushed to him and helped him stand up. There were blood stains on his neck, nose and other parts of the body.

Three more protesters then joined and carried him away.

Sayed's killing sparked widespread outrage, with many questioning the justification of police's use of lethal weapons on unarmed protesters.

In the following days, at least 156 people were killed and several thousand wounded in deadly clashes across the country.

The government enforced curfew to tackle the situation, and on July 23 issued a circular, taking merit-based recruitment in civil service to 93 percent from 44 percent. The remaining seven percent will be reserved.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, rights activist Nur Khan Liton said police's account in the FIR was unacceptable because the shooting took place in broad daylight and it was a cold-blooded killing.

He said police should warn first and then can only shoot aiming at the legs when they have no other option to protect lives, properties and firearms. "The problem is the government party men who get jobs in the police force do not care about the rule of law," he told The Daily Star.

WHO SHOT HIM?

A source in the police said an officer named Yunus Ali fired a weapon at Sayed during a protest on July 16 without authorisation from higher officials. No details could be known.

DC Maruf said that no action has yet been taken against any policeman involved in the shooting.

He only mentioned that police used shotguns, adding that expert opinions would be sought, and actions would follow if rules were violated.

Meanwhile, a four-member committee, led by Additional Commissioner Saifuzzaman Faruki of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, has been formed to investigate the incident. The committee was asked to file its report in two weeks.

Sayed, the youngest of nine siblings, was a student of English. His grieving father and brother said he dreamt of joining the civil service and changing his family's fate.

A day before his death, he wrote on Facebook that he was ready to sacrifice his life for the cause.

His brother Ramzan said he tried to collect the autopsy report from the hospital on Thursday but was asked to obtain it from the court. The family has not filed any case.

[Kongkon Karmaker contributed to this report.]

'End crackdown, restore full access to internet'

FROM PAGE 1

disturbing reports of journalists being threatened by authorities for their news reporting.

"Prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations in line with internationally recognised standards must be carried out into all human rights violations."

Saying that the government has a history of broken promises with regards to human rights and that there is a lack of public trust in the judiciary, the experts urged the government to initiate a credible accountability process with the support of the UN. The experts offered their assistance in this regard.

"We call on the authorities to immediately release all peaceful protesters and ensure due process for those charged and prosecuted in connection with their role in the violence," they said.

Since the start of July, university students and job seekers have been protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs, and demanding reforms to the system. On June 5, the High Court effectively reinstated the quota system by declaring illegal a 2018 government circular that abolished it.

The Supreme Court on July 10 issued a status quo on the HC verdict.

According to the statement on the OHCHR website, the violence centring the quota reform movement erupted on July 15, after "inflammatory public statements by Government officials and attacks by Government-aligned youth groups on the peaceful protesters. Law enforcement authorities reportedly rushed in to support government-aligned groups and used excessive force, including live bullets, against unarmed protesters."

It said some of the protesters retaliated, destroying and burning public property and vehicles.

Early on July 18, mobile data was shut off and later that night, the entire country was plunged into digital darkness as broadband internet across the country became unavailable.

The government called a nationwide curfew on the night of July 19, and called in the army.

The statement said the army was given shoot-on-sight orders.

On July 21, the Supreme Court decided to keep seven percent government jobs reserved and open the rest to competition. On July 23, the government issued a circular taking merit-based recruitment in civil service to 93 percent from the previous 44 percent.

According to the OHCHR statement, the authorities in Bangladesh had shut down broadband and mobile internet, preventing access to websites, social media and web-based mobile phone communications.

However, the government and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) have said the internet shutdown occurred due to an attack on the data centres in the capital's Mohakhali. Broadband internet is slowly being restored since the evening of July 23, while mobile data is yet to be restored. Access to social media has been limited.

The experts said, "The government needs to fully restore the internet and access to social media immediately and ensure that local and foreign media are granted full access to report on the developments without being attacked, threatened or pressured.

"The state must uphold people's right to information. Total transparency and accuracy on the numbers of those detained, forcibly disappeared, killed or subjected to other human rights violations, as well as careful preservation of evidence is essential to ensuring accountability and restoring public trust."

They warned that while a recent decision by the courts to scale back the controversial quota system was an important step in the right direction, it will not be sufficient to restore the people's trust and confidence in the government.

"To regain public trust, the Government needs to take responsibility and ensure a credible process of investigation and accountability to hold perpetrators to account."

They are in contact with the Government of Bangladesh on this matter, the statement said.

The UN experts are Cecilia Bailliet, independent expert on human rights and international solidarity; George Katrougalos, independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; Morris Tidball-Binz, special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Margaret Satterthwaite, special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Irene Khan, special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Surya Deva, special rapporteur on the right to development; Farida Shaheed, special rapporteur on the right to education; Gina Romero, special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Mary Lawlor, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Alice Edwards, special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Matthew Gillett (chair); Ganna Yudkivska (vice-chair on communications); Priya Gopalan (vice-chair on follow-up); Miriam Estrada-Castillo and Mumba Malila, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Aua Baldé (chair-rapporteur); Gabriella Citroni (vice-chair); Grażyna Baranowska and Ana Lorena Delgadillo Pérez, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

'Loss of so many lives very painful'

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said her government has taken all necessary steps to improve the socio-economic condition of the people and ensure better life for them.

"My question is what they have gained from it [violence]. So many people have lost their lives, so many families have been affected."

The premier prayed for the salvation of the departed souls of the dead and wished quick recovery of the injured.

"We will do whatever is needed for the treatment of the injured. There is no lack of treatment," she said.

Hasina said physicians, the health minister, and the state minister for health have been visiting the injured and ensuring their proper treatment.

She said she would visit more hospitals to see the injured.

The premier said Jamaat-Shibir, the BNP and Chhatra Dal have been carrying out destructive activities taking an advantage of the quota reform protests.

"They have no sense of humanity, no love and affection for the country, no sense of responsibility towards the country. They do not consider human beings as human beings."

Hasina asked the countrymen to be united against such heinous incidents.

"We have fulfilled all the demands [made by the students]. Then why more [movement]?" she said.

The PM thanked the physicians for giving treatment to the injured.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen, State Minister for Health Rokeya Sultana and local lawmaker AFM Bahauddin Nasim, among others, were present.

DB picks up three organisers from hospital

FROM PAGE 1

In the evening yesterday, families of the three and hospital staffers said a group of people in plainclothes went to the Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in the capital's Dhanmondi at 3:30pm and forcibly took them out to an undisclosed place.

The plainclothes men picked up Nahid from his cabin on the sixth floor of the hospital. They then went to Asif's cabin on the second floor. They also picked up Baker while he was bringing food for Asif.

They took away the mobile phones of Nahid, his sister Fatima Tasnim, Asif and Baker.

Fatima said her brother is not involved in any anti-government activities. "They are not affiliated with any political parties. We urge all to ensure our safety."

This is the second time the trio -- all students of Dhaka University -- have been picked up in just a week.

Nahid was picked up in the early hours of July 20 allegedly by law enforcers from a house in the capital's Sabujbagh. He alleged that he was tortured physically until he lost unconsciousness. When he gained consciousness, he found himself under a bridge in Purbachal. He went to his home by a CNG-run auto rickshaw.

Both Asif and Bakar were picked up on July 19. The two wrote on Facebook that they were blindfolded and left in Hatirjheel and Dhanmondi areas on July 24. Neither of them mentioned who picked them up.

This paper could not reach the family members of the three early today for comments as their phones were switched off.

As per an earlier announcement, the coordinators of the anti-quota protests were scheduled to brief the media about the overall situation at a press briefing in front of the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital yesterdayevening.

Abdul Hannan Masud, coordinator of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, told journalists that they would hold the briefing at 7:30pm.

Journalists from different media outlets waited at the hospital, but the coordinators did not appear until 8:30pm.

Contacted, Masud told The Daily Star at 8:35pm that they were under "huge pressure" and doubtful about holding the press briefing.

The anti-quota quota protesters could not hold the briefing as of 9:30pm.

Over 5,500 held

FROM PAGE 1

wife and lawyer that he was tortured and beaten up during remand," said the release.

In another development, a Dhaka court yesterday sent six leaders of BNP and Jamaat, including BNP Publicity Affairs Secretary Sultan Salauddin Tuku, to jail, after completion of five-day remand in a case lodged over vandalising the BTV Bhaban in Rampura.

The five other accused are BNP leaders Qazi Sayedul Alam Babul, Aminul Haque, MA Salam, Mahmudus Salehin, and Jamaat Secretary General Miah Golam Parwar.

At a press briefing yesterday, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP, said they arrested six people, including Demra thana unit Chhatra Dal convener Masud Rana, in different parts of the capital over the killings of two policemen in Jatrabari and Shanir Akhra.

The five others are Irfan, Abu Bakar, Rabiul Islam, Sourav Mia, and Tarek.

They were arrested after analysing footage, said police.

Harun said a group of 25-30 people, including the arrestees, stayed in Jatrabari's Rayerbagh on July 19 to take part in the quota reform protest.

"The killings and destruction were carried out in a planned way in the name of quota protest. The BNP-Jamaat tried many times to oust the democratic government."

Harun said those who killed police personnel, ordinary people, and vandalised government establishments will not be spared.

‘We demand UN probe into the killings’

Say social and cultural orgs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesting the deaths during the countrywide violence centring the recent quota reform protests, as well as false cases and indiscriminate arrests, cultural and social organisations yesterday demanded fair and impartial investigations under the United Nations.

Under the banner of “Protesting Cultural and Social Organisation”, they organised a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club around 11:00am.

“No one can remain silent after seeing the number of deaths. When I close my eyes, I can see those bodies,” said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive at Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

“We witnessed the Joj Miah drama during the previous judicial probe. Therefore, we want fair and impartial investigations under the United Nations,” she demanded.

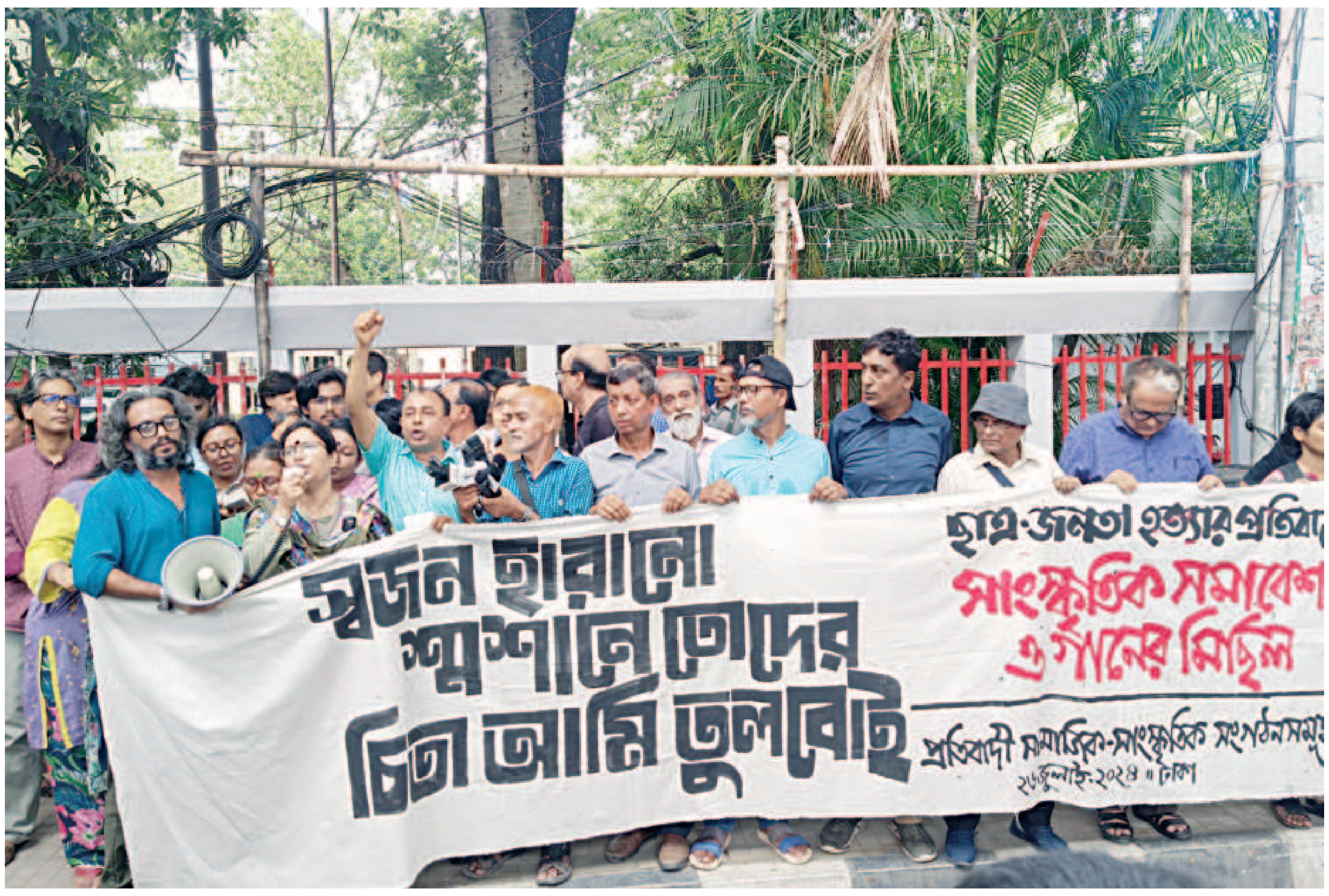
Mentioning that critically injured people were rushed from hospital to hospital after sustaining injuries from police firing, she said, “The hospitals refused to provide them with treatment. We condemn such a health system.”

She demanded the resignation of the ministers responsible for the killings, an end to “dirty politics” on campuses, and the immediate reopening of educational institutions after ensuring safety of the students.

Addressing the rally, Daily Samakal Advisory Editor Abu Sayeed Khan said the quota reform protest was a just one.

“But the government used force to suppress the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Various cultural and social organisations form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday morning, demanding fair and impartial investigations into the violence and killings centring the quota reform protests under the United Nations.

PHOTO: **MD ABBAS**

Find the perpetrators of violence

Says PM after visiting BTV Bhaban

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged citizens to cooperate with the government to make sure the perpetrators of the recent mayhem are nabbed from every nook and corner of the country.

“I would like to call upon the country’s people to find out who was involved in these destructions and cooperate to ensure their punishment,” she said.

The premier made the call while visiting Bangladesh Television (BTV) Bhaban in the city’s Rampura area to see the extent of damage after it

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Lift curfew, withdraw army: Fakhrul

UNB, *Dhaka*

Terming the killing of student protesters by law enforcers “mass murder”, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government has lost the moral right to rule.

He also called for withdrawal of the army and lifting of the curfew.

In a statement, he asked the government to release accurate statistics on the number of innocent individuals killed, maimed, and injured in recent days.

“It’s never acceptable to use the army to suppress a justified movement of students and people. We demand the immediate withdrawal of the curfew and sending the armed forces back to the barracks,” the BNP leader said.

Fakhrul said people need to know how much ammunition, tear gas, and sound grenades bought with the public money were used on students.

He warned that the government will one day be held accountable

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Every death will be probed

Says Quader, blames BNP-Jamaat for violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Every death related to the violence centring quota reform protests will undergo judicial investigation and trial, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

“We don’t want any untimely death. Every killing will be tried. Legal actions will be taken against those involved in the violence,” Quader told a press conference in Dhaka.

He said all the demands of students have been accepted. He accused the opposition of exploiting the movement to overthrow Sheikh Hasina’s government, saying, “Thousands of our leaders, activists, and police officers were attacked. Their intention was to overthrow Sheikh Hasina’s government.”

He linked the violence to historical betrayals, saying “The murderers of ’71, the killers of ’75, the assassins

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Anti-mosquito drives slow down due to unrest

Experts fear dengue cases may rise as a result

HELEMUL ALAM

Anti-mosquito drives have either remained completely suspended in some areas or been slowed down since the recent unrest in the country centring the quota reform protests.

This may result in a rapid increase in dengue cases, fear experts. They said if not addressed quickly, the situation may become alarming.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), dengue cases in July have nearly doubled from June, rising from 798 to 1,747.

The total number of cases until July 26 stands at 5,398, with 60.9 percent male and 39.1 percent female patients. The death toll has reached 51, with females accounting for 52.9 percent of the fatalities.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said while the reduced rainfall is somewhat positive, the anti-mosquito drives have become irregular, and in some instances, non-existent, due to the recent violence.

He said anti-mosquito drives should resume in all places as the upcoming days will be challenging due to the potential emergence of Den-2 variant.

Last year, the country faced approximately 3,21,179 dengue cases, primarily caused by the Den-2 variant.

Entomologist Kabirul Basar warned that dengue cases are expected to rise significantly next month due to the early July rains.

The slowdown in anti-mosquito activities has likely contributed to mosquito breeding, necessitating immediate action.

Public health expert Mushtaq Hossain emphasised the importance of proper solid waste management to combat Aedes mosquitoes.

He advocated for a nationwide cleaning drive to address dengue and other health issues, adding that dengue is no longer confined to urban areas.

Mushtaq stressed the need for integrated efforts to control Aedes mosquitoes, with community engagement and government leadership.

He also called for a reformed healthcare management system to reduce dengue fatalities, proposing a three-tiered approach: primary, secondary, and hospital care.

He explained that primary healthcare should involve local facilities in every city ward for early diagnosis and treatment, easing the burden on hospitals. Secondary healthcare should cater to at-risk patients, such as pregnant women, the elderly, and children, reducing the strain on major hospitals and critical care units.

Mushtaq said the lack of manpower, medicines, and diagnostic facilities at village and upazila levels hampers early detection and treatment of dengue.

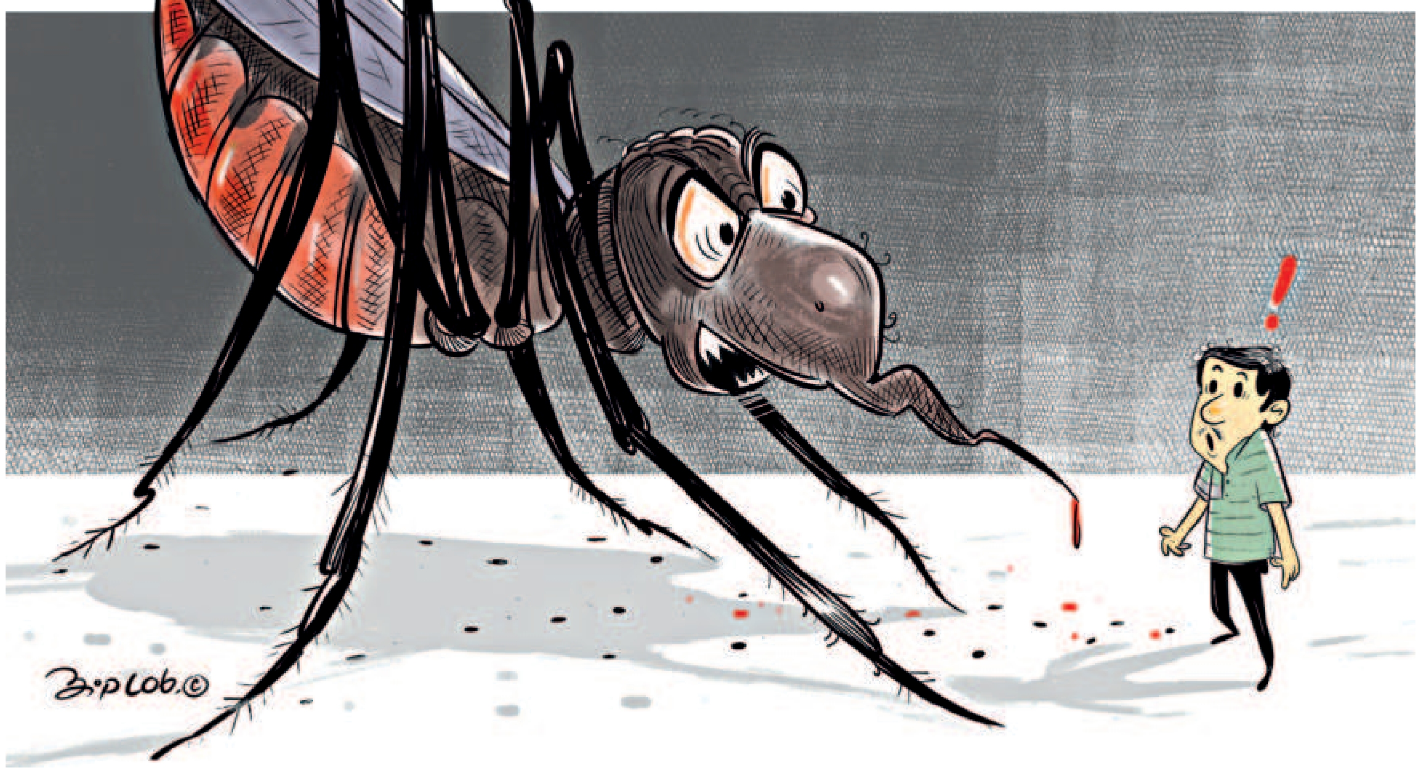
The year 2023 was marked by the worst outbreak of dengue since the disease’s first official appearance in 2000. As of December 31, 2023, DGHS reported 321,179 hospitalisations and 1,705 deaths due to the dengue outbreak.

In 2000, the nation experienced 93 deaths and 5,551 cases, with the highest recorded death toll before 2023 being 281 in 2022. The highest number of cases before 2023 was 101,354 in 2019.

In 2023, dengue fatalities saw 970 female and 735 male victims, while in terms of cases, 60 percent were male and 40 percent female.

PHOTO: **STAR**

- Almost two times more dengue cases in July than June
- **798** cases in June; **1,747** in July
- **5,398** cases till July 26
- **60.9**pc male patients; **39.1**pc female patients
- So far, dengue claimed **51** lives this year
- Female patients accounted for **52.9**pc of fatalities
- **3,21,179** dengue cases in 2023.



‘Punish those involved with the killings’

Shujan calls for commission to probe each death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday demanded the formation of a commission comprising neutral persons and experts to investigate each killing during the countrywide violence centring the quota reform movement.

Shujan, a civil society platform, in a statement signed by its President M Hafizuddin Khan and Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar, also demanded the punishment of those involved in these incidents.

“We are deeply concerned by the ongoing deadlock caused by the students’ protest to reform the quota system. The number of deaths from violence is escalating daily... We believe that these numerous deaths are attributable to provocative government statements, instigation by vested quarters, and the excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies,” said the statement.

> **It is unacceptable for any independent and democratic country to suffer such a loss of life in the pursuit of rights. We believe that every life is precious. These lives cannot be replaced.**

“It is unacceptable for any independent and democratic country to suffer such a loss of life in the pursuit of rights. We believe that every life is precious. These lives cannot be replaced,” it added.

The organisation asserted that violence perpetrated in the name of a movement, as well as attacks, vandalism, and arson targeting government establishments, are completely unjustified.

It demanded that those responsible for damaging state property be brought to justice.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

‘We condemn crackdown on student protesters’

Say Bangladeshi communication scholars in North America

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty academicians, under the banner of Bangladeshi Communication Scholars in North America (BCSNA), have expressed deep concern over the “government’s crackdown on student protesters in Bangladesh”.

In a statement yesterday, they expressed solidarity with students protesting against the discriminatory quota system in government jobs and demanded justice for the deaths of unarmed civilians.

They also called for a cessation of ongoing legal harassment.

BCSNA supports the student community’s calls for broader political reforms and holding perpetrators accountable, the statement reads.

Although the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the students’ demands, its implementation is pending. The protesters, who began their peaceful advocacy in mid-July, faced severe repression from the government, the platform said.

According to a BBC report, police responded with “shotgun fire, tear gas, and sound grenades,” resulting in nearly 200 student deaths and thousands of injuries, they claimed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Mahbubul Haque laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chattogram*

Renowned linguist Mahbubul Haque was laid to rest in the central graveyard of Chittagong University yesterday.

Before the burial, his body was taken to a mosque in the port city, where his namaz-e-janaza was held after the Juma prayers.

He was also given a "guard of honour" there, and then his body was taken to the university campus.

After the Asr prayers, another namaz-e-janaza was held at the university central mosque.

Earlier, a tribute programme was organised at Shilpakala Academy at 10:30am, where his body was kept till 12:00pm for people to pay their respects.

People from all walks of life, including educationists, writers, artists, journalists and political figures, paid their respects during the programme.

With the death of Mahbubul Haque, Bangladesh has lost a highly accomplished researcher, said speakers at the tribute programme.

Workers load bags of wheat onto a truck, hoping to get all of it stacked and ready to head to a warehouse in Barishal amid the curfew break yesterday afternoon. The photo was taken from Band Road.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Fuel transport starts amid tight security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Four oil carrier wagons left Chattogram for Dhaka, Sylhet and Dohazari and Hathazri upazilas yesterday amid tight security. Two more are waiting at Patenga depot in Chattogram to leave for Rangpur and Sreemangal.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members escorted the fuel carrier trains from Chattogram.

According to the information of the control room of the railway transport department, a train with 24 oil carrier wagons left for Dhaka at around 5:30am on Friday. Besides, another train with 16 oil carrier wagons left for Sylhet at 6:30am.

Meanwhile, a train with 12 fuel carrier wagons left Chattogram for Dohazari Power Station at 10:00am, while another train with 12 fuel carrier wagons left Chattogram for Hathazari upazila at 11:00am.

A press release signed by Chattogram-8 BGB Commander Lt Col Shahed Minhaj Siddiqui informed that a platoon member of BGB was on security duty in each fuel carrier train.

British MP Rupa Huq questions situation in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh-origin British MP Rupa Huq has raised a question in the UK parliament on the current situation in Bangladesh.

Addressing the parliament on Thursday, she wanted to know the UK government's stand on the Bangladesh situation from Leader of the House of Commons Lucy Powell, given the recent protests and violence centring quota in government jobs.

She said the deaths of students and protesters ran three figures. Due to the countrywide internet shutdown, she said they could not know much about what is going on in the country.

She sought an urgent government statement on UK's position about Bangladesh's situation saying, "We have a historic unique role in this situation."

In response, Lucy Powell said the UK is deeply concerned about the violence in Bangladesh in recent days and said the loss of life is unacceptable.

"The right to protest must be restored and access to the internet should also be restored. We urge all sides to have restraint in this regard," she said.

She said the foreign secretary and foreign office ministers would update the House.

'We will take steps against attackers, but won't harass students'

Hasan Mahmud says govt has proof of Tarique's involvement

UNB, *Dhaka*

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said every incident of recent attacks and sabotage will be investigated to deliver justice but genuine students will not be harassed.

"Those who killed PS of Gazipur ex-mayor Jahangir and policeman in Dhaka, those who hanged their bodies, threw BCL activists from a six-storey building in Chattogram, and burned public and private properties will not be spared. I have seen the footage of vandalism and arson on the BTV building. Those who carried out these attacks will not be spared from legal action," he said.

Speaking at a discussion at Jatiya Press Club, the minister said many people were prosecuted after the sabotage in 2013-14, some escaped through the loopholes of the law. "That won't happen this time. Every attacker will be brought to justice," said Hasan Mahmud.

He said attacks on the state were ordered by BNP's Tarique Rahman, adding that a voice record of Tarique has come into the hands of the government. "If you carry out a big attack, get a big post. Break the curfew; if not, leave the post," the minister quoted Tarique as saying.

We condemn

FROM PAGE 3

The platform condemned the imposition of curfew and internet shutdowns–which they believe resulted in a total communication blackout.

BCSNA highlighted the historical significance of student movements in Bangladesh, noting students' role in the 1952 Language Movement and the 1971 War for Liberation.

The current protests continue this legacy, now focusing on broader issues of autocratic oppression, corruption, and social injustices, BCSNA said.

The BCSNA strongly criticised the government's handling of the protests and urged the international community to pressure the Bangladeshi government to stop the violence. They called for the resignation of responsible officials and demanded justice for the student protesters.

The signatories include Anis Rahman, faculty at the department of communication in University of Washington; Khairul Islam, faculty at communication studies in State University of New York; Fahmidul Haq, faculty at Bard NYC Bard College; Najifa Farhat, PhD researcher/Graduate student at journalism department in University of Montana; and Priyanka Kundu, PhD researcher/Graduate student at Communication department in University of Illinois Chicago, among others.

Lift curfew, withdraw

FROM PAGE 3

by the people for the killings carried out "using helicopters purchased with state funds".

He asked the government to resign immediately by handing over power to a non-partisan, neutral government to hold an impartial election and ensure the safety of people's lives and property.

He alleged that the AL regime has become desperate to arrest BNP leaders, activists and students by unleashing all the state forces and ruling party cadres.

As per the government's statistics, Fakhrul said at least 3,000 people were arrested in connection with the student movement.

He said the opposition leaders are being produced before the court four to five days after being picked up and repressed, which is a gross violation of law and human rights.

Fakhrul also called for the withdrawal of the "false" cases filed against all the arrested opposition leaders and their immediate unconditional release.

Every death will be

FROM PAGE 3

of August 21 are the same perpetrators even in 2024. They are BNP and Jamaat."

He said BNP and Jamaat do not trust the country or its people. "Now that their terrorist character has been exposed, they are seeking foreign intervention to escape responsibility."

The minister continued, "The destructive actions carried out domestically and internationally under the guise of the movement will not be tolerated by the people. The situation in the country will return to normal soon."

Quader said the "radical lefts and foreign conspirators" are assisting the BNP-Jamaat axis.

Punish those involved

FROM PAGE 3

The statement called for increased capacity and preparedness within relevant government institutions to safeguard the state's critical infrastructure.

The organisation urged the government to prevent future harassment of students related to this movement and to ensure the safety of students on university campuses.

It also demanded an end to dirty politics on campuses and the regular holding of university student union elections to foster student leadership.

The civil society platform urged the immediate resolution of all deadlocks through dialogue with leaders of the anti-discrimination student movement by accepting their logical demands.

We demand

FROM PAGE 3

movement, resulting in numerous deaths. Even after such a large number of deaths, the government shows no regret," he added.

Expressing solidarity with the protests, BLAST Honorary Executive Director Barrister Sara Hossain said they are not getting the actual number of deaths.

"We have the right to know the actual number of deaths... Going through the government's statements, it seems they are more concerned about property than lives. Are properties more valuable than lives?" she added.

Dhaka University Professor Samina Lutfa said the country was now under "autocratic rule".

"Thousands of people were injured in firings of the law enforcement agencies. More than 200 were killed. The government must take responsibility for these killings," she said, demanding justice for the victims.

A total of 31 cultural and social organisations participated in the programme. In the gap between speeches, cultural organisations sang songs and recited poems protesting the killings.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 27

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Find the perpetrators

FROM PAGE 3

came under attack during the recent violence.

She inspected different parts of the BTV Bhaban, which was set on fire by a mob during the student protests for reformation of the quota system in public service.

Hasina said BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists, gathering from across the country, carried out these attacks in the capital.

"They carried out these attacks using the anti-quota demonstration," she said.

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat and BTV senior officials including its Director General Md Jahangir Alam, briefed the prime minister about the damages of the state-owned television centre.

A video presentation was made highlighting the damages in the BTV Bhaban and BTV headquarters located on the same premises.

On Thursday, the prime minister visited the vandalised metro rail station at Mirpur 10.

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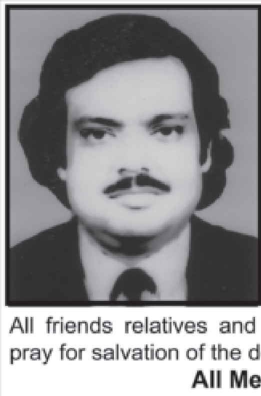
বসুন্ধরা এফ ব্লক রানিয়া এভিনিউতে ১৮৫০ বর্গফুটের দক্ষিণমুখী নির্মানাধীন ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

32TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MD. SALAHUDDIN FAROQUE



Today the **27th July** is the **32th** death anniversary of late **Md. Salahuddin Faroque** Managing Director of **Modhumita Group** and eldest son of late **Md. Sirajuddin** founder of Modhumita Group.

Though he is not in this world he lives in our hearts, in our minds and in our memory.

All friends relatives and well wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

All Members of Modhumita Family

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বসুন্ধরা এফ- ব্লকে ১৫০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
লালমাটিয়া বি-ব্লক-এ ১৬০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ব্র্যান্ড নিউ ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭

JOB ADVERTISEMENT

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Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sena Edible Oil Industries (SEOI), Narayangonj **Job Location:** Dhaka and Narayangonj	1. Post Graduate in Marketing/ Management/ MBA (Post Graduate in Engineering will be considered as additional qualification.) 2. Minimum 15 years of Management and Operational experience in the field of edible oil manufacturing, general management experience in the areas of Sales, Business Development and Distribution Channel Management. 3. Minimum 5 years experience in Leadership/top management position dealing with general management, P&L, sales, business development, distribution channel management, plant operation and revenue management.	1. Responsibile to develop strategic business plan and achieve the target set by the authority with the efficient performance of the team. 2. Monitoring and further development of plant operations and Channel Network in Bangladesh. 3. Providing timely and regular feedback to Board of Director/senior management regarding performance in all facilities. 4. Managing the cross functional teams of HR, Marketing, Sales & Distribution, Finance, SCM, IT and Corporate & Regulatory Compliance. 5.Successfully implementing SKS policy and develop growth strategy together with the board. 6. Closely monitoring the operating and financial results against plans and budgets. 7. Representing the SKS to major customers. 8. Managing an effective executive team.	Salary and other facilities may be decided with bilateral discussion

2. Interested candidates need to submit their updated resume along with recent passport size photograph to Sena Kalyan Sangstha (HR Division), SKS Tower (Level 10), 7 VIP Road, Mohakhali, Dhaka and hrd@senakalyan.com by 03 August 2024.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD,
Cumilla Road Division, Cumilla.
Phone: 081-64725
e-mail: eecom@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1933.410.07.001.24-4931 **Date: 25.07.2024**

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal in Bangladesh (http:www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work mentioned in the table below:-

SL No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of Works	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
01	1004890, e-GP/CRD/ADP/ EMRB/WP-02/ 2023-2024	Strengthening of Existing Pavement, Construction of new pavement, DBS Base course, DBS Wearing course, Rigid Pavement, Earth work in Road Embankment, Protective work by RCC Retaining Wall, Brick Toe wall, Cast-in-situ Palisiding, C.C block with Geo textile, Brick "U"-Drain & Saucer Drain, Installation of Overhead Sign, Sign, Signal, Kilometer Post, Guide Post, Construction of Bus Bay, Reflecting Road Studs, Deliniator-Reflector and Road Marking work from 13th KM to 24th KM at (Ch: 12+000 to Ch: 24+000) of Eliotganj-Muradnagar-Ramchandrapur-Bancharampur (Z-1042) Road, Development Project Programme, under Road Division Cumilla during the year 2023-2024.	12-Aug-2024 16:00	13-Aug-2024 12:00	13-Aug-2024 12:00

25/07/24
(Suniti Chakma)
ID No. 602147
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Cumilla.
☎: 01730-782641

GD-75

Pakistan using 'proxy war' to stay relevant

Says Modi

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday that Pakistan is trying to stay relevant through "terrorism" and "proxy war" but its "unholy plans" will never succeed.

The nuclear-armed neighbours share an uneasy relationship and India has, for decades, accused Pakistan of backing Islamist militants fighting its rule in Kashmir, the Himalayan region both claim in full but rule only in part.

Pakistan denies the accusations, saying it only provides diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris seeking self-determination in the Muslim-majority region. Modi's comments came at an event to mark the 25th anniversary of India's short military conflict with Pakistan in Kargil.

Displaced Palestinians from the eastern part of Khan Yunis prepare to cook at a temporary camp set up on the grounds of a cemetery in the western part of the city, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.
PHOTO: AFP

Regional security chiefs arrive in Myanmar for talks

AFP, *Bangkok*

National security chiefs from six South and Southeast Asian countries have arrived in Myanmar for regional talks, state media reported yesterday, in a rare visit for the isolated and embattled junta.

National security chiefs from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Thailand and Sri Lanka arrived on Thursday, the Global New Light of Myanmar reported.

The six countries, plus Myanmar, make up the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) group, loosely focused on trade.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing met BIMSTEC officials ahead of the talks which began yesterday.

They discussed "peace and stability... cooperation among member states in drug eradication, combatting terrorism, anti-human trafficking," the newspaper said.

AFP has contacted the embassies of the six countries for comment.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power in 2021 and launched a sweeping crackdown on dissent.

It is now battling established ethnic minority armed groups and newer "People's Defence Forces" that are fighting its rule, and together have seized swathes of territory.

Rights groups accuse the military of massive human rights abuses as it struggles to crush its opponents.

IRAQ, SYRIA

Rockets launched at bases hosting US troops

AFP, *Baghdad*

Several rockets were launched Thursday and yesterday against bases hosting troops from the US-led anti-jihadist coalition in Iraq and Syria, security officials and a war monitor said.

Such attacks were frequent early in the war between Israel and Hamas Palestinian militants in Gaza but since then have largely halted.

"Four rockets fell in the vicinity" of Ain al-Assad base in Anbar province, an Iraqi security source said.

Another security official said an attack occurred with "a drone and three rockets" that fell close to the base perimeter.

A United States official said initial reports indicated that projectiles landed outside the base without causing injuries or damage to the base.

All sources spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorised to speak to the media.

At least one rocket also fell near a base of the coalition in the Conoco gas field in Deir Ezzor province of eastern Syria, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

WEEKS OF ISRAELI BOMBARDMENT

Gaza civilians shelter in former prison

REUTERS, *Gaza*

After weeks of Israeli bombardment left them with nowhere else to go, hundreds of Palestinians have ended up in a former Gaza prison built to hold murderers and thieves.

Yasmeen al-Dardasi said she and her family passed wounded people they were unable to help as they evacuated from a district in the southern city of Khan Younis towards its Central Correction and Rehabilitation Facility.

They spent a day under a tree before moving on to the former prison, where they now live in a prayer room. It offers protection from the blistering sun, but not much else.

Dardasi's husband has a damaged kidney and just one lung, but no mattress or blanket.

"We are not settled here either," said Dardasi, who like many Palestinians fears she will be uprooted once again.

Palestinians, many of whom have been displaced several times, say nowhere is free of Israeli bombardment, which has reduced much of Gaza to rubble.

An Israeli air strike killed at least 90 Palestinians in a designated humanitarian zone in the Al-Mawasi area on July 13, the territory's health ministry said, in an attack that Israel said targeted Hamas' elusive military chief Mohammed Deif.

On Thursday, Gaza's health ministry said Israeli military strikes on areas in eastern Khan Younis had killed 14 people.

Entire neighbourhoods have been flattened in one of the most densely populated places in the world, where poverty and unemployment have long been widespread.

According to the United Nations, nine in ten people across Gaza are now internally displaced.

Israeli soldiers told Saria Abu Mustafa and her family that they should flee for safety as tanks were on their way, she said. The family had no time to change so they left in their prayer clothes.

After sleeping outside on sandy ground, they too found refuge in the prison, among piles of rubble and gaping holes in buildings from the battles which were fought there. Inmates had been released long before Israel attacked.

"We didn't take anything with us. We came here on foot, with children walking with us," she said, adding that many of the women had five or six children with them and that water was hard to find.

She held her niece, who was born during the conflict, which has killed her father and brothers.

More than 39,000 Palestinians have been killed in the air and ground offensive, Palestinian health officials said.

Hana Al-Sayed Abu Mustafa arrived at the prison after being displaced six times.

> **Palestinians, many of whom have been displaced several times, say nowhere is free of Israeli bombardment.**

'I will not be silent'

Says US VP Harris after tough talks with Netanyahu on Gaza ceasefire deal

REUTERS, *Washington*

US Vice President Kamala Harris pressured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday evening to help reach a Gaza ceasefire deal that would ease the suffering of Palestinian civilians, striking a tougher tone than President Joe Biden.

"It is time for this war to end," Harris said in a televised statement after she held face-to-face talks with Netanyahu.

Harris, the likely Democratic presidential nominee after Biden dropped out of the election race on Sunday, did not mince words about the humanitarian crisis gripping Gaza after nine months of Israeli offensive.

"We cannot allow ourselves to be numb to the suffering and I will not be silent," she said.

Harris' remarks were sharp and serious in tone and raised the question of whether she would be more aggressive in dealing with Netanyahu if elected president on November 5.

But analysts do not expect there would be a major shift in US policy toward Israel, Washington's closest ally in the Middle East.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

China, Russia vow to counter 'extra-regional forces'

AFP, *Vientiane*

China and Russia's foreign ministers met their Southeast Asian counterparts yesterday after vowing to counter "extra-regional forces", a day before Washington's top diplomat was due to arrive.

Wang Yi and Sergei Lavrov were attending a three-day meeting of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) bloc in the Laos capital Vientiane.

Both held talks with counterparts from the bloc, while Wang also met with new British Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

On Thursday Wang and Lavrov agreed to work together in "countering any attempts by extra-regional forces to interfere in Southeast Asian affairs", according to Moscow's foreign ministry.

They also discussed implementing "a new security architecture" in Eurasia, Lavrov said in a statement, without elaborating.

According to a readout from Chinese state news agency Xinhua, Wang said Beijing was "ready to work with Russia to... firmly support each other, safeguard each other's core interests".

China is a close political and economic ally of Russia, and Nato members have branded Beijing a "decisive enabler" of Moscow's war in Ukraine.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to arrive in Vientiane this morning for talks with Asean foreign ministers.

Blinken has made Washington's alliances in Asia a top foreign policy priority, with the aim of "advancing a free and open" Indo-Pacific -- a veiled way of criticizing China and its ambitions.

OIL SPILL FROM TANKER

Philippines races to avoid 'catastrophe'

AFP, *Limay*

The Philippine Coast Guard yesterday raced to offload 1.4 million litres of industrial fuel oil from a sunken tanker and prevent an "environmental catastrophe" in Manila Bay.

One crew member died when the MT Terra Nova sank in rough seas nearly seven kilometres (4.3 miles) off Limay municipality early Thursday after setting out for the central city of Iloilo.

An oil slick stretching several kilometres was detected in the waterway, which thousands of fishermen and tourism operators rely on for their livelihoods.

Coast guard spokesman Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said yesterday the spill was "minimal" and that it appeared to be diesel fuel used to power the tanker and not the industrial fuel oil cargo. "No oil has been leaking from the tank itself, so we're racing against time to siphon the oil so we can avoid the environmental catastrophe," Balilo said.

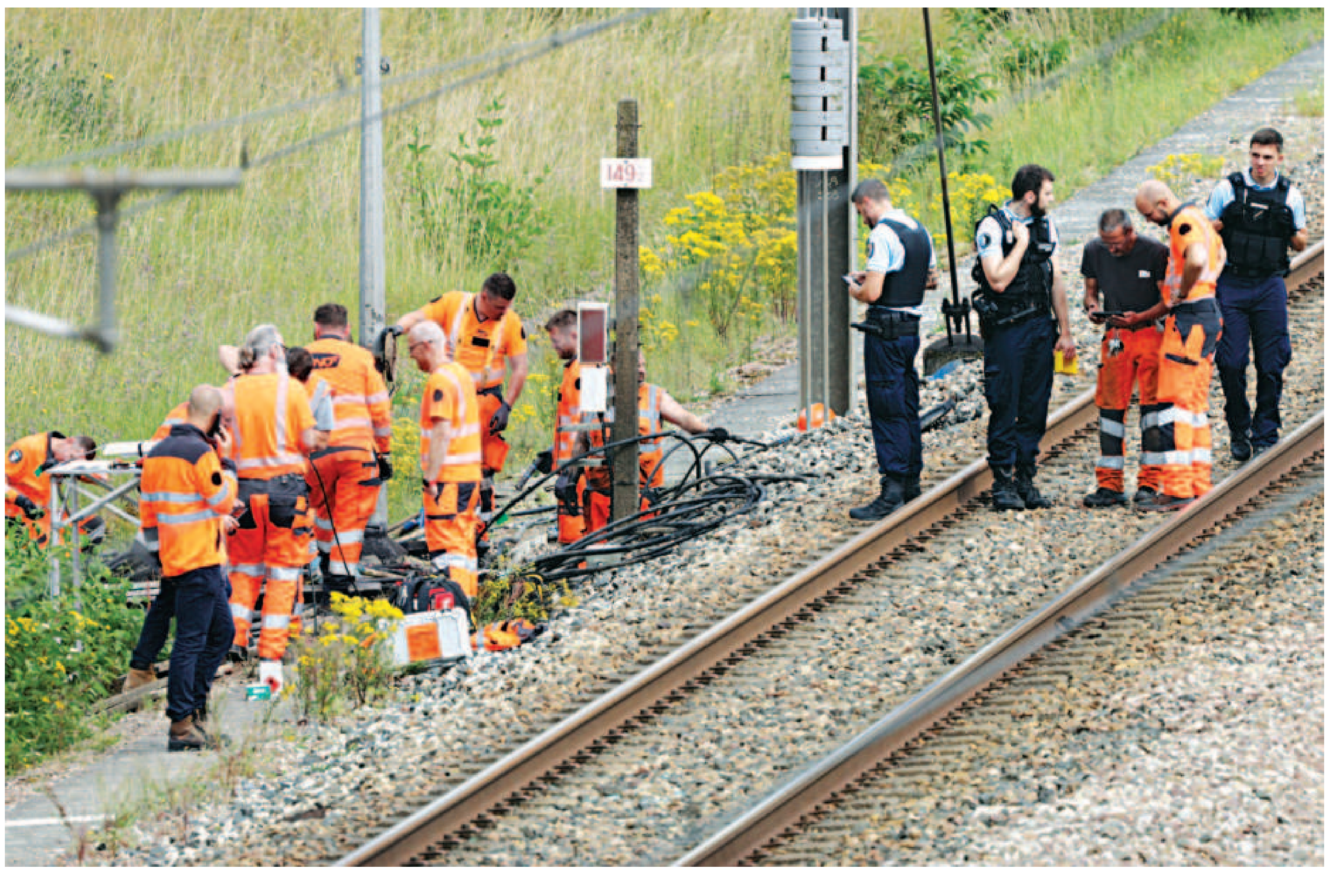
The coast guard has set a target of seven days to offload the cargo and prevent what Balilo warned would be the worst oil spill in Philippine history if it were to leak.

AFP journalists at the Port of Limay in Bataan province watched coast guard personnel load oil dispersant and a suction skimmer onto a boat to be used against the slick.

Balilo said oil spill containment booms had also been deployed in preparation "for the worst case scenario" of the industrial fuel oil leaking before it could be offloaded.

Once the weather improved, coast guard divers would inspect the position of the tanker so the "siphoning operation" could get under way, he said.

The coast guard met with representatives of the MT Terra Nova's owner and a contracted salvage company yesterday to discuss the timeline.



SNCF employees and French gendarmes inspect the scene of a suspected attack on the high speed railway network at Croiselles, northern France yesterday. French security forces are hunting people behind arson attacks that hobbled the country's high-speed rail network hours before the Olympic Games opening ceremony.
PHOTO: AFP

Plan to tax super-rich divides at G20 meet in Rio

AFP, *Rio De Janeiro*

Brazil's vision for a global deal to tax the ultra-rich sparked divisions Thursday at a meeting of G20 finance ministers in Rio de Janeiro, where the US dismissed the need for an international accord on the matter.

The initiative, discussed at an afternoon meeting, is a key priority for Brazil's leftist president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who this year heads the G20 grouping of the world's major economies, the European Union and the African Union.

Even before talks began, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen dampened the mood by saying there was no need for a global agreement on taxing billionaires.

"Tax policy is very difficult to coordinate globally," she told journalists. "We think that all countries should make sure that their taxation systems are fair and progressive."

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Television thrives amidst internet outage
CAN IT KEEP ITS VIEWERS?

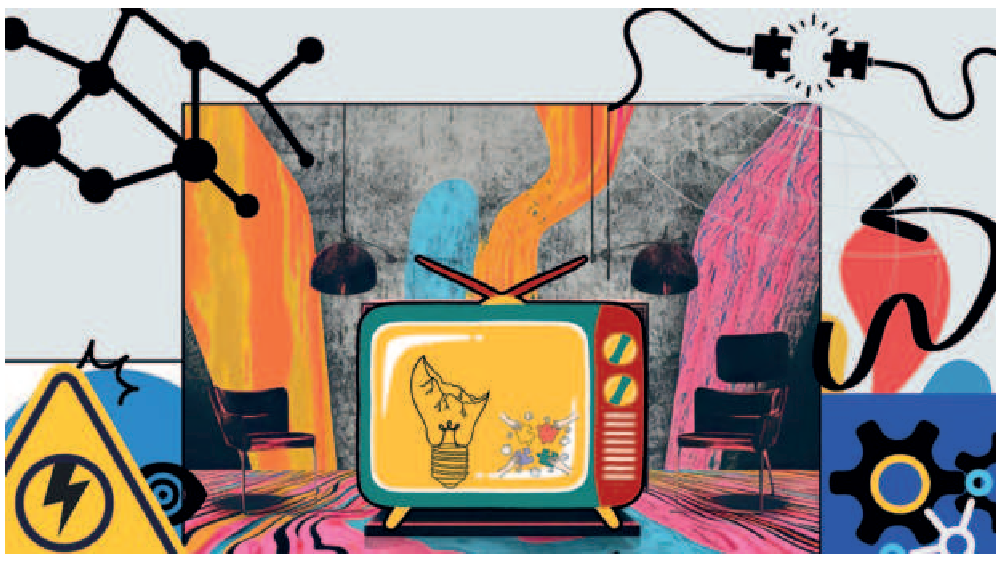


ILLUSTRATION: **DOWEL BISWAS**

"After almost five years, our family came together to watch television during the internet outage. It was fun, and reminded us of the old times when we used to watch cable TV together," said Parul, who works as a nurse at a private hospital.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

This sentiment resonated across the country as people left their mobile phones to watch their TV screens for a change.

My brain, accustomed to surfing the internet all day, found peace in switching channels with my trusty old friend, the remote control. After watching piles of excruciating news about the rampage and ruins of our country, I found an escape in funny serials and old Bangla movies on TV.

Amid the chaos, I found solace in Deepto TV's popular drama ***Bokulpur*** and Gaan Bangla's musical programme ***Wind of Change***. Then it struck me—what had happened to television? Why did it lose its charm? Will it be able to sustain the sudden rise in TV ratings with quality content?

Curious, I asked my Gen-Z cousin for her take on television content. "I think I'm going to lose my mind if I have to stay without the internet. I can't stand those cringe Bangla movies and slapstick comedies anymore," said Zaira.

ILLUSTRATION: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

"Television channel owners should have considered people's tastes and taken digital media as a strong competitor to produce quality programmes. Unfortunately, they failed to meet expectations, leading to a decline in viewership," said Ibn Hasan Khan, director of Sales and Marketing at Channel i.

Alfred Kokhon, head of programs at NTV, shared a similar sentiment. He stated, "We have both television and an OTT platform. However, we always air the latest episodes first on our channel. But since the audience has options, viewership gets distributed. When there was no online option, everything was centralised on TV. If television starts producing quality content that caters to our local audiences' tastes, viewers will surely watch it."

To be fair, television channels could not have predicted the situation and instantly formulated a plan to keep its sudden viewership. "We are going through a crisis period right now, and sticking with scheduled content for the time being. However, we are hopeful that once we get through this, we will come up with ideas to draw audiences back to television," said Ibn Hasan.

While the internet was down, TV ratings skyrocketed. Most TV channels have confirmed that their ratings have doubled, although they couldn't provide actual figures as data couldn't be gathered physically. How did they assume their content was reaching the audience? The answer lies in the constant stream of advertisement breaks.

"The viewership of our series is also increasing. Many people are watching our series ***Ghorer Shotru Bivishon*** and ***Jonakir Alo***. Increased viewership means more advertisements for NTV. With online platforms still temporarily off, people are turning to television. When sponsors are eager to place ads on our content, it confirms that viewers are watching it more," said Alfred Kokhon.

While other channels are airing old series and reruns of previous episodes, Deepto TV is committed to highlighting new episodes for their viewers.

"We could have showcased repeats of old episodes of our popular series, but we didn't. We don't want to bank episodes; instead, we aim to show fresh episodes to our viewers. If we run out of episodes, we have decided to ensure pick-and-drop service for our artistes so that they can film safely. This initiative is our effort to retain our audience. We are confident that this approach will help retain a small percentage of our viewers," said COO Subarna Parvin of Deepto TV.

Deepto TV, known for its series-based content, saw a significant increase in viewership during the internet outage. Their dramas "Mashrafe Junior," "Bokulpur," and "Dena Pawna" have a massive fanbase that grew even larger during this period.

Recently, Channel i's tele-fiction "Tithidor" has been praised for raising awareness about depression in adults. The channel also enjoys a dedicated fanbase with its "Punorjonmo" series. Ibn Hasan Khan of Channel i is confident that the popularity of television will sustain in the long run against OTT platforms.

"Although the popularity of this medium is increasing, it still hasn't fully taken away the charm of television. The reason is that only a certain sector of people is connected to digital media, while a large number of people still watch television. Television still has a significant scope to attract an audience by offering good content," added Ibn Hasan.

While it's true that the popularity of OTT.

Lady Gaga alters breathing technique to sing in 'Joker 2'

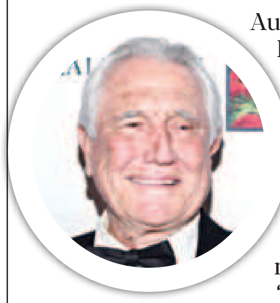
Lady Gaga is all set to feature a different vocal style, for her rendition of the DC character Harley "Lee" Quinn in the Todd Phillips directorial film ***Joker: Folie à Deux***, also starring Joaquin Phoenix.

The Grammy and Oscar-winning artiste told Empire magazine that her portrayal of the iconic character from ***Batman: The Animated Series*** will showcase a new talent in the musical.

She explained, "I focused intensely on changing my usual breathing techniques to sing in a way that comes from Lee, rather than from the artiste people know me as."

"There are quite a few off-key moments in my singing as Lee because she wouldn't know that as a classically trained vocalist, I control my breathing to stay on pitch and maintain rhythm. For Lee, I let go of these technical elements, setting aside my training to fully embrace the character."

'James Bond' star George Lazenby announces retirement



Australian actor George Lazenby, renowned for his portrayal of James Bond in the 1969 classic ***On Her Majesty's Secret Service***, has officially retired from acting. Lazenby shared his decision on the social media platform X, as reported by Variety.

"This hasn't been an easy decision, but it's time to announce my retirement from work. Therefore, I won't be doing any more acting or making public appearances, doing any more interviews, or signing any more autographs as of today," Lazenby posted.

The actor expressed heartfelt gratitude to his fans for their unwavering support over the years. Lazenby's tenure as the world's most famous secret agent was the shortest, starring in only one ***James Bond*** film. Despite this, his role left a lasting impression on the franchise.

Beyond James Bond, Lazenby appeared in other notable projects, such as ***The Man from Hong Kong*** (1975) and ***Never Too Young to Die*** (1986).

NEWS

Humanity suffers

FROM PAGE 12

The disease is climate inaction," he stressed, calling in particular on G20 countries to take action.

While 2023 was the hottest year on record, and 2024 could set a new record, temperatures well above 40C (104F) are increasingly common.

In the space of a year, the 50C threshold has even been exceeded in at least 10 places, from Death Valley in the United States (53.9C on July 7) to Agadir in Morocco, and also in China and India.

The intense heat, often less visible than other devastating impacts of climate change such as storms or floods, is nonetheless more deadly.

This "silent killer" is responsible for around 489,000 deaths per year between 2000 and 2019, compared with 16,000 deaths per year from cyclones, according to the UN's "Call to Action" document published on Thursday.

Extremely high temperatures also have an economic impact, with the UN estimating economic losses from heat stress at work will reach $2.4 trillion in 2030.

According to a report by the International Labor Organization published on Thursday, more than 70 percent of workers were exposed to excessive heat in 2020, 8.8 percent more than in 2000.

"The good news is that we can save lives and we can limit its impact," Guterres said Thursday.

The UN has called for the world community to first act to protect "the most vulnerable" -- including young children, the elderly and also humanity's poorest.

In this context, early warning systems should include extreme heat, warning populations of the arrival of heat waves and informing them of the precautions to take, the document says.

The call to action also recommends an "increase (to) equitable access to and scale up (of) low-carbon cooling."

This would involve investing in passive cooling systems -- which include climate-sensitive urban design measures, reflective surfaces and natural cooling systems -- and the phase-out of climate-warming gases that are used in many cooling systems.

Investigate killings of 3 journos

FROM PAGE 12

It said Bangladesh authorities imposed an internet shutdown and severely disrupted mobile data services on July 18. Broadband internet was partially restored in limited areas on Tuesday evening, but mobile services and social media remained blocked as of July 26.

CPJ also said it has confirmed attacks on 14 journalists and was continuing to investigate reports that dozens more have been assaulted either by police, protesters, or supporters of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

Of the 14, several required hospital treatment for injuries, including head wounds, it added.

Referring to various sources, including media reports, CPJ said Mehedi, a reporter for Dhaka Times, was fatally shot on July 18 while covering clashes in Jatrabari. Hossain, a correspondent for Daily Bhorer Awaj newspaper, was also killed on July 18 while reporting in Gazipur. Turab, a reporter for the Daily Jalalabad and Daily Naya Diganta, was killed when police allegedly fired on a procession of the BNP in northeast Sylhet city on July 19.

Take steps to restore people's faith

FROM PAGE 2

serious crisis yet," said the Brussels-based global think tank.

The report details the origin of the quota reforms protest, corruption in the job sector, lack of political freedom and the authorities' heavy-handed approach to protesters.

"The Awami League government has the coercive tools to hold onto power and the past week's events have shown that it is willing to go to great lengths to crush challenges to its authority," it said.

"But if it survives through brute force alone, its legitimacy will be greatly diminished, particularly among the students who led the demonstrations."

Bangladesh risks losing RMG orders to competitors elsewhere in the region due to political instability, said Pierre Prakash, adding that the impact of the protests will place further stress on the country's ailing economy.

Once the immediate crisis is resolved, the government should assume the hard work of political reform, the ICG said.

"It should take steps to restore the multi-party system that it has undermined over the past fifteen years. The Awami League's dominance of the political landscape has helped create the conditions for a popular upheaval," it said.

It also suggested dialogues with opposition groups, including the BNP.

The report suggested that a unity government or even a new national election are potential means of helping restore confidence in the political system.

"State and party leaders should encourage the emergence of new political forces that could channel the demands of younger generations; many in the student movement see the current opposition as little better than the Awami League."

"The rise of anti-quota protests has illustrated just how fragile one-party rule is in Bangladesh."

Prakash said foreign partners should urge the government to restore respect for civil rights immediately and pursue talks with those leading the anti-quota movement.

India, a staunch supporter of Hasina's government, should also use its leverage to help Bangladesh back on a path to stability by restoring multi-party democracy, good governance and respect for civil rights, ICG said.

"Doubling down on authoritarian methods to quell demonstrations without serious efforts at dialogue and political reform is unlikely to bring more than temporary calm," it added.

'Sabotage' hits French trains

FROM PAGE 12

suspicions fell on leftist militants or environmental activists, but they said there was not yet any evidence.

The Paris prosecutor's office said the probe would be overseen by its organised crime office, with the anti-terrorist sub-directorate (SDAT), a branch of the judicial police that typically monitors hard-left, extreme-right and radical environmental groups, coordinating investigations.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal declined to speculate about the possibility of such groups being behind the sabotage.

"What we know, what we see, is that this operation was prepared, coordinated, that nerve centres were targeted, which shows a certain knowledge of the network to know where to strike," he said.

The coordinated strikes on the rail network will feed into a sense of apprehension ahead of the Olympics opening ceremony in the heart of Paris later on Friday. Operations at the Basel-Mulhouse airport on France's border with Switzerland were briefly suspended due to a bomb alert.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said he had full confidence in the French authorities.

"I don't have concerns," he told reporters at the Olympic Village.

More than 300,000 spectators are expected to line the banks of the River Seine when the athletes parade through the heart of Paris on a flotilla of barges and riverboats, part of an extravagant show that will be watched by billions.

France has deployed 45,000 police, 10,000 soldiers and 2,000 private security agents to secure the Games' opening ceremony. Snipers will be on rooftops, and drones in the air.

But while the capital is locked down for the opening ceremony, security elsewhere in the country is lighter.

The TGV high-speed rail attacks left hundreds of thousands of people stranded at stations.

Eurostar's high-speed services linking London and Paris were forced onto slower lines while Germany's Deutsche Bahn warned of disruption to long-distance services.

The SNCF urged all travelers to postpone their journeys. Repairs were underway but traffic would be severely disrupted until at least the end of the weekend.

At the Gare de L'Est, Xavier Hiegel, 39, said he was just trying to get home for the weekend and could not believe that people would want to harm the Olympics.

"The Games bring jobs so this really is nonsense. I hope the people responsible will be found and punished," he said.

The attacks hit signalling installations on the Atlantic, Northern and Eastern high-speed lines with fires set off by explosive devices, the SNCF said.

SNCF chief Jean-Pierre Farandou said some 800,000 customers had been impacted ahead of a busy weekend for French holidaymakers. Thousands of rail staff had been deployed to repair the damage.

"This attack is not a coincidence, it's an effort to destabilise France," Valerie Pecresse, president of the Paris region, told reporters.

Paris 2024 said it was working closely with the SNCF to assess the situation. The attacks will make it tougher for people travelling to Paris from other areas of France.

"It's a disaster," said Parisian Brigitte Dupont. "Today is the opening of the Olympic Games, a huge event that was supposed to be magnificent, and this is spoiling people's joy."

Wave of Israeli strikes hit

FROM PAGE 12

cannot continue," it said.

Iran's government said yesterday the recent meeting of Hamas and Fatah in the Chinese capital is a valuable step in the direction of national reconciliation for Palestine, reports Al Jazeera Online.

Nasser Kanaani, the foreign ministry spokesperson, said on X that the Iranian government backs the Palestinian groups "in confronting the occupation of the apartheid regime of Israel and their collective movement in the direction of exercising the fundamental right to self-determination".

Peace Now Israel, a group pushing for a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said since the offensive on Gaza began, Israel has established at least "25 outposts, most of them agricultural outposts", in the occupied West Bank.

"The cabinet approved the establishment of five new settlements: Evyatar, Givat Assaf, Sde Ephraim, Adorayim, and Nachal Haletz, all illegal outposts intended to become official settlements," the report said.

In the eastern area of Nablus, north of the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces detained seven Palestinians during a raid, according to the Wafa news agency.

Palestinian security and local sources told Wafa that several Israeli military vehicles stormed the area with tear gas and stun grenades near the Askar refugee camp.

20 students sued for attack on police

FROM PAGE 12

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, also the case's investigating officer, told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to recent statements by some government high-ups, students would not be harassed for participating in the quota reform protests unless they were involved in attacks on government establishments.

This year's quota protests started on July 1 and were held peacefully till July 15, when Chhatra League activists attacked quota protesters on the Dhaka University campus. The attack led to fierce clashes on the campus, leaving scores injured -- mostly protesters, including female students.

Is Islamic finance facing headwinds?

Islamic finance began its journey in the country in the early 1980s and evolved into a significant sector within Bangladesh's financial landscape due to the Islamic perspective of risk sharing and ethical investment.

AM JAHID *and* **MD MEHEDI HASAN**

Rabiul Islam, a practising Muslim who works at a private organisation, refrained from conventional banking services for many years as both paying and receiving interest are against his religious principles.

Although he had to maintain a mandatory salary account with a private bank, he did not utilise additional services like loans.

Out of concern about where to safekeep his savings around 10 years ago, he sought advice from an Islamic scholar or Imam and opened an account with Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL).

"I opened the account after getting assurances that all banking activities through Islamic finance are conducted in accordance with religious principles," he explained.

Like Islam, millions of Bangladeshi Muslims have turned to Islamic finance, regardless of financial literacy, boosting its popularity.

Islamic finance began its journey in the country in the early 1980s and evolved into a significant sector within Bangladesh's financial landscape due to the Islamic perspective of risk sharing and ethical investment.

IBBL, the first Islamic bank of the country, was formed in 1983. It offered products like profit-sharing investment accounts (Mudarabah) and financing facilities (Musharakah).

By the early 2000s, IBBL's success had paved the way for the formation of other Islamic banks like Al-Arafah Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, and Shahjalal Islami Bank.

"Most Bangladeshis are religious. Even those who do not practise actively want to adhere to Islamic principles. Islamic banks are capitalising on this sentiment," said Mohammed Nurul Amin, a former chairman of the Association of Bankers Bangladesh.

The seasoned banker said many people prefer interest-free banking because of religious beliefs.

Another reason for the popularity of Islamic banks is the favourable policy support extended to them from the Bangladesh Bank, which has made the sector more profitable than the conventional banks.

The Islamic finance sector enjoys a lower statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and higher investment-deposit ratio (IDR) than conventional banks. The SLR is the minimum percentage of deposits that a commercial bank has to maintain in the form of liquid cash, gold or other securities.

As per the central bank rules, traditional banks must maintain 13 percent of their deposits as SLR while Islamic banks must maintain only 5.5 percent, a major regulatory benefit that means Islamic banks have more investible funds than commercial banks.

At the same time, conventional banks have to maintain an ADR (advance to deposit ratio) of 87 percent while Shariah-based banks have to maintain 92 percent.

This means conventional banks can lend Tk 87 against a deposit of Tk 100, while Shariah-based banks can lend Tk 92 against the same.

Amin, also a former managing director of Meghna Bank, said investors and shareholders are very eager to form Shariah-based banks due to such regulatory benefits.

Industry insiders added that the beneficial policy support motivated a growing number of commercial banks to turn into Islamic banks.

For instance, Standard Bank and NRB Global Bank, both commercial banks, transformed into Shariah-based lenders in 2021.

Including those two, there are 10 full-fledged Islamic banks in the country. The others are IBBL, Shahjalal Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, Al-Arafah Islami Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Union Bank and ICB Islamic Bank.

These banks have around 1,700 branches in the country.

However, the central bank has been selective in approving the introduction of Islamic financing windows in most conventional banks.

Besides, many commercial banks have introduced Islamic windows and branches. This has enabled them to reach customers who otherwise wouldn't have availed their services.

A total of 15 commercial banks have opened 30 Islamic banking branches while 16 banks are running 624 Islamic banking windows to provide services.

Also, some non-bank financial institutions and insurance companies are also providing Islamic finance services like Islamic bonds (sukuk), Islamic insurance (takaful), and Islamic microfinance.

Sukuk has become an alternative avenue for raising funds for infrastructure and development projects, while takaful offers a Shariah-compliant insurance solution to individuals and businesses.

Islamic microfinance institutions have played a crucial role in providing financial services to the unbanked and underbanked population, contributing to financial inclusion and poverty alleviation.

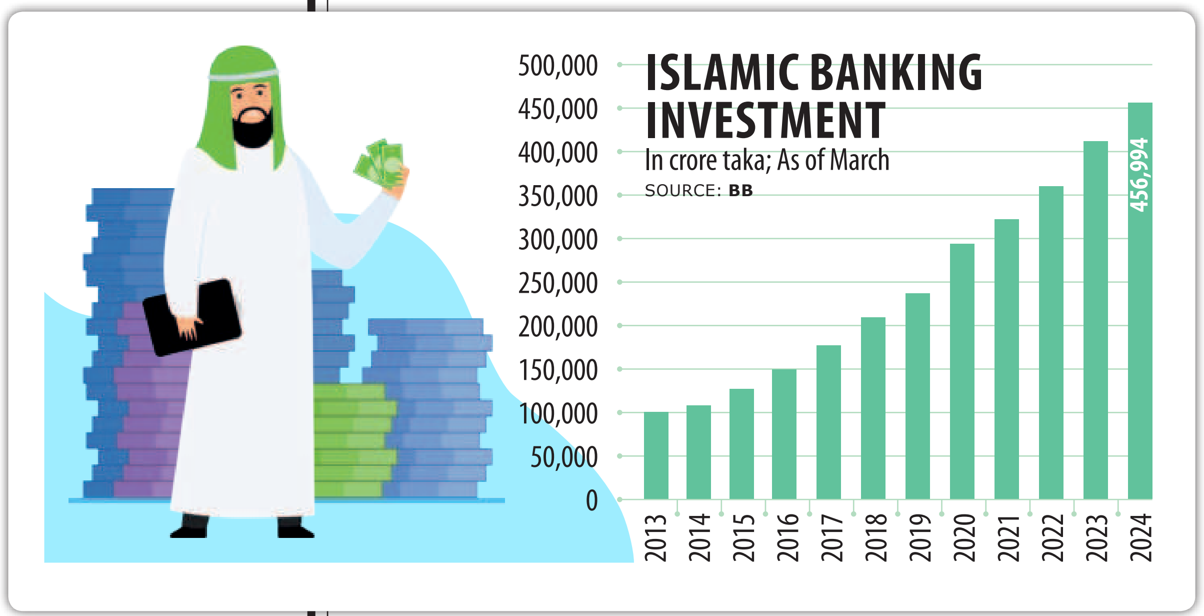
The wide adoption of Islamic banking has contributed to phenomenal growth and expansion in the sector until 2022.

At the end of September 2022, total deposits in this system reached Tk 421,375 crore and investment stood at Tk 386,221 crore. Besides, the IDR stood at 0.92 while excess liquidity reached Tk 17,525 crore.

However, total deposits at the Islamic banking industry rose to Tk 439,465 crore till March of this year and total investment stood at Tk 456,994 crore, as per the latest data from the central bank.

As of 2023, Islamic banking assets accounted for over 25 percent of the overall banking sector's assets in Bangladesh.

Islamic microfinance institutions have played a crucial role in providing financial services to the unbanked and underbanked population, contributing to financial inclusion and poverty alleviation. The wide adoption of Islamic banking has contributed to phenomenal growth and expansion in the sector until 2022.



RECENT CRISIS

However, despite the impressive growth and potential, the sector has been facing a significant crisis since the middle of 2022 due to loan irregularities, scams and a lack of good governance in some Shariah-based banks.

At the end of 2022, the Islamic banking sector faced some headwinds as the asset quality of a dozen Shariah-based banks deteriorated and a number of loan irregularities came to light, impacting the growth and liquidity indicators of the sector.

The deposit growth of Islamic banks dropped to 2.9 percent year-on-year in 2022 from 20.1 percent a year ago, according to the central bank's Financial Stability Report 2022.

Presently, six Shariah-based banks are facing a huge liquidity crisis as depositors have withdrawn their funds, adversely affecting the whole sector.

Recently, Fitch Ratings said that Bangladesh's Islamic banking sector was still being affected by a liquidity shortage as it is more vulnerable than the conventional banking sector.

The American credit rating agency added that Bangladesh's Islamic banking sector has been stagnant for the past two years despite having a sizable market share.

The liquidity crisis has been so severe that the ICB Islamic Bank, one of the affected banks, recently failed to repay depositors' money.

Excess liquidity in the sector plummeted to Tk 1,518 crore at the end of March this year, a 91.3 percent drop compared to September of 2022.

Amin accused those who were involved in loans irregularities and scams of forming Islamic banks solely to make profits instead of for ideological reasons. "If ideology was the driving force, then how come one person can own six to eight Shariah-based banks?" he questioned.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

There are some structural issues in the sector, such as the lower number of Shariah-compliant instruments that allow banks to borrow money from the call money market, which has worsened the liquidity crisis, according to industry insiders.

Besides, except for a set of guidelines issued by the central bank, there is no specific law or policy framework for the Islamic finance sector in Bangladesh despite the fact that countries with dedicated frameworks have seen the sector grow substantially.

The central bank recently revised its Shariah banking guideline, but is yet to publish it.

Mustafa K Mujeri, a former chief economist of the central bank, recently told The Daily Star that simply revising the guidelines would not be enough. Strict action must be taken in case of violations, he said.

Mujeri, also an executive director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development, said most Islamic banks are worse off than before as the rules are not being followed.

Industry insiders emphasised forming supervisory committees in banks with people who are efficient in both banking and Islamic law. In most cases, bankers lack knowledge about Islamic jurisprudence while Islamic scholars have limited to no practical banking knowledge.

Hence, strict monitoring by the central bank is mandatory in order to bring discipline to the sector.

WAY FORWARD

Good governance and accountability are key to navigating the current crisis and ensuring sustainable growth, according to experts.

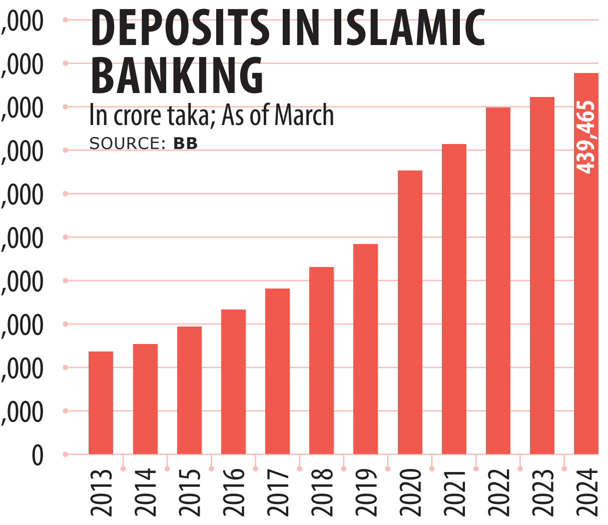
This requires the implementation of internal controls, independent audits, and transparent reporting mechanisms as well as strengthening the role and independence of Shariah boards in overseeing compliance with Islamic principles.

The central bank should review some Shariah-based banks and, if needed, the board of directors of those banks should be reformed, Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

A chief executive of a Shariah-based bank, seeking anonymity, said there is a need for a concentrated effort from regulators, banks, and stakeholders to enhance governance, better manage risks, and restore public confidence.

An Islamic banking law is needed to ensure compliance as the sector can play a vital role in the country's economic development and financial inclusion once it overcomes the current crisis, he added.

Islamic Banking



BY THE NUMBERS (As of March 2024)

Total number of Islamic banks: **10**

Total branches: **1,700**

Total deposit: Tk **439,465**cr

Total investment: Tk **456,994**cr

SHARIAH-BASED BANKS

Islami Bank Bangladesh, Shahjalal Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, Al-Arafah Islami Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Standard Bank, ICB Islamic Bank, Union Bank, and NRB Global Bank

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

How smart is shutting down social media?

It will severely curtail people's fundamental freedoms

After a prolonged internet shutdown that all but brought the "Digital Bangladesh" to a standstill, broadband internet has finally been restored across the country. However, mobile internet is still suspended. More worryingly still, sources say that the government is unlikely to provide uninterrupted access to social media platforms anytime soon—at least until tech companies comply with its demands. State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak stated on Wednesday that social media platforms, particularly Facebook and YouTube, have not been complying with Bangladesh's laws; as such, Facebook, along with Meta's other popular platforms such as Messenger and WhatsApp—and ByteDance's TikTok—will remain blocked indefinitely.

The internet was shut down at the height of the protests around 9pm on July 18, with the government offering conflicting accounts of why it occurred from the very beginning. While it claims that the shutdown occurred due to an attack on the data centres in the capital's Mohakhali area, The Daily Star, upon visiting the centres, found no sign of damage to the building that housed them—to say nothing of the fact that it's a technical impossibility for an entire country's internet to be disrupted simply because of a localised disruption.

We are disturbed that the government ordered such a shutdown, which lasted for over five days—which, as highlighted by UN experts, represent a dramatic means of limiting fundamental freedoms and contravene international law. But that it did so under false pretext can only add to people's growing mistrust of the government at a time when the latter needs to assure the former of its commitment to democratic norms and human rights. The government's decision to prolong the ban on social media will only confirm the public's suspicion that it is doing so to control the free flow of information about the severity of the atrocities conducted during the protests. During such a vacuum, it is natural for misinformation and rumours to spread among a population starved of information.

We have observed with increasing alarm the government's stringent measures to curtail digital freedoms over the decade, from arbitrarily arresting people under the draconian Digital Security Act (now the Cyber Security Act) for their social media posts, to the surveillance of private data of citizens, to demanding that tech companies block certain users or content or provide their personal details. We have seen such measures being intensified in the aftermath of mass protests. We urge the government to realise that blocking social media indefinitely will only fuel panic and resentment and further alienate it from the public.

Putting aside the obvious violations of our digital rights and freedoms of speech and expression, what is to happen to the numerous businesses that are now dependent on social media for their very survival? How is the government to commensurate its grandiloquent claims of building a "Smart Bangladesh," while taking increasingly unsmart measures to restrict people's access to digital platforms and in the process jeopardising their livelihoods? Cutting off Bangladesh from the world at large is a great disservice to the people of this country when the government would have us believe that we are riding the waves of digitisation.

Enhance prison security measures

Narsingdi jailbreak exposes security lapses in prisons

The July 19 Narsingdi jailbreak, amid a breakdown of law and order that followed violent clashes in different parts of the country, sends out a chilling message. This was the first time such an incident occurred in Bangladesh, in which outsiders attacked a jail and aided the escape of all 826 inmates of the prison. Some were reportedly even forced to flee.

The way the incident unfolded raises questions about police intelligence, preparedness, and timely action, and the overall security lapses in our prisons. According to media reports, there were violent clashes, which left two students dead, in the areas adjacent to the prison on July 18. However, on July 19, at around 1:30pm, our correspondent saw rioters picketing, but there was no major police patrol in the area. A few police personnel initially tried to defend the prison when rioters stormed the establishment at around 4pm. The jail superintendent, too, alleged that police did not arrive at the scene before 10pm. Why extra security forces were not deployed around the prison area where deadly clashes had taken place just the day before is puzzling.

The attackers used local weapons and crude bombs, and detectives suspect that six microbuses were used to carry the fleeing inmates. Such descriptions raise the question if the attack was preplanned. It was certainly well-organised. How did our intelligence wings remain in the dark about this? Considering that the prison housed nine inmates belonging to militant outfits like the JMB and Ansarullah Bangla Team, the prison authorities should have been extra careful anyway.

We have often called attention to the security lapses in our prisons which allow extremists to mobilise within the confined, overcrowded walls. The media has reported about mobile phones being smuggled into the prisons many times. Reportedly, about 300 of the inmates who fled have surrendered to court so far. But their successful escape, especially that of the militants, does put a serious question mark on our security apparatuses. We hope that law enforcers will promptly track down the remaining escapees, bring them to book, and recover the stolen arms and ammunition. As we reflect on the violence that shook the country last week, we need to take note of our security lapses so that this kind of incident is not repeated.

How can the rulers erase so much bloodstain?

Golam Mortoza
is the editor of The Daily Star Bangla.

GOLAM MORTOZA

As of Thursday, at least 156 people have died in six days' of violence, per the tally recorded by this daily. The exact number of deaths is unknown; there is no certainty if it will ever come to light. One state minister said, "If law enforcement agencies come under attack, they will return fire. It is only natural that there would be some casualties."

On July 16, we saw the cold-blooded killing of Abu Sayed, student of Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur and a coordinators of the quota reform movement, at the hands of police. A viral video of his final moments showed he was quite far from law enforcement. He posed no threat, yet the police member shot him. This does not match the government's narrative.

Within such a short period of time, an unprecedented level of bloodshed took place. This exceeded even the number of deaths during the nine years' of movement against Ershad's autocratic regime, the biggest movement in independent Bangladesh. That movement was violent too; it saw arson and vandalism, too.

Now, the main question is: why did the situation escalate last week, resulting in so many deaths and injuries?

The quota system had been abolished following the quota reform movement in 2018. During a press conference on July 14 this year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she had been "utterly dismayed" and had "abolished the quotas" at that time. A circular was issued accordingly. Challenging that circular, some freedom fighters' children filed a writ, responding to which the High Court annulled it on June 5 this year, effectively reinstating the quota system. The government appealed against this decision on July 6. Not relying on the government, students of public universities began their movement again, and it was completely peaceful. On July 9, two students filed a petition, which led to the court issuing a stay order against the earlier verdict. In spite of the stay order, protests continued. The Appellate Division set the hearing date for July 21. In the meantime, several ministers made comments about the movement, such as the protesters were not following the law, they are defying the constitution, the issue must be resolved through court, the government will not bypass the court, etc. Some of those comments were condescending towards the protesters. Still, they remained peaceful.

How, then, did the protest take such a violent turn?

On July 14, the protesters submitted a memorandum to the president, saying they would launch an all-out protest if their demands were not met within the next 24 hours.

During the press conference on the same day, the PM asked, "If the freedom fighters' grandchildren won't get quotas, should the grandchildren of Razakars [Pakistani collaborators] get quotas?"

In response, DU students brought out processions that night. They chanted loudly, "Who are you, who am I? Razakar, Razakar," which naturally caused an uproar. However, the students claim that the full version of the slogan was, "Who are you, who am I? Razakar, Razakar. Says who? Says who? *Shoirachar, Shoirachar* (autocrat)."

On July 15, AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) would give a "fitting reply" to the student protesters who had "labelled themselves as Razakars and showed arrogance." BCL President Saddam Hussain said, "BCL is prepared to tackle this (quota reform movement) through political means."

That afternoon, BCL launched its attack on the protesters.

On July 16, the protesters and BCL both called for a rally in front of DU's Raju Memorial at 12pm and 3pm, respectively. When the unarmed general students started gathering near Raju Memorial, BCL activists attacked them with metal rods, sticks, hockey sticks and guns. Many students were injured, and eventually, the protesters were dispersed.

At night, BCL members, aided by the police, searched for and found the protesters in DU, RU and JU's residential halls and beat them up. Many were driven out of the halls.

This provoked the protesters further. On July 17, the DU coordinators of the quota reform movement asked the students to gather at Shaheed Minar with sticks. This is the first time that the protesters took up a weapon in this movement. The same situation arose in JU and RU. Police, along with armed BCL members, conducted waves of assaults against the protesters in all three campuses.

FILE PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

The protesters managed to put up a strong resistance as they were bigger as a group. By that night, the members and leaders—even the female ones—of BCL, a student organisation that is disconnected from the general students, were all driven out of the residential halls and the campuses of DU, JU and RU.

A major reason why a peaceful movement became violent is the attempt to quash it using BCL's muscle power and police-BGB's mindless shooting. BCL's "Helmet Bahini" indiscriminately used sticks and hockey sticks on the protesters. Who are the armed individuals, who were photographed along with the BCL men, assaulting the students? Are they BCL members? It is assumed that they may have been outsiders, whose machete attacks injured many students, which further enraged the protesters.

Police and BGB fired lethal and non-lethal bullets at the students, as evidenced by published videos and photos in newspapers. This is not the conventional way of dispersing a protest. It seems it was not the police or BGB's goal to fire shots in order to scare the protesters and disperse them; it seemed they meant to shoot at the protesters.

Throughout the protest, the government repeatedly mentioned a "third party." Some intelligence high-ups mentioned that certain elements had "infiltrated" the movement.

The quota reform movement was led by anti-discrimination students' movement. This apolitical movement gained popular support from the entire student community. Undoubtedly, certain members of Chhatra Dal, Shibir and leftists, along with BCL members also joined the cause. More than 50 BCL leaders resigned from their posts and aligned themselves with this movement. But the leadership and majority participation came from general students. Chhatra Dal and Shibir never came close to assuming the leadership.

Yet, the government tried to contain the movement with a hardline and brutal approach, which raised casualties.

Why did AL leader Obaidul Quader, who is a former journalist and veteran politician with roots in student politics, want to use BCL to deal with such a widely supported movement? Now he can never escape the blame for what happened; his part in this mayhem will be revisited time and time again.

Even Law Minister Anisul Huq, who is an experienced lawyer, failed to show prudence. By the time he asked to sit with the students and announced intent to expedite the appeal hearing date, the situation had already spiralled out of control. Had the government sat with the students for a discussion beforehand, the situation could have unfolded differently.

This reminds me of Pablo Neruda's poem "I'm explaining a few things":

Come and see the blood in the streets.
Come and see
the blood in the streets.
Come and see the blood
in the streets!

Since independence, we have not seen so much blood being spilt during a movement. On whose hands is this blood? Can the rulers answer this question?

Translated from Bangla by Mohammed Ishtiaque Khan.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

We are all biomass

Slavoj Žižek,
professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School, is international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London.

SLAVOJ ZIZEK

In a recent commentary, philosopher Michael Marder looks beyond the immediate horror of what is taking place in Gaza to consider the ontological implications of what we see in the long-distance drone shots of the ruins. Allow me to quote him at length:

"... Gaza is rapidly transformed into a dump, where high-rise buildings and human bodies, ecosystems ... and orchards are mutilated beyond recognition and reduced to organic-inorganic rubble. A solidarity with dumpified lives, places, and worlds requires something other than compassion. So what could that be?"

Marder's answer is to propose "another kind of solidarity based on the shared condition of biomass." To say, "I am biomass" is to "identify with a vanishing life," to see Gaza as "a condensed and particularly blunt version of a planetary tendency." The rendering of all life into mere biomass—chaotic heaps of organic and inorganic matter—can be found everywhere, but it has been "accelerated in Gaza at the cutting edge of the most recent technologies of devastation. Rather than compassion, then, what is required is the solidarity of the dumped, who dare assert, 'We are biomass.'"

This notion of biomass echoes an insight from philosopher Levi Bryant, "In an age where we are faced with the looming threat of monumental climate change, it is irresponsible to draw our distinctions in such a way as to exclude nonhuman actors." And yet, in today's capitalist societies, efforts to mobilise a large majority of people in the name of our shared ecological condition consistently fail. We all know that we are part of nature and fully dependent on it for our survival, yet this recognition does not translate into action. The problem is that our choices and outlook are influenced by many other forces, such as biased media reporting, economic pressures on workers, material limitations, and so forth.

In her 2010 book *Vibrant Matter*, philosopher Jane Bennett has us picture a polluted trash site, where not only humans but also rotting trash, worms, insects, abandoned machines, chemical poisons, and so on each play some active role. This scene of biomass exists on the same spectrum as the situation in Gaza, though the latter is an extreme case. Around the world, there are numerous large physical spaces, especially outside the developed West, where "digital waste" is dumped, and thousands work separating glass, metals, plastic, mobile phones, and other man-made materials from the chaotic heaps. One such slum, Agbogbloshie, near the centre of Accra (the capital of Ghana), is known as "Sodom and Gomorrah."

What makes the exploitation of biomass different from the capitalist logic is that it accepts a chaotic wasteland as our basic predicament. Though this condition can be partly exploited, it can never be abolished.

Life in these environments is a horror show, and the communities that live in them are strictly hierarchically organised, with children forced to do the most dangerous work, under extremely hazardous conditions. Yet, because this exploitation of biomass appears ecologically attractive (under the banner of "recycling"), it responds perfectly to the demands of modern technology: "In the technological age," writes philosopher Mark Wrathall, "what matters to us most is getting the 'greatest possible use' out of everything."

After all, the whole point of using resources sparingly, of recycling, and so forth is to maximise the use of everything. The ultimate products of capitalism are piles of trash—useless computers, cars, TVs, VCRs, and the hundreds of planes that have found a final "resting place" in the Mojave Desert. The idea of total recycling (in which every remainder is used again) is the ultimate capitalist dream, even—or especially—when it is presented as a means of retaining Earth's natural balance. It is yet another testament to capitalism's capacity to appropriate ideologies that seem to oppose it.

However, what makes the exploitation of biomass different from the capitalist logic is that it accepts a chaotic wasteland as our basic predicament. Though this condition can be partly exploited, it can never be abolished. As Marder puts it, biomass is our new home; we *are* biomass. It is a fantasy to think that such environments can be left behind and replaced by life in some idyllic "natural," ecologically sustainable environment. That easy way out has been irretrievably lost to us. We should accept our only home and work within its confines, perhaps discovering a new harmony beneath what appears to be a chaotic heap.

This will require us to be open to the objective beauty of different levels of reality (humans, animals, ruins, decaying buildings), and to reject a hierarchic ordering of aesthetic experiences. Are we ready to do this? If not, we are truly lost.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
Phone: 09610222222

Newsroom: Fax- 58156306
reporting@thedailystar.net

Advertisement: 01711623910
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GPO Box: 3257

Subscription:
01711623906

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A generation's fight in the shadows of quota

BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Once the curfew lifted, driving on the familiar roads seemed unfamiliar. The oleanders and allamandas on the airport road were in perfect bloom. During the imposed hiatus, the rain and shine had done them good. Maybe the lack of air pollution had given them some extra lustre. I drove through the link road to attend a meeting near a spot that had witnessed one of the bloodiest pitched battles between protesters, police, and their auxiliary forces. As I took the U-loop to get to Hatirjheel Drive, the charred walls of the national television centre came into sight. On that day, I encountered additional signs of destruction: the eerie toll booth at the entrance of the elevated expressway, the towering BRTA and Bridge Authority buildings adorned with burnt feet, the metallic apparitions of numerous ashen vehicles, and the vandalised metro rail stations—all emblematic of the development discourse. However, the streets hold no remembrance of the fallen and injured. To do so, you'll probably have to visit hospitals, graveyards, grieving families or turn to social media. While the broken infrastructure can be fixed, the lives lost can never be regained.

During the state-sponsored lull, the internet shutdown revived an almost forgotten device: the unsmart TV that only speaks. Unlike your mobile phone, it does not listen. The TV channels used sanitised rhetoric to cite official numbers and figures. Life without the internet, the long lines for prepaid utility services, and the spiked prices of daily essentials became unbearable as we craved for normalcy. Memories of anomalous deaths were pushed aside.

The army was brought in to restore peace. Meanwhile, we heard the movement was no longer about quotas; it was about justice. Students fighting for an end to positive discrimination have won their initial battle. The government claims it agreed with the demand from the start. The government was the one who appealed against the court ruling that resurrected the dead quota system. It also patiently allowed the peaceful Bangla Blockade to continue, allowing the legal system to run its full course.

On July 14, a taunt from above was audible. The insinuation that the protesters were the descendants of the 1971 collaborators sparked a spontaneous reaction. "We demanded our rights and got branded as collaborators," the students chanted. Their ironic slogan, "Who am I? Who are you? Razakar, Razakar!" was lost in translation. The movement that maintained a career agenda for all potential job-seekers suddenly became ideological. Skirmishes turned ugly. Violence erupted on the Dhaka University campus. The general secretary of Awami League boasted that his party's student wing was enough to quash the storm. Images of attacks started pouring in. Students turned against each other. Helmet-clad gangs did not even spare female students, causing the movement to spread to other regions. The next day, while we were watching TV, in Rangpur, they shot Abu Sayed, a student of English literature. In a Facebook post, he had echoed Wordsworth's sonnet "London 1802" to conjure the spirit of Dr Mohammad Shamsuzzoha, the proctor of Rajshahi University who, on the onset of the 1969 Mass Uprising, famously told law enforcement personnel, "Your bullets will pierce my heart first before they hit my students." Sayed died with his arms wide open as a policeman shot him. Sayed's mother's cry—"You didn't have to give my son a job if you couldn't; why did you kill him?" (translation ours)—reverberated through the grieving hearts. At least six people died that day.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) intervened, closing all public and private universities indefinitely. The fulcrum shifted. The students discovered unexpected allies in the "general mob," who started fighting by their side. Their agenda was many and unclear. The police used extreme measures, inciting further violence. By that time, the death toll had escalated, while thousands sustained injuries, and thousands found themselves in custody. The government summoned the army to restore calm. It expedited the judicial process, and on July 21, the Appellate Division heard the opinions of the amicus curiae, who reminded the court that the decision was an executive one. Everyone across the aisles seemed to be in agreement. What took the parties so long to come to a consensus on the disproportionate quota system, which was a no-brainer from the start? Who will own up to the madness and carnage? The healing process can only begin with a thorough survey of these questions.

Boycott
Economics
DU
Economics, DU
DU HOME ECONOMICS

FILE PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Our political leaders have failed to see that these young people fighting for their rights don't want to be trapped in any identity binary.

The verdict, however, is already out. We hear that dark forces have taken control of the movement and turned it into arson. It appears that the ship for dialogue has sailed. When the students went to the president, he could have just given them his sympathetic ears. When the government decided to scrap the quota, they could have communicated in a non-sarcastic manner. A healing strategy was necessary when students suffered physical and emotional harm. Sending stick-wielding students to beat up the injured inside the hospital was never a solution. The internet abruptly shut down whenever the need to establish a communication channel arose, blaming the fire on the data centre and the fibre cables.

Businessmen showed concern over losing buyers as e-commerce collapsed. Fixing the economy became the priority. The black banners by the elevated expressway serve as a reminder of the time it will take to transform the once hard-earned road into a functional one. The prime minister wept at the vandalism that brought the coveted life in the metro rail to a halt. The home minister has visited the injured policemen. However, no one is present to support the injured and deceased students or ordinary citizens. The tears of grieving parents and kin are spinning in cyber reels.

Meanwhile, the protest has moved to a different level. And our political leaders, blinded by their egos, have failed to see that these young people fighting for their rights don't want to be trapped in any identity binary. They are citizens of the world. They sang "Bella Ciao," hacked into government websites, and mobilised international support. Their idealism has the freshness that defies the stink of old politics. Even the government isolated the arrest of the "BNP-Jamaat" axis from the activities of the students. The sooner the government understands that a student faction or increased military presence cannot destroy the student movement in five minutes, the better for the country. Giving the movement a political colour can create a long-term rift that the country cannot afford. We need to bring the killers and arsonists to justice, but we also need empathy and open-minded leadership.

As a teacher, I want to go back to my class and embrace all my students as one. We will begin the healing process by creating space for one another to share and grow in the true spirit of the Liberation War.

Can we expect some accountability from the government?

Dr Rainer Ebert
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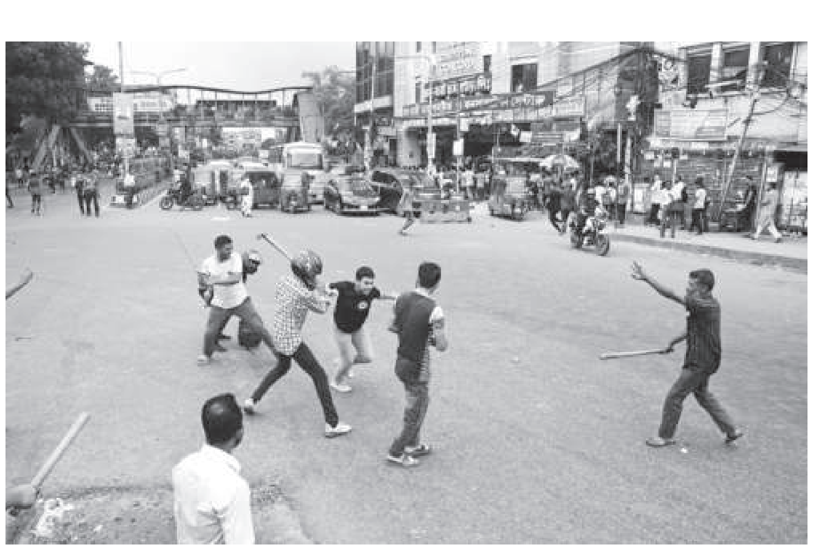
RAINER EBERT

Last week's political violence in Bangladesh was by far the worst I have seen since I first visited and fell in love with this country 15 years ago. Some media outlets report that around 150 lives have been lost, others say 170. Among those who lost their lives are young adults, uninvolved bystanders, and law enforcement personnel. Once the dust settles and a careful tabulation is done, the actual number of deaths could be far higher than the numbers circulating at the moment. In addition, thousands were injured, many of whom have a long road to recovery ahead, and some of whom may never fully recover.

What we saw was nothing short of disturbing and, tragically, seems it could have been largely avoidable. The protesters' initial demand for a reform of the quota system in government job recruitment, whether you agree with it or not, was surely not unreasonable, and should have been addressed through political dialogue. Instead, armed Chhatra League members entered the University of Dhaka campus on July 15, and attempted to quell the protests by assaulting protesters. The situation only escalated from there.



What we saw last week was nothing short of disturbing and, tragically, it seems it could have been largely avoidable. PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

What was the process and legal basis for the government's decision to shut off mobile data as well as broadband internet on July 18? Was civil society given the opportunity to request a judicial review of that decision? Considering the devastating impact of the decision to impose a curfew and shut off the internet for millions of people in terms of education, commerce, healthcare, and personal relationships, was that decision proportionate to the purpose it was meant to achieve?

Now, as Bangladesh slowly edges towards a semblance of normalcy, all eyes must be on the government: will it choose accountability, or more of the cronyism and selective application of the law that got the nation into this trouble in the first place? As I write this column, I am looking at a bunch of national dailies and I see reports of more than three thousand arrests and many more cases filed in connection with the recent violence. BNP and Jamaat are mentioned over and over again, and the prime minster herself said that this time she "will not spare them." Insofar those arrested have in fact been engaged in violence and the destruction of public infrastructure and private property, and it is expected that they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

I then searched for any reports of legal proceedings of any kind against the Chhatra League and law enforcers, but it was in vain. True accountability requires the equitable prosecution of everyone who broke the law, regardless of political or professional affiliation, as well as a transparent and independent inquiry into the government's response to the protests.

Hard questions, such as the following, must be addressed promptly, honestly, and transparently. The extent to which that will happen will show how sincere the government is in its commitment to democracy.

With the Chhatra League being the youth organisation of the ruling party, why did party leaders not call them off on July 15 to prevent the escalation of violence? Will there be a credible investigation of that failure, and will those who are found to be responsible be held accountable? Have security forces been analysing video footage to identify Chhatra League members who committed violence, and if so, have criminal proceedings been initiated against any of those identified?

On July 16, the Chhatra League and quota reform protesters gathered in Dhaka and across the rest of the country, carrying metal rods, sticks, stones, other weapons, and helmets. Yet, in many places, including in front of Dhaka College, there were clashes despite police presence. What was the rationale for letting violence unfold unopposed by law enforcement?

A day later, videos of a member of police shooting unarmed protester Abu Sayed point blank were widely shared on social media. He later died in a hospital. Has a formal investigation been launched, and has the officer involved in the shooting been suspended pending its outcome?

Are those responsible for the deaths of Dhaka Residential Model College student Farhan Faiyaaz and countless other protesters across Bangladesh being held accountable? Has an independent commission to investigate these deaths been formed? Who authorised the use of lethal force against protesters? What structural steps are the security forces taking to prevent the use of excessive force in the future?

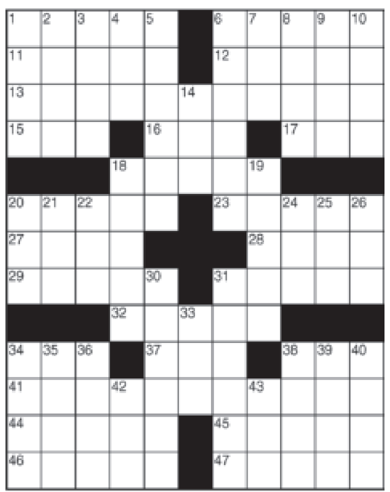
What was the process and legal basis for the government's decision to shut off mobile data as well as broadband internet on July 18? Was civil society given the opportunity to request a judicial review of that decision? Considering the devastating impact of the decision to impose a curfew and shut off the internet for millions of people in terms of education, commerce, healthcare, and personal relationships, was that decision proportionate to the purpose it was meant to achieve? Were there no less disruptive means available to the government to achieve the same purpose?

With no opposition worth the name in parliament, who will do the necessary political work of reviewing the manner in which the total internet blackout unfolded and was justified by the government? Who will ask the government the questions that need to be answered to determine if it has overstepped its authority? The people of Bangladesh deserve timely answers to these and many other questions they are certain to have, and the government will be measured by the quality of the answers it provides. It has an opportunity to stake out a positive path forward. If that opportunity is missed, then who knows what awaits the country in the future.

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Like some notebook paper
6 Taking to court
11 Dote on
12 Passion
13 Barbra Streisand hit
15 Compass dir.
16 Pen fill
17 Fall behind
18 Jeans material
20 Valentine's Day gift
23 Frisco player
27 Opera piece
28 Cairo's river
29 Polite chaps
31 Amorous archer
32 Corridors
34 Cash dispenser
37 Golf peg
38 Desire
41 Beyoncé hit
44 Microwave feature
45 Gives over
46 Stretches over
47 Valentine symbol

DOWN
1 Statutes
2 Wedding vows
3 Alaskan city
4 Memorable time
5 Disavows
6 Registered
7 Online address
8 Revered one
9 Flaring star
10 Golfer Norman
14 Tourist stop
18 Ominous tarot card
19 Less
20 Cloth scrap
21 Metal source
22 Lust, e.g.
24 Tiny taste
25 Yale rooter
26 Valentine color
30 Nymph chasers
31 Hold tightly
33 Floral garland
34 Play parts
35 Journey
36 Baby's call
38 Luke's teacher
39 At any time
40 Egg setting
42 Buddhism branch
43 Spike of film



JULY 15 ANSWERS

■	C	O	P	S	■	T	O	M	B	■
C	A	C	A	O	■	A	D	O	R	E
A	S	T	R	O	■	P	E	C	A	N
C	H	A	I	N	S	■	■	K	I	D
H	E	N	S	■	P	R	E	E	N	S
E	W	E	■	D	R	E	A	D	S	■
■	■	■	M	E	A	N	T	■	■	■
■	P	L	A	C	I	D	■	P	O	T
S	L	A	P	O	N	■	W	O	R	E
O	A	T	■	■	S	T	A	I	N	S
F	I	E	R	Y	■	I	N	S	E	T
A	N	N	I	E	■	L	E	E	R	Y
■	S	T	O	P	■	E	D	D	Y	■

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

CORRIGENDUM

In our July 16, 2024 issue, the set of clues for the crossword puzzle that was published was wrong. We sincerely apologise to our readers for this unintentional error. We are publishing the same puzzle today with the right set of clues.

REFLECTIONS

In both form and content: A political (un)reality

I was particularly enraptured by *Life and Political Reality's* usage of the device of memory—both individual and collective—and how it helps construct the narrative of the war and its consequences. Memory is a silenced device in the novella, particularly the memories that address gendered and sexual violence. Memory is also unreliable and open to distortion and damage.

NAZIA MANZOOR

Life and
POLITICAL
Reality
Shahidul Zahir

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

Over the last two semesters, my course on South Asian writing at both the undergraduate and graduate level begins with Shahidul Zahir's *Jibon O Rajnoitik Bastobata* (*Life and Political Reality*, translated by V Ramaswamy and Shahroza Nahreen). As anyone who has ever had to design syllabi for survey courses—courses that survey a period, a genre, or an entire body of work representing various peoples, languages, and political history—knows, a lot of complex thinking goes into the process. Issues of representation, language, length, complexity, diversity, readability, and even pleasure haunt an educator's thinking as he finalises the texts for the semester. As I spent the last week away from my classroom, and as the nation erupted all around us revisiting old, foundational questions about what it means to be a patriot and indeed, a Bangladeshi, I recalled the discussions we had on 1971 in my classroom, especially while reading Zahir together.

Published in 1988, Shahidul Zahir's first novella is a tale of two days, set 15 years apart and written in one long, breathless paragraph, examining 1971 and its aftermath. The story is centered primarily around Abdul Mojid, a young man from Dhaka's old parts and his affective ties with his traumatic past and grotesque present. The slim novella opens with the sound of Abdul Majid's sandal's straps going "phot", a mundane sound that is magnified by its significance as he hears the voice of Moulana Bodu's son Abul Khair address the inhabitants of his moholla or neighborhood as "brothers". Bodu, an accessory to the Pakistani forces during the terrible nine months of 1971, was the man behind the rape and murder of Mojid's sister, Momena. The novella's opening is breathtaking—Zahir draws the reader in with unparalleled urgency and plunges those that have only heard of 1971 anecdotally from family members, or read about dispassionately in mandatory school textbooks, straight into the narrative.

At an allegorical level, *Life and Political Reality* is about Bangladesh itself and the inexorable ways in which a small community in Dhaka's Lakshmibazar bears witness to the nation's history. While Bodu's 1971 actions of violence and his later rehabilitation form the central narrative tension of the novella, it is Mojid's final decision to sell his ancestral home that stages the ultimate rupture in the narrative—with Mojid abandoning his home, the nation too, snaps, mimicking the muted explosion of the sandal's snap, but this time on a much grander scale.

Often a restrained, poignant study of the inequalities of life experienced by the ordinary subjects of the state, Zahir's fiction almost always captures the haunting of Bangladesh's political past with an urgency that is hard to ignore. A bureaucrat by profession, Zahir is generally considered to be one of the most influential and unique voices to have emerged in independent Bangladesh's literary landscape.

I was particularly enraptured by *Life and Political Reality*'s usage of the device of memory—both individual and collective—and how it helps construct the narrative of the war and its consequences. Memory is a silenced device in the novella, particularly the memories that address gendered and sexual violence. Memory is also unreliable and open to distortion and damage. Rituparna Mukherjee notes that characters like Bodu "alter the memory narrative to suit their own needs". Yet some memories linger. After Khayer addresses the moholla as brothers, and upon realising that the horrors of the past are acutely, profoundly present in the current moment, a devastated Mojid sobs into his wife's shoulder. As he touches her bony shoulder and remembers the exact spot where Momena was pierced by a bayonet, Mojid bears witness to the trauma of a nation's collective gendered and sexual past while also confronting his own limitations as a masculine subject of a liberated state. Feeling weak and emasculated by the reappearance and reclamation of power by the forces that made those nine months a traumatic experience for oppressed subjects such as himself and his sister, Mojid's devastation is made palpable with agonising clarity.

Memory further uncovers the link between communal (dis)harmony and the West Pakistani regime's commitment to rid the "Hinduani" from the East and marking them as minoritised, Hindu-ised Muslims whose lives are expendable. Mojid's memory recalls how Momena is the only Muslim girl in the Lakshmibazar area who sings in a choir with the Christian Bashanti Gomes, establishing a moment of quiet communal camaraderie. That the singing leads to Bodu cursing Momena out and an ontological enmity being formed between the teenage Mojid and Bodu reestablishes Zahir's flair for marrying the personal with the political. As the current unrest continues to unfold with dizzying speed all around us, I wonder how our memory will recall this July. How this story will be written. What conversations we will have about it.

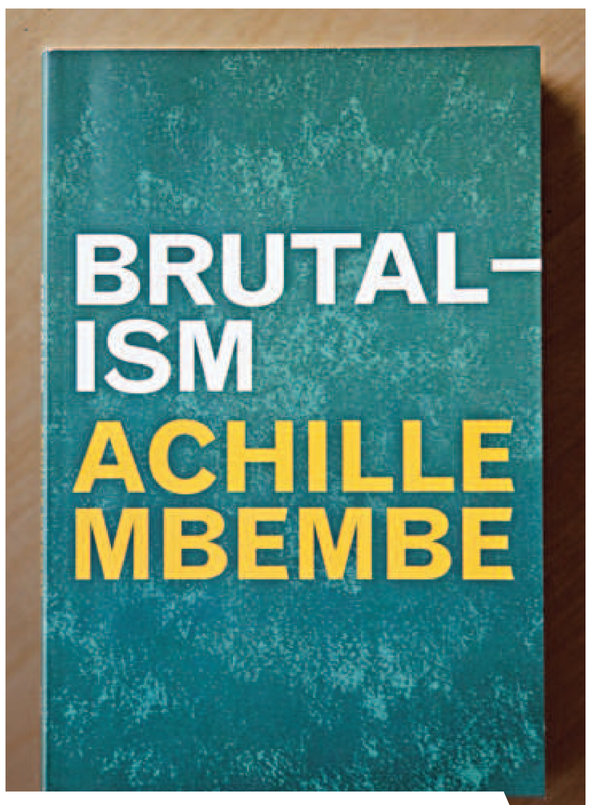
Much has been said by critics about Zahir's writing, its uniqueness, and its carefully chaotic, breathless brilliance. Hasan Azizul Huq argues that there is "extreme disinterestedness" in Zahir's "narration or writing style...severing the roots of emotionality, waving logic aside, taking unexpected turns, creating unanticipated relations through the threads of sentences". For Sarker Hasan Al Zayed however, that disinterestedness Huq speaks of is revealed in the "form of sudden interjections and subtle innuendoes" in the text. "It is, as if, partial exposure is the mode through which this novel has chosen to explore the truly traumatic memories and political failures of the nation," he adds. The collective narratorial voice and the specificities of the lived realities of characters give the novel a poetic joie de vivre. In the days prior to the pogrom of March 25, for instance, when Jamir Baypari and Abdul Majid's mother show up to Bodu's house and Bodu slaps Jamir Baypari, the moholla's collective audience "looked on in a dazed astonishment, like how entranced spectators gaze at a magician's inexplicable acts and try to figure it out". This collective inability to comprehend the meanings of such action signifies the inexplicable violence of '71, as well as testifies to the incomprehensibility of genocidal violence at large. Ironic then, that a similar sense of incomprehensibility haunts a lot of our collective thinking now, especially as we too, look on in "dazed astonishment" as events continue to unravel around us.

Finally, it is not only the urban underclass human who testifies to the trauma of the past but the nonhuman other that participates in narrating the unsayable in the novella. From the crows that eat the flesh of the enemy, to the Tulsi tree that bears witness to communal harmony as well as antagonism—the ecology opposes as well as reproduces the regime of terror set in motion during and after the war. When Bodu's young son Abul Bashar (a hermaphrodite who dies under mysterious circumstances) is permitted to mourn the death of his beloved dog but the moholla is unable to mourn their seven dead neighbors during '71, the text stages a collapsing of the binaries separating the human from its nonhuman other and with it, raises complex questions about the quality of life as well as death under conditions of extreme political unrest.

Last semester, as our course drew to its conclusion, a student mentioned how this is now the book she makes everyone read—her parents, her friends, her peers. For generation Z, 1971 is more relevant than ever, as evidenced by this July. Throughout this slim novella, Zahir helps sketch the unadorned horror of the return and rehabilitation of noted war criminals as political leaders, problematises the forgiveness granted to those perpetrators by former leaders of the liberation movement, and examines Mojid's relationship with his memories, his neighborhood, and eventually the nation. If there's one thing our troubled political history has taught us, it is that our literature has steadfastly engaged with the complexities and nuances of our political landscape and today, if we are to step away from the binarism of us vs. them, Zahir's work can be our guiding light.

A version of this article first appeared in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, February 2024.

Dr Nazia Manzoor *teaches English at North South University. She is also Editor, Star Books and Literature.*



WHAT WE'RE READING THIS WEEK

Brutalism

ACHILLE MBEMBE

Duke University Press, 2024

One of the most influential cultural and political thinkers of our time, Mbembe's latest book is a careful study of politicised acts of "brutalism", a concept he studies, analyses, and investigates by invoking architectural aesthetics. A careful study of demolition and production on a planetary scale, the book interrogates capitalism's brutal assault against all spheres of human, nonhuman, and environmental realms. He offers that "the many practices of demolition had nothing accidental about them". The book also cautions against the blurring of the natural and the artificial in this age of unprecedented technological advancements while remaining unabashedly optimistic about a futurity that will offer a renewed sense of community.

POETRY

The song of freedom

MARZIA RAHMAN

the bloodied scarf of my
sisters' shoulder lies
on the dusty footpath, the
bullet hole
in my brother's chest
unfolds like a pandora's box
like a new sun heralding a
new era. The
slogans are echoed from
street to street, from campus
to campus, from Teknaf to
Tetulia. Hundreds
of thousands of brothers
and sisters march ahead,
shouting
the names of their dead
brothers and sisters. The
wind, breeze, trees, leaves,
birds, sons, daughters, mothers,
father shouting along, the
song of freedom.

Marzia Rahman *is a flash fiction writer and translator. Author of two books,* The Aftermath *and* Dot and Other Flashes, *she has been published widely in both print and online journals.*

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

PHOTO: **MAISHA SYEDA**

Ghostly tenants

WAZIHA AZIZ

My father speaks in a dismantled language
that goes up in
smoke.
He leaves broken edges of questions wedged
into corners of
empty rooms he walks past.
Enter smoke churning, pervading, answering.
In my house we sit at the table with ghosts.
We offer tea and biscuits.
They accept, soundlessly.
These temporary tenants shatter the glass in
my mirror
to tell tales of towns of timbre on fire.
Through kaleidoscopic images.
The words that fell out of burning bodies my
father fled.
Fires bellowing, a little boy running. Wind
curdling like
dissipating smoke.
Running, from nothing to nothing.
What goes around comes around
and rests—
The country, silent
Because quiet men don't whisper, but haunt.
Haunting, rumbling, smoke rising
from chimneys of a million homes.
Pieces of ballot paper in flames flowing
turbulent smoke
The looters, afire. Screaming.
Begins again.
I'm sorry, my poetry is only a stream of
apologies I inherit from
my father. In his burden I share. His vow:
To remember.
So together we house the ghosts that fought
for no home.
Together we house the smoke.

Waziha Aziz *is a writer from Chattogram, Bangladesh.*

Star SPORT
DHAKA SATURDAY JULY 27, 2024, SRABAN 12, 1431 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
England vs West Indies
Third Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00 pm
Sri Lanka vs India
1st T20I
Live from 7:30 pm
GT20
Mississauga vs Vancouver
Live from 11:30 pm
Brampton vs Toronto
Live from 2:00 am
(Sunday)
The Hundred
London vs Birmingham
Live from 11:35 pm

Tigresses 'couldn't understand what they wanted'

SPORTS REPORTER

Familiar batting woes returned for Bangladesh in a disheartening 10-wicket loss in the 2024 Women's Asia Cup semifinal against India in Dambulla yesterday, with skipper Nigar Sultana Joty mentioning that she had no clue about what they wanted to achieve in a shambolic batting effort.

"We couldn't understand what we wanted," Joty, at the post-match presentation ceremony, reflected on the huge-margin loss as India restricted the Tigresses to a meagre 80 for eight before chasing it down with ease in just 11 overs.

When opener Dilara Akter flicked Renuka Singh for six over deep square leg in the very first over, it appeared the batting unit had the resolve to challenge an in-form Indian outfit, who had romped to the semifinal unbeaten.

However, Dilara was dismissed in the very next delivery, holing out to deep midwicket while trying to play a similar shot. The Tigresses went on to lose three wickets in the Powerplay, the last of those of in-form opener Murshida Khatun, who had hit a career-best 59-ball 80 against Malaysia in the previous game, as Bangladesh slumped to three for 21 in 4.5 overs.

"Losing too many wickets in the Powerplay hurt. When top order is not making runs, it is difficult for teams to come up with runs," Joty rued that phase of play.

Unable to recover, Bangladesh slumped further to 44 for six and were eventually restricted to a low total.

Renuka, who was named player of the match, was the pick of the bowlers for India with all three of her wickets coming in the Powerplay. That set the tone for another batting mishap as apart from Joty's 51-ball 32 and a cameo 18-ball 19 from Shorna, no other batter was able to reach double figures.

Joty also praised Shorna for the type of character she showed down the order.

"Shorna has a job to do in the five-six overs, unlucky today as she did not get much strike. She is showing her capability, she came from the Under-19s and is showing character," Joty said.

India, unscathed, cruised to the target as Smriti Mandhana, who came out to open the innings, hit a 39-ball 55 while her opening partner Shefali Verma remained unbeaten on 26.

For Bangladesh, it was another quizzical batting effort.

Bar the 191 for two that the Tigresses posted in the Group B game against Malaysia, the batting effort showed no signs of improvement as of late. Oftentimes, Bangladesh batters went into their shell, and against India, they failed to apply themselves against some tight bowling.

Ahead of the T20 World Cup at home in October, questions remain as to how the batting unit can thwart such disasters.

"It is about mentality. They are capable of playing shots, but against India, they played differently. We need to work on our batting, we are losing games because of it. Before the World Cup, we will try and rectify our mistakes," Joty added.

Joy, Aich strike fifties against Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

Skipper Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Aich Mollah struck fifties before Bangladesh High Performance Unit were bowled out for 258 in their first innings on the opening day of second four-day match against Pakistan Shaheens at the DXC Arena in Darwin on Friday.

Joy scored 69 off 90 balls with eight fours and a six while Aich scored 55 runs as the pair shared a 54-run stand for the fifth wicket after Bangladesh were reduced to 104-4 at one stage.

Bangladesh lost both the batters in quick succession to be left reeling at 188-7 before Mahidul Hasan Ankon (31), Rejaur Rehman Raja (28) and Ripon Mondol (17) made some vital contributions to help the team cross the 250-run mark before being all out in 67.3 overs.

Shaheens pacers Khurram Shahzad finished with 3-69 which included the wickets of opener Parvez Hossain Emon (30), Amite Hasan (seven) and Ankon while Kashif Ali, Faisal Akram and Kamran Ghulam bagged two wickets each.

Pacer Ripon then struck twice as he removed both the Shaheens openers Sahibzada Farhan (4) and Haseebullah (18) to leave their opponents at 39-2 at stumps.

Mohammad Ali (one not out), who was sent in as night-watchman, will be at the crease with Omair Bin Yousuf (seven not out) at the start of play on second day.

Rony's quest for a comeback

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Pacer Abu Hider Rony sees his call up to the High Performance Unit for the tour to Australia as a lifeline for his international career and believes it can open a path for him to make a comeback to the Bangladesh side after a lengthy gap.

The 28-year-old was a surprise inclusion in both the one-day and T20 squads of the HP unit, which will leave for Australia tonight, for their forthcoming white-ball series against Pakistan Shaheens and Big Bash teams.

Rony, who played two ODIs and 13 T20Is between 2016 and 2018, has been a consistent performer in the domestic circuit for years but has hardly been considered for the senior side or for other developmental teams in years.

The left-arm pacer last toured with the national team during a three-match T20I series against India in 2019 and since then, has been in the wilderness when it comes to playing for the Tigers in any format.

"It's an incredible opportunity for me. I think the opportunity arrived because I have consistently performed well in the domestic circuit," Rony told The Daily Star recently.

"If I can do well there, I can hope to make a comeback to the senior side. I will try my best to utilise the opportunity," said Rony, who previously toured Australia twice – first during the Under-19 World Cup in 2012 and then in 2018 with the HP Unit.

The fact that the national side already has two left-arm pacers in Mustafizur Rahman and Shoriful Islam in the mix works against Rony's chances of making a comeback.

To overcome this hurdle, Rony has been working on sharpening his batting skills as he believes that can help him stand out among his peers. His performances with the willow in recent domestic matches also show that this extra emphasis has not gone to waste.

During the 2023-24 season of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League, Rony, who emerged as the highest wicket-taker in the List A competition with 31 wickets in 16 matches, made 250 runs at a strike rate of 121.9 and scored two fifties for eventual runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club.

"From the beginning of my career, I had a good command over batting. Earlier, I never put too much effort into it. But now, I have been trying to do well in this department alongside my bowling. It's very difficult right now to survive in Bangladesh cricket with only bowling," he said.

"In order to make a comeback to the national side, I think my batting is very important. I'm still working to improve my batting alongside my bowling. If I can do well in both departments, I can contribute much more for the team. I really enjoy the dual role and I think I need to hone this skill further.

"It has definitely become really tough to make a comeback to the national side. Our pacers have been doing very well. I think there is a healthy competition between the pacers which is good for the team. Those of us who are trying to break into the national team need to perform exceptionally well. We are enjoying this competition," he concluded.

OLYMPICS CORNER

'Raw meat'

AFP, *Paris*

France may be the home of haute cuisine but the British team have been less than impressed about the food on offer at the Paris Olympic village, especially "raw meat".

Britain have brought in an extra chef as a result and complained about a shortage of the right food at the village, and the quality of what's on offer.

Some British competitors have headed off to Team GB's base elsewhere in the city to get fed and pick up packed meals to take back for dinner.

"There are not enough of certain foods: eggs, chicken, certain carbohydrates," Andy Anson, the British Olympic Association chief executive, said of the apparently disappointing offering at the village.

"And then there is the quality of the food, with raw meat being served to athletes." Anson called the food problem "the biggest issue at the moment".

Paolini hunting medals, and Rafa selfie

REUTERS, *Paris*

Italian Jasmine Paolini's breakout year could be about to get even better as she prepares for the Paris Olympics with strong medal prospects in singles and doubles and the chance to grab a selfie with French Open king Rafa Nadal.

The 28-year-old Tuscan returns to Roland Garros just weeks after reaching the French Open final -- a feat she repeated at Wimbledon where she also ended as runner-up.

Those stunning runs have elevated Paolini to fifth in the WTA rankings and she will be one of the players expected to have a deep run in her second Olympics where she is seed fourth.

Paolini will be busy on Saturday as she plays Ana Bogdan of Romania in the singles and will also team up with veteran Sara Errani in the doubles against New Zealand pairing Erin Routliffe, the world number one, and Lulu Sun.

"My goal for these Olympics is to ask Rafa for a selfie," she joked. "I have one with Roger (Federer) and one with Novak (Djokovic) from the previous Olympics, so my goal is to ask for one with Rafa."

Brazil great Zico robbed

AFP, *Paris*

The Brazilian former footballer Zico filed a complaint with French police on Friday after having his bag stolen which contained cash, watches, and diamond jewellery.

The 71-year-old, who appeared in three World Cups, was in transit at the time of the theft and had left his car window open.

The Parisien daily reported the goods Zico lost to be worth 500,000 euros ($542,000) while a source close to the matter told AFP this sum was highly exaggerated. The Selecao legend is in Paris as a guest of the Brazilian Olympic team as the 2024 Games get underway this weekend.

Sagorika wants to build on impressive debut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football's latest sensation Mosammat Sagorika said she would like to build on her debut hattrick as the women in red and green take on Bhutan in the second of their two FIFA international friendlies in Thimphu today.

The 19-year-old forward came off the bench in the second half of the first match and hauled Bangladesh from a goal down to lead them to a convincing 5-1 win against the South Asian minnows.

Bangladesh had gone to Bhutan without a few of their key players, yet trailing by a goal for 48 minutes against a side that Bangladesh had thrashed 8-0 in their previous meeting was beyond anyone's imagination.

Sagorika, however, eased the pressure of the visitors with a fine hattrick and now she is looking for more goals.

"Scoring on debut is a big thing, and I scored three. It was beyond my imagination. I would want to score more goals so that we get a bigger margin of victory in the second match," Sagorika said ahead of the second match, which will kick off at the Changlimithang Stadium at 6:00 pm today.

Sagorika may get a chance in the starting eleven today as coach Peter Butler said he would change personnel and try to give most players game-time, with an eye on October's SAFF Women's Championship.

"I will keep the system but the personnel will change. We'll give quite a few number of players (the chance) to share the workload. I think the most important thing is we try and mix the game up," said the Englishman, adding that it would be foolish to expect Bangladesh to roll over an ever-improving Bhutan side.

Captain Sabina Khatun, who scored a goal in the first match, said they would try to rectify the mistakes from the first match. "If you followed the first match, you would've realised that Bhutan are in a much better position than they were during the SAFF Championship. But we tried to play our natural game which is why we got the result. We want to rectify the small mistakes from that match and want to win it too."

Mominul hits ton in drawn practice game

SPORTS REPORTER

Mominul Haque hit a century in the drawn two-day practice game between BCB Red and BCB Green at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Carrying on from an overnight score of 47, BCB Red's Mominul hit 123, laced with 15 fours and a six, before perishing to Nasum Ahmed, out caught and bowled.

BCB Red declared on 274 for 9 in their first innings with a 143-run lead. Mehedi Hasan Miraz was the pick of the bowlers for BCB Green, picking up three wickets for 64 runs while Nasum and Shafiqul Islam picked up two wickets each.

Mushfiqur Rahim, who got 50 in the first innings, struck 48 for BCB Green as they reached 147 for 6 at stumps on a rain-interrupted day to draw the practice game.

Ahrar Amin and Habibur Rahman remained unbeaten on 31 and 15 respectively while Taijul Islam bagged two wickets for BCB Red. Earlier BCB Green were skittled out for 131 in their first innings on the first day.

The second practice match, slated to be a three-day game, is scheduled to begin on July 29 in Chattogram.

SKY ready to take India forward 'in own style'

AFP, *Delhi*

India's Suryakumar Yadav said Friday he was not going to repeat the mistakes of his domestic captaincy ahead of his first trial as Twenty20 skipper against Sri Lanka.

Suryakumar, 33, this month picked up the baton from much-loved predecessor Rohit Sharma, who announced his retirement from the 20-over format after India's World Cup victory in June.

He pipped all-rounder Hardik Pandya to the post after concerns over the latter's frequent injury absences.

But his previous captaincy of state team Mumbai had aroused concerns over his leadership style, after complaints from teammates prompted his 2015 sacking.

"Lot of things have changed since then. I am a different person now," the batsman told reporters in Kandy ahead of Saturday's series opener.

"I have got married and I have learned a lot from other captains. I will take the team forward in my own style," he added.

"Our brand of cricket remains the same. What the captaincy has done is it has given me new responsibility and I am looking forward to the challenge."

Star batter Virat Kohli also retired after the T20 World Cup and India's 15-man squad will give Suryakumar the opportunity to experiment with the top order, anchored on openers Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

Sri Lanka also have a new short-format captain after a humiliating first-round World Cup knockout prompted Wanindu Hasaranga's resignation just six months after his appointment.

His replacement Charith Asalanka captained Jaffna Kings on Sunday to a title win in the island's 20-over Lanka Premier League tournament.

"It's a huge challenge for us to play the world champions. We are ready for the challenge as we prepared well for this series," Asalanka said.

"Bit disappointed that we are not at full strength," he added, saying that injury and illness had hurt the team's pace strength.

Fast bowler Nuwan Thushara was ruled out of the series with a fractured thumb while Dushmantha Chameera is unwell.

Sri Lanka have brought in right-arm seamer Asitha Fernando and left-arm quick Dilshan Madushanka as replacements.

The three-match series concludes Tuesday in Kandy before a three-match ODI series begins in Colombo on Friday.

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CLASHES OVER QUOTA

Four more die from gunshot wounds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four more people, who suffered bullet wounds during the recent clashes centring the quota protests, died at different hospitals in Dhaka in the last 48 hours.

The deceased are Imtiaz Ahmed Dalim, 20, a student of Southeast University; Mainuddin, 25, a madrasa student; Sohel Rana, 20, and Yeasin, 17.

Imtiaz's father, Nawsher Ali, said his son was shot in Rampura on July 19. Imtiaz died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 4:00am yesterday.

Mainuddin was shot in Rayerbagh on July 21. He also died at DMCH around 2:00am yesterday, said his mother, Mahfuza Begum.

Yasin was shot in Jatrabari on July 21 and was admitted to Mugda Medical College Hospital. He died undergoing treatment around 11:00pm on Thursday, said his cousin Babul.

Sohel was shot in Rampura on July 19. He was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, where doctors declared him dead on Thursday evening, said Manik Saha, a sub-inspector of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PHOTO: REUTERS

Members of the Bangladesh delegate wave the national flag as they parade on a boat through River Seine during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris yesterday. For the first time in Olympic history, the opening ceremony took place outside the main stadium, with some 300,000 people watching in person from specially built stands on the river banks, and another 200,000 from overlooking balconies and apartments.

'Sabotage' hits French trains hours before Olympics

One in four Paris-London Eurostar trains cancelled

REUTERS, *Paris*

Saboteurs struck France's TGV high-speed train network yesterday in a series of pre-dawn attacks across the country, causing travel chaos and exposing security gaps ahead of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony later in the day.

The coordinated sabotage took place as France mounted a massive security operation involving tens of thousands of police and soldiers to safeguard the capital for the sporting extravaganza, sucking in security resources from across the country.

SNCF, the state-owned railway operator, said vandals had damaged signal substations and cables along the lines connecting Paris with cities such as Lille in the north, Bordeaux in the west and Strasbourg in the east. Another attack on the Paris-Marseille line was foiled.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Two security sources said the modus operandi meant initial

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY

20 students sued for attack on police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, along with many unnamed others, were sued on charges of demonstrating unlawfully in front of the campus and assaulting police.

Sub-Inspector Akhtaruzzaman of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station filed the case on July 21, ten days after the incident.

The students who have been named in the case as accused are Tawhid Ahmed Ashique, Ahmedul Kabir Taposh, Md Raihan, Sourav, Shahriar, Mohaiminul, Ahsan Habib, Anas, Sagar, Imran, Ahsan Habib, Wasiul Islam, Mujahidul Islam Shuvo, Altaf, Selim Reza, Nur Islam, Asif, Rifat, Shakib, and Mridul.

According to the case statement, students demanding reform to the quota system in government jobs blocked the road in front of Gate-2 of the university on July 11.

When police went to the spot to control the situation, students allegedly started throwing brickbats at them. At that time, several police personnel were injured. At one stage, police chased the protesters and dispersed them, it added.

As of yet, no arrests have been made in the case, Sub-Inspector SM Al Mamun of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Wave of Israeli strikes hit Gaza's north, south

21 more Palestinians killed; WHO sends over 1m polio vaccines to enclave to protect children

AGENCIES

A new wave of air strikes by Israeli fighter jets yesterday targeted the Gaza Strip, including Khan Younis in the south, the Bureij refugee camp in the centre, and Gaza City in the north of the enclave.

Gaza health officials said Israeli military forces fired live rounds at an ambulance evacuating a wounded person in southern Khan Younis, where a deadly ground invasion by Israeli forces is expanding.

The armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad said its fighters bombarded Israeli soldiers and vehicles stationed around the Rafah crossing in southern Gaza with mortar shells.

The group also said it engaged in fierce clashes with Israeli forces since Thursday night in the east of Khan Younis, using machine guns and anti-tank shells.

According to Gaza health officials, Israeli military strikes in the past 24 hours had killed at least 21 people, the latest casualties in an offensive that health authorities in the enclave say has killed at least 39,196 Palestinians.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has been forced to reduce rations for families in Gaza to ensure broader coverage for newly displaced people, it said yesterday.

- » WFP reduces rations for Gaza families to ensure coverage for newly displaced
- » Australia, Canada, NZ urge Israel to protect Gaza civilians
- » Death toll in enclave rises to 39,196

"Food stocks and humanitarian supplies in central and southern Gaza are very limited and barely any commercial supplies are going in," WFP added in a post on social media platform X.

The World Health Organization is sending more than one million polio vaccines to Gaza to be administered over the coming weeks to prevent children being infected after the virus was detected in sewage samples, its chief said yesterday.

Meanwhile, Australia, Canada, New Zealand urged Israel to protect civilians in Gaza. The three governments have issued a statement on the need for an urgent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, saying "the situation in Gaza is catastrophic".

"The human suffering is unacceptable. It

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Humanity suffers from 'extreme heat epidemic'

Warns UN chief, calls for action to limit impacts of heat waves

AFP, *United Nations*

Humanity is suffering from an "extreme heat epidemic," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Thursday, calling for action to limit the impacts of heat waves intensified by climate change.

Antonio Guterres

"Billions of people are facing an extreme heat epidemic -- wilting under increasingly deadly heat waves, with temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius around the world," he said. "That's 122 degrees Fahrenheit. And halfway to boiling."

According to the European Copernicus network, July 21, 22 and 23 were the three hottest days ever recorded worldwide, with July 22 holding the absolute record of 17.16 degrees Celsius (62.9 degrees Fahrenheit).

Guterres repeated his call for humanity to fight its "addiction" to fossil fuels.

"Today, our focus is on the impact of extreme heat. But let's not forget that there are many other devastating symptoms of the climate crisis: ever-more fierce hurricanes. Floods. Droughts. Wildfires. Rising sea levels. And the list goes on," he said.

"To tackle all these symptoms, we need to fight the disease. And the disease is the madness of incinerating our only home. The disease is the addiction to fossil fuels.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

COVERING DEMO

Investigate killings of 3 journos

CPJ urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) yesterday called on Bangladesh authorities to investigate the killings of three journalists and other attacks on reporters covering deadly nationwide protests over government job quotas.

"CPJ is deeply disturbed by the killing of journalists Hasan Mehedi, Md Shakil Hossain, and Abu Taher Md Turab while they were reporting on the quota protests in Bangladesh," said CPJ Asia Programme Coordinator Beh Lih Yi, according to a report on its website.

"The Bangladesh government must hold to account those responsible for all assaults on journalists and fully restore internet and phone services to allow the free flow of information needed to cover matters of public interest," Yi added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Lanka to hold presidential polls Sept 21

REUTERS, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka will hold presidential elections on September 21, a government notice said yesterday, setting the date for a crucial vote expected to determine the future of reforms in the South Asian nation weathering its worst financial crisis in decades.

Nominations for the election have to be submitted on August 15, with incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe becoming the first candidate to do so by paying a non-refundable deposit to the election commission, his office said.

Wickremesinghe, 75, took office in July 2022 after widespread protests caused by the debilitating financial crisis forced his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and later resign.

Parliament elected Wickremesinghe to serve out the rest of the five year-term vacated by Rajapaksa who was elected in November 2019.

Children playing in the capital's Ramna Park during the curfew break yesterday. With schools closed and slow internet connection amid the curfew, children are left with little to do. The photo was taken around 3:30pm.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Ancient secrets unearthed in vast Turkish cave city

AFP, *Midyat*

Through a basement door in southeastern Turkey lies a sprawling underground city -- perhaps the country's largest -- which one historian believes dates back to the ninth century before Jesus Christ.

Archaeologists stumbled upon the city-under-a-city "almost by chance" after an excavation of house cellars in Midyat, near the Syrian border, led to the discovery of a vast labyrinth of caves in 2020.

Workers have already cleared more than 50 subterranean rooms, all connected by 120 metres of tunnel carved out of the rock.

But that is only a fraction of the site's estimated 900,000-square-metre area, which would make it the largest underground city in Turkey's southern Anatolia region.

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Block raids unnerve city residents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City residents, still reeling from the shocks of deaths and destructions over the quota protests, are now feeling a fresh wave of fear.

Almost every day, a column of vehicles carrying law enforcers reaches some neighbourhoods, in some cases after sundown. Members of different forces jump off their vehicles, quickly cordon off the area and take position at different points. In some cases, their left hands grip the gun barrels with the right hand index fingers placed on the triggers.

An announcement through a megaphone hits the building walls and reverberates through the area: Go inside your home, don't try to come out.

Panicked, locals do as they are told – a block raid begins.

Soon, internet connections at targeted homes get snapped and street lights go off one by one. Only the searchlights mounted on the law enforcers' vehicles light parts of the area. In the next one to two hours, additional forces are called in, who then split into different groups and start raiding different houses.

This is how residents of at least eight areas in the capital shared their experience to The Daily Star.

> **"Before conducting a drive, we collect the digital footprint and information provided by local sources including the ruling party men to identify the troublemakers and trace their whereabouts."**
>
> A police officer, requesting anonymity.

The raids are creating further worries among the residents whose trauma is still fresh from the deaths of at least 162 people (according to this newspaper's count; actual figure could be much higher) in recent violence centring the quota protest.

The eight areas that saw such raids are Matuail, Shanir Akhra, Jatrabari, Kajla, Bashundhara, Shahinbagh, Mirpur DOHS, ECB Chhattar and Matikata.

During the raid, law enforcers knock on the door, get inside and arrest anyone suspected to have been involved in violence or were in contact with any troublemakers, police and locals said.

Joint forces have been conducting the block raids in different areas of the capital and other parts of the country to arrest those suspected to have been involved in the violence centring the quota protests.

STUDENTS ARE TOP TARGET

Till yesterday police confirmed 2,536 arrests while Rab arrested 71 in the capital alone.

"Before conducting a drive, we collect the digital footprint and information provided by local sources including the ruling party men

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

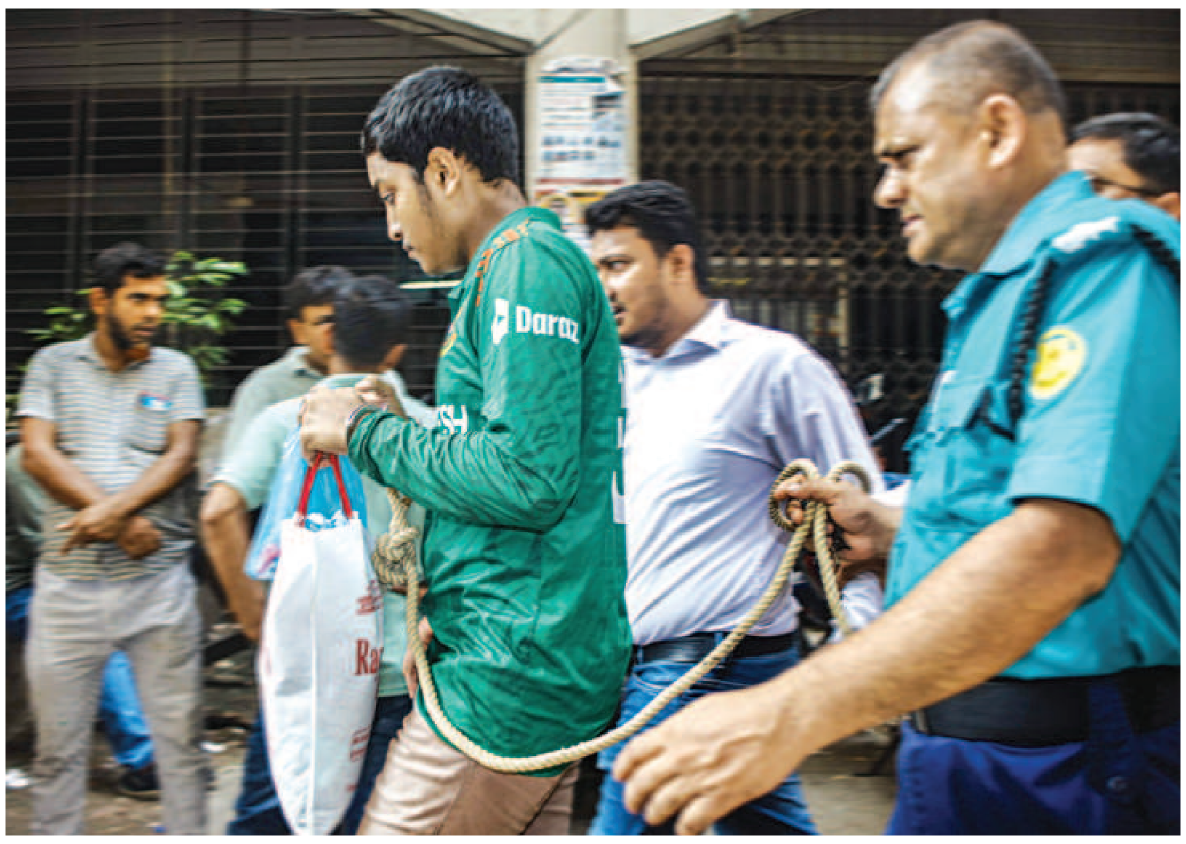

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, a first-year HSC student of Dhaka College, is tied up with ropes as cops take him back to jail on a seven-day remand after he was produced before the CMM's Court in the capital. Hasnatul was picked up from his Jatrabari home on Wednesday night in connection with a case filed over recent violence.

It was a plot to cripple the economy

Says PM while visiting wounded in Nitor

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the recent violence in the country was part of a conspiracy to reduce Bangladesh to a nation of beggars by crippling the economy.

She said this after visiting the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (Nitor), popularly known as Pangu hospital, in the capital.

Hasina, also the chief of Awami League, once again said it is up to the country's people to try the culprits who were behind the deadly violence.

"So many families have been affected. Who is responsible for this?" she asked.

She narrated how the BNP-Jamaat alliance unleashed a reign of terror and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PROTEST ORGANISERS

2 more in DB custody 'for their security'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday took two more organisers of the quota reform movement -- Sarjis Alam and Hasnat Abdullah -- into their custody.

Junaed Alam Sarker, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of police, told The Daily Star that they took the two into custody "to ensure their security and to get information

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

INTERNET OUTAGE, CURFEW

Default loans to soar, banks' profit to dip

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bankers are dreading a big drop in their profits as their defaulted loans are likely to increase further due to the curfew and the five-day internet blackout.

The defaulted loans are likely to increase further as business people are suffering due to the ongoing unrest, said Naser Ezaz Bijoy, chief executive officer (CEO) of Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

At the end of March, total defaulted loans stood at a record Tk 182,295 crore, which is 11.10 percent of total disbursed credit, as per the latest published data of the central bank.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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Hold law enforcers accountable for wrongdoings

14 foreign missions urge govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONENT

In a letter to Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud, 14 foreign missions in Dhaka urged the protection of human rights and fair trials for those arrested in the wake of last week's violent clashes.

They also expressed deep concern over the casualties and destruction of public properties during the unrest centring the student protests demanding reform to government job quotas, diplomatic sources said.

The joint letter sent to the foreign

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

MORE NEWS
China's teen duo grabs first gold P15
An entity with serious cracks P12
Yasin wakes in pain, every time P3

Syed Abdus Samad, Ph.D.
December 23, 1942 - July 28, 2021
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With heartfelt prayers,
Syeda Amatul Mowla (Sister),
Friends, Colleagues, Well-wishers
and Other Family Members

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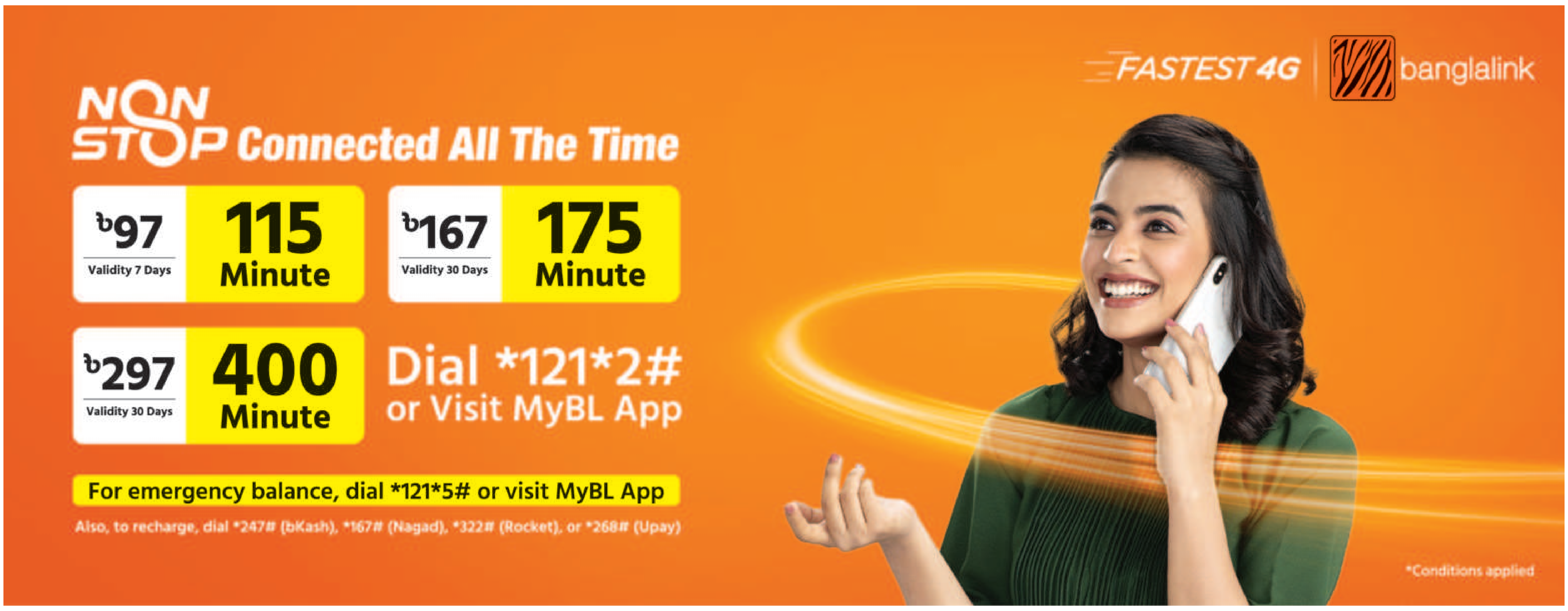
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UPDF member shot dead in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was shot dead by unidentified assailants at Santi Bikash Karbaripara in Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Junel Chakma, 31, was an organiser of the Tarabunia unit of UPDF (Prasit Group) from Amtoli village in the upazila.

According to Nurul Haque, officer-in-charge of Dighinala Police Station, some three to four unidentified armed assailants broke into the house of Master Lalit Chakma in the Kangarima Chara area early in the morning, where Junel was staying, and killed him.

Upon receiving the information, police recovered the body and sent it to Khagrachari Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

"It was not immediately clear who were the persons involved in the killing," said the police official.

Meanwhile, Angya Marma, district organiser of UPDF, accused the reformist Jana Samhati Samity (JSS-MN Larma) and UPDF (Democratic) of being responsible for the killing and demanded justice.

However, both groups refuted the allegation and denied their involvement in the incident.

Junel had recently joined the UPDF from the Democratic Jubo Forum, reports UNB.

With the nine-hour curfew break ending soon, people who've just got off work are in a hurry to return home before the curfew is back on. The result is standstill traffic on the streets, with many opting to go on foot. The photo was taken around 5:00pm in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Rain likely across the country: BMD

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Met office yesterday predicted light to moderate rain across the country in 24 hours till 9:00am today.

"Light to moderate rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, and Sylhet divisions; at a few places over Rangpur and Mymensingh divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions," said a bulletin issued by Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

A mild heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, as well as over Tangail, Sylhet, and Chuadanga districts. It may abate is some areas.

The day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Air quality 'moderate' in Dhaka for past few days

UNB, *Dhaka*

Dhaka ranked 63rd on the list of cities worldwide with the worst air quality with an AQI score of 51 at 09:08am yesterday.

The air quality was classified as "moderate". Dhaka's air quality remained in the moderate zone for the past few days, indicating an improvement.

The AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, informs people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

The AQI in Bangladesh is based on five pollutants: particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2, and ozone.

Dhaka has long been grappling with air pollution issues. Its air quality usually turns unhealthy in winter and improves during the monsoon.

Block raids unnerve city residents

FROM PAGE 1

to identify the troublemakers and trace their whereabouts," an officer said, requesting anonymity.

Law enforcers say these raids are meant to arrest four types of suspects -- those who ordered violence, provided funds, supplied firearms and those who took part in the violence.

But locals who witnessed such raids say law enforcers usually look for students, and if they find any, they check their phones, which is a breach of privacy.

"On Friday night, numerous police loaded in five trucks and many police vans and other vehicles cordoned off our area. They ordered students from many buildings to go on to the streets and stand in a single file. The street lights were off, but the headlights of their vehicles were directed at us. They said they would not arrest us this time, but we must leave Dhaka in three days," a student of a top public university said.

As the students said they offered private tuitions to support their education and so they cannot leave Dhaka now, some officers hit them and asked them to "shut up," the student said.

The Daily Star is not naming the student and the area where the raid took place for his safety.

Locals also saw helicopters flying low during these raids in some cases.

'AUXILIARY FORCES'

On Wednesday night, police arrested Fazlur Rahman, a manager at a courier service, from Manik Nagar during such a raid.

"Police checked Fazlur's cell phone and found a video clip of the clashes. This is why they arrested him," said one of his relatives, on condition of anonymity fearing reprisal.

Biplob Kumar Sarkar, joint commissioner (operation) of the DMP, said they will make sure that no troublemaker can leave Dhaka.

"The miscreants have gone into hiding, but we have been conducting block raids. Besides, police drives are underway day and night in Dhaka. No matter where they flee, we will arrest them," Biplob told a media briefing.

Sources in law enforcement said they already identified several thousand people who joined violence at different points in Dhaka.

A top DMP official said the plan to conduct violence was hatched at least a month ago by opposition party leaders and activists.

For the block raids, areas like Mohakhali, Mohammadpur, Jatrabari, and Uttara are on top of the list as some of the fiercest clashes took place in these areas.

Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), a platform of eight left-leaning parties; Anti-Fascist Leftist Association, a platform of six parties; and Bangladesh Jasod yesterday said the mass arrest of innocent students and people by flashing searchlights from helicopters during block raids joined in by Chhatra League-Jubo League activists to track down the protesting students and other people brings to mind the activities of Razakar, Al badr and other collaborators who aided the Pakistani army as auxiliary forces to identify the houses of freedom fighters.

A statement of the platforms demanded "an immediate end to repression, torture and mass arrests, withdrawal of curfew, return of army personnel to barracks and ensure normal environment."

PANIC ALL AROUND

The block raids have created a sense of fear among students and their families in many parts of Dhaka. Many of these families have already left their homes and seeking every opportunity to leave Dhaka, said witnesses.

"Before searching every room, police at first took photos of our rooms and houses and asked us not to talk to anyone about the raids," said Toufiq (not his real name), a university student form Shanir Akhra of Jatrabari.

He said police searched a six-storey building where he lives and vandalised some apartments before leaving the place late on Friday night.

"Many of our neighbours turned off the lights in their rooms so that police believe those flats were vacant," he said.

At one point, police started kicking at the main gate of their building. As the security guard and the houseowner opened the gate, police said they came for two men named Shahjahan and Rezwan, who allegedly attacked cops.

When the houseowner said there were no such people living in the building, several police officers in plainclothes started beating them and hurled abusive language.

"We know you have given them shelter. Tell us where?"

Around 50-60 armed police personnel, some in plainclothes and some wearing DB vests, were there, he said.

"From our balcony we saw some policemen beat up two people for several minutes, forced them to do sit-ups and made them say they will never participate in protest again," he said.

FEAR OF HELICOPTERS AGAIN

Many families in Jatrabari shared almost similar accounts.

"The local Chhatra League activists also joined the police during the raid and helped them identify houses where protesters live or the houses that provided food and water to them," said a witness to a block raid in Matuail.

A large number of law enforcers carried out raids on different houses in Mirpur 12 DOHS. Many students of different universities located near DOHS live there.

They said that during the raids, they looked for students and police checked their phones.

Witnesses from areas adjacent to ECB Chattar and Matikata area also said law enforcers carried out block raids in their areas too.

Late on Thursday night, a joint operation was conducted in Shaheen Bagh area of the capital. At that time, locals saw helicopters flying low and using searchlights.

"Use of searchlights from helicopters was terrifying," said a witness, recalling the memories of such choppers opening fire on the protesters.

'THIS IS NOT FAIR'

Locals from Bashundhara residential area said law enforcers conducted raids in the posh neighbourhood on Thursday night. Before the raids, police announced that no one should remain out of the house after 5:00pm. As the evening wore on, the presence of law enforcers increased.

A video footage shows members of the law enforcers firing when someone tries to capture the raid from top a building. The video went viral on social media.

In Mohakhali, electricity connection was snapped before a block raid.

Panicked, many families left their homes and took shelter elsewhere for safety.

In Jatrabari for example, The Daily Star found several homes empty.

"Among 22 families living in our building, there are only eight now. All other families have left Dhaka. Those who could not leave are thinking of shifting to someplace else," said a resident in Jatrabari.

"Police are making the common people extremely nervous. This is not fair, and it will not help improve the situation," he said.

It was a plot to cripple the economy

FROM PAGE 1

arson attacks in 2001, in 2013-2015 and after that in 2023.

Referring to the killings of AL activists and police personnel during the recent mayhem, the premier asked what kind of politics is this.

Briefly describing various steps taken by her government regarding the quotas in government jobs, Hasina questioned the motive of the student movement.

She said the agitating students declared a "complete shutdown" that led to the destruction of state properties and killing of a number of people.

"My question to the people of this country is, what was my fault? I am working for the welfare of the people to upgrade their lives and livelihoods. Is that my fault?"

The PM said she repeatedly requested the agitating students to have patience as their wishes will be fulfilled by the apex court and the government is also in favour of them.

She questioned why the "complete shutdown" continued after the apex court issued status-quo on the quota issue making no quota in the government jobs.

"I don't know why their shutdown was not stopped despite meeting all of their demands."

Hasina urged the people to stand against violence and support the government's efforts to maintain peace and progress.

"I do not want to see mothers losing their children like this. I have lost my parents; I know the pain. I seek cooperation from all to prevent such tragedies," she said referring to the deaths.

The premier reiterated that her government would do everything to ensure proper treatment of the injured.

She said the government will provide artificial limbs to those who need them.

During her visit to the Pangu hospital, the PM enquired about the treatment of the injured people.

Nitor Director Kazi Shamim Uzzaman apprised the PM of treatment of the injured.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen and State Minister for Health Rokeya Sultana, and former health minister AFM Ruhal Haque were present.

PM VISITS SETU BHABAN

Later in the day, Hasina visited Setu Bhaban to witness the damage caused by the recent violence.

She inspected the vandalised floors and the premises of the building.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and other senior ministry officials were present.

They briefed the premier about the vandalism and arson attacks that took place on July 18.

Default loans to soar

FROM PAGE 1

However, the actual volume of bad loans is at least three times the central bank figure, according to industry insiders.

Inflation may also increase in the coming days, Bijoy said.

Average inflation overshot the government's target of 7.5 percent in fiscal 2023-24; it stood at 9.73 percent.

"Not only was infrastructure damaged due to the unrest, but it also damaged the country's image -- the country will face a confidence crisis with investors," Bijoy said, adding that the priority now should be to bring the situation back to normal.

The bad loans will increase further as some business people have lost their capacity to repay the bank loans, said Anis A Khan, the former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh Ltd (ABB), a platform of banks' chief executive officers and managing directors.

Already, some export orders of the garment sector have been cancelled amid the weeklong unrest, he said.

Banks' profitability will be impact adversely when they will have to keep higher provisioning for the higher bad loans, said Khan, also the former MD of Mutual Trust Bank.

There will be multiple effects on the banking sector and the overall economy because of the ongoing unrest, he said, adding that foreign investors will lose their trust in the country.

"It will be very difficult to rebuild the trust of foreign investors."

The country's economic capacity will be reduced because of infrastructural damage.

"There will be a need for incentive packages for business people but the government is facing a cash crisis of its own. So the overall economic situation is not so good," Khan added.

Borrowers failed to repay the bank loans and other payments amid the internet blackout and curfew, which will adversely affect the banking sector alongside the bank's profitability, said Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank.

Last week, Bangladesh Bank instructed banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIS) to refrain from imposing fees or interest on delayed repayment of loan and saving scheme instalments and credit card bills between July 18 and July 25 if they clear their dues by the end of this month.

Banking services were stopped from 9 pm on July 18 for the countrywide internet blackout. From July 24, banking services were resumed on a limited scale, with many banks unable to conduct foreign transactions because of the slow internet.

"There is a lot of uncertainty regarding the economic situation in the coming days because of the recent unrest," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

There will be a double blow to the economy compared with the Covid-19 pandemic period.

"One will be for the internet shutdown and the other will be for the nationwide curfew. This may adversely impact the country's exports and imports," he added.

2 more in DB custody 'for their security'

FROM PAGE 1

about recent incidents".

This newspaper, however, could not know when and from where the two were picked up.

Earlier on Friday night, Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumder -- three key organisers of the quota reform movement -- were picked up by police from a city hospital, where Nahid and Asif were undergoing treatment.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday claimed they were taken into custody "to find out who were threatening to attack them".

"When we got the news [that they were being threatened] on social media, we took them into custody. We're questioning them to know who were trying to attack them. After questioning, we'll take a decision about them," he told a press briefing at the office of Narayanganj superintendent of police, after visiting the government and private establishments that were set on fire.

About these three also, ADC Junaed said they were taken into custody as "they sought security".

Meanwhile, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of DB, yesterday said Nahid, Asif and Abu Baker will be interrogated.

"We've interrogated Nur [former Ducsu vice president Nurul Haque Nur] and some other leaders after taking them on remand. They told us they had talks with Nahid and other coordinators. We need to know what they talked about," he told reporters at the DB office on the capital's Minto Road on Saturday.

"They [the coordinators] spoke on social media about feeling insecure. One of their fathers too expressed similar feelings. We think it's our responsibility as law enforcers to provide safety and security to those who say they're feeling insecure."

Meanwhile, a delegation of 12 teachers of the University Teachers Networks yesterday went to the DB office to enquire about the three coordinators, but the DB chief did not meet them as "he was busy".

They went there at 4:00pm and waited for around 20 minutes. They left after being told the DB chief was leaving the office.

Speaking to reporters, Professor Gitiara Nasreen of DU's journalism department, said, "When we came here, the head of the office was inside and was also informed. But he didn't meet us. We were asked by others in the office to stop his car when he was leaving and talk to him ... We're university teachers and also the guardians of these students ... Why should we stop someone's car to ask if our students are okay?

"It's very natural [to expect] that the entire process will be transparent and we'll be told what happened and why. But he didn't speak to us."

She added they went there out of concern for their students after learning from the media that they were picked up from the hospital "for extra security".

Saimum Reza Talukder, a teacher of Brac University's law department, said, "They were picked up on grounds of security issues. But the question is – why should they be in DB's custody? Why were they not returned to their families? A person's safest place is with their family.

"If security is to be provided, then it should be provided around their house and to their families as well."

He added, "We teachers have the right to know where they are now. It's also a matter of accountability to the public. So, the government should open up."

Responding to a question, Samina Lutfa, associate professor of DU's sociology department, said they were concerned about how the students are being treated and their safety.

"If there was a lack of security, they [the students] could've been handed to us."

About the DB chief not meeting them, she said, "I think it was very rude of him. Twelve teachers were standing and waiting but he didn't get the time. He didn't even tell us himself ... It wasn't right."

FRESH PROGRAMMES

After the five organisers were taken into police custody, three others last night announced fresh protest programmes, including drawing graffiti on walls across the country today.

Coordinators Abdul Hannan Masud, Mahin Sarker and assistant coordinator Rifat Rashid made the announcement in a virtual conference around 9:00pm last night.

They demanded the release of the five organisers currently in DB custody and the withdrawal of the false cases filed against students across the country.

Another demand was "visible action" against those – from ministers to constables – involved in the attacks on students.

They also said a "health force" should be formed in every educational institution at district, upazila and city levels, which will prepare a list of the injured and dead. They must also provide psychological and financial support to the injured and their families.

A legal force should also be formed, they added, to document the many false cases filed across the country and provide legal assistance to those in need.

"If our demands are not met, the anti-discrimination movement [Baishamya Birodhi Andolan] will be compelled to announce a tougher programmes from tomorrow," said Abdul Hannan Masud.

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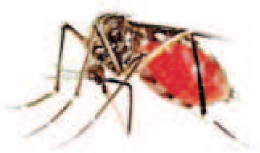

Two more die of dengue

BSS, *Dhaka*

Two more dengue patients died and 98 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

During the period, 74 dengue patients were hospitalised in Dhaka.

This year, the total number of cases rose to 5,496 while 53 deaths from dengue were reported.

In the past 24 hours, 68 dengue patients were discharged from different hospitals.

Among the total cases, 4,910 patients have already been released, the DGHS statement added.

Last year, the country recorded 1,705 dengue-related deaths and a total of 3,21,179 dengue cases.

Meanwhile, anti-mosquito drives have either remained completely suspended in some areas or been slowed down since the recent unrest in the country centring the quota reform protests.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks to an injured youth at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) in Dhaka yesterday. *Inset*, earlier, the premier visited Setu Bhaban to witness the extent of damage caused by the recent violence centring the quota reform protests.

PHOTO: **BSS**

Release quota organisers immediately

Demands HRFB; urges authorities to refrain from picking up students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) yesterday condemned and expressed deep concern over the picking up of three organisers of the quota reform protests by detectives and demanded their immediate release and security.

The forum also urged to ensure safety of all students and maintain highest caution so that no students face any harassment.

It also demanded compensation for the affected students, their rehabilitation and proper treatment to prevent any kind of potential disabilities.

Signed by 23 members of the forum, HRFB in a statement also demanded fair and impartial investigation into the recent violence to ensure justice.

HRFB, referring to media reports, said around 200 people were killed and over 1,000 injured in the violence that spread across the country, centring the quota reform protests. The

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

How could law enforcers open fire at students?

Ask speakers at women's rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women at a protest rally yesterday wanted to know under which law the law-enforcement agencies fired bullets at students and the masses during the quota reform protests.

They also demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Under the banner of "Chhatra Janatar Pashey Nari Samaj," women from all walks of life organised the rally at the capital's Purana Paltan around noon, condemning the arbitrary killings, assaults, cases, and arrests by the police against students.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

"I don't know why the forces opened fire on the students and masses. Was there a national emergency that necessitated the use of live ammunition by law enforcement agencies?" asked Sadia Arman, a senior lawyer at the Supreme Court.

"If there had been an emergency, it might have been justifiable. However, since the situation during the quota reform protests did not warrant

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'Every time he wakes up, he cries out in pain'

Says father of Yasin who was shot during recent violence

SHAHEEN MOLLAH *and* **NILIMA JAHAN**

Twenty three-year-old Md Yasin, a pickup van helper, was struck by a bullet on July 19, when he went to a nearby grocery store in an alley close to his house.

Fired from a distance, with tremendous force and speed, the bullet first pierced his wallet, then his hip and finally exited through his stomach.

He is now fighting for his life at Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital.

On that evening, there was a clash going on between quota reform protesters and law enforcement agencies in the Rayerbazar area, near the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Yasin undergoing treatment at Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Yasin, who lives in Rayerbazar area with his brother Md Mizan, a day labourer, said, "I had no idea there was a clash going on."

"I was buying vegetables from a shop close to my house, which was far from the main road. Suddenly, I was hit by a bullet."

"The bullet first went through

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Rickshaw-vans parked in a queue in Tejgaon area yesterday afternoon. Even though the curfew break has been extended to nine hours, many low-income people, including pullers of such vans, are still struggling to find work.

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'They're enemies of the country'

Raushan on those who destroyed state resources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Raushan Ershad, chairman of a faction of Jatiyo Party, yesterday demanded justice for the victims of recent anti-quota movement violence across the country.

She also called on the government to provide proper compensation to the families of the victims and ensure adequate medical treatment for the injured.

The former opposition leader made these remarks while speaking to reporters after visiting various damaged government establishments, including "Setu Bhaban", in the capital during the anti-quota demonstrations.

Accompanied by senior party leaders, Raushan condemned the destruction caused by armed criminals.

Those responsible for such extensive damage need to be tried under sedition laws through proper investigation, she said. "Citizens of any country cannot destroy state resources like this. Those who did are enemies of the country."

She acknowledged the valid demands of the young students and supported their cause, which she said had been addressed by the Supreme Court.

However, she added that the movement turned violent due to conspirators, resulting in the loss of many lives, including students, civilians, and law enforcement personnel.

3 sent to jail over rape of schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A Jashore court yesterday sent three persons to jail in a case filed for allegedly raping a sixth grader and filming the incident in Jashore's Monirampur upazila.

The accused are Ashraful Islam, 20, and his two friends -- Pranto Biswas, 22, and Shaon Hossain, 19.

Police arrested the three after the victim's grandmother filed a case with Manirampur Police Station, said ABM Mehdi Masud, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The three accused were sent to jail by a court.

According to the case statement, Ashraful recently returned home from Malaysia.

Around 8:00pm on Friday, Ashraful and two friends picked up the victim and raped her.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Caught in a sudden rain, a woman covers herself with a leaf in Khulna city's Shibbari intersection yesterday.

ATAI RIVER IN JASHORE

3 villages inundated as dam breaks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

The dam on Atai river in Abhaynagar upazila of Jashore broke on Thursday, inundating three villages under Siddhipasha union.

Since then, hundreds of families in Shantipur, Chandrapur and Ramnagar villages have been going through immense sufferings.

The villagers urged the authorities concerned to repair the broken dam quickly, and demanded a permanent solution to the issue.

The river's water started entering through Rishipara section of the dam in Shantipur village after a 300-metre stretch of the embankment collapsed early on July 26 due to rise in tidal water, said locals.

Soon, areas across Shantipur, Chandrapur and Ramnagar villages became waterlogged, causing sufferings to the residents, said Akbar Khan, a local union parishad member. The upazila administration has been informed in this regard, he added.

"Around 2,000 people in the three villages have been affected while numerous houses, animal sheds, fish enclosures and rural roads across the area have been waterlogged for the last three days," said A Kamal Hasan, chairman of Siddhipasha Union Parishad and a resident of Chandrapur village.

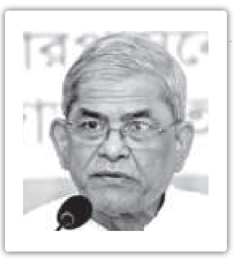
Contacted, KM Abu Nawshad, UNO of Abhaynagar upazila, said the officials concerned of Bangladesh Water Development Board have been informed about the collapsed dam.

"BWDB officials gave assurance of repairing the collapsed dam within a week. Meanwhile, upazila administration has taken some steps to repair the damaged roads," he added.

She is shedding 'crocodile tears'

Says Fakhrul on PM's hospital visit

UNB, *Dhaka*



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for what he called a deceptive display of "crocodile tears" during her hospital visits to see the injured protesters of the quota reform movement.

In a statement, Fakhrul condemned the Detective Branch for detaining three coordinators of the quota reform movement from a hospital, warning that such actions would deepen the crisis.

He accused the premier of deceiving people with her hospital visits.

Fakhrul urged the government to step down, taking responsibility for the recent violence.

He also accused it of shutting down communication systems and imposing curfews to cling onto power. He highlighted the economic hardships faced by the public and called for a political solution.

Fakhrul demanded an impartial international probe into the killings during the quota protests and accused the government of spreading misinformation about BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

BNP, Jamaat are inseparable

Says Quader

BSS, *Dhaka*

The relationship between BNP and Jamaat is inseparable, as demonstrated in the BNP's call for unity that includes Jamaat, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"Anti-liberation forces are collaborators of BNP," he said in a statement to the media.

Quader criticised the call for national unity by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, labelling it as a union of anti-state forces against the spirit of the Liberation War.

He said this call poses a threat to the country's independence and sovereignty. Quader urged pro-liberation forces to resist BNP-Jamaat.

He alleged that BNP-Jamaat activists conducted widespread destruction using lethal weapons.

Quader assured that law enforcers are actively pursuing the culprits, with a judicial probe committee and police investigations underway.

Rejecting BNP's allegations, he said innocent people will not be harassed, and no criminals will be spared.

Release quota organisers

FROM PAGE 3

forum also feared many of the injured may lose their vision and limbs.

Besides, various government establishments were damaged due to the violence, it said.

The forum condemned the violence vehemently and demanded legal action through fair and impartial investigation against those involved. They also urged that students are not harassed in the process.

HRFB said it was known that when allegations rose of men in plainclothes picking up three organisers of Anti-discrimination Student Movement -- Asif Mahmud, Nahid Islam and Abu Baker Majumder -- on July 26 evening, the Detective Branch claimed that they were taken into custody "on security grounds".

Meanwhile, there was an allegation that plainclothes DB men picked up Nahid Islam from his friend's residence on July 19 and later he was dumped on a road after being physically and mentally tortured, it said.

The forum expressed deep concern over the allegations of picking up the organisers of the student protests time and again by men in plainclothes and demanded a clear statement from the authorities concerned in this regard.

"Such incidents will definitely create panic among general students and their family members," it said, adding that such indiscriminate detention is a clear violation of the articles 27 and 31 of the constitution.

"So, the forum demanded release and security of all organisers, including Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumder, and urged [the authorities] to refrain from picking them up by plainclothes men, intimidating them and exercising illegal force," reads the statement.

The forum demanded that the 2016 Supreme Court directives regarding the arrest without warrant and remand be followed.

It said police action were not coherent with the public statement of several ministers, who said the students were not involved in any violence or subversive activities. Rather, police action are creating obstacle to freedom of expression and holding peaceful protest guaranteed by the constitution.

Such activities by the law enforcement agencies are exposing their misuse of power and questioning their professional integrity, it said.

Overall, this is contradictory to the laws of Bangladesh and its international commitments, which will create mistrust among people about the rule of law, the forum added.

The signatories include HRFB experts Hameeda Hossain, Sultana Kamal and Raja Devasish Roy; HRFB convener Faruq Faisel, also executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra; HRFB steering committee members Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagarik Uddyog; Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust; Ranjan Karmakar, executive director of Steps Towards Development; Shale Ahmed, executive director of Bandhu Social Welfare Society; and Sanjib Drang, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum.

The other signatories are HRFB members Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development; Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori; Sarder Jahangir Hossain, executive director of Acid Survivors Foundation; Moni Rani Das, chairperson of Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Society; Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies; Dewan Zaman, executive director of FAIR; Pallab Chakma, executive director of Kapaeeng Foundation; Rokeya Rafique Baby, executive director of Karmojibi Nari; Tasnim Azim, president of Naripokkho; Abdus Sattar Dulal of National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations; and Ashrafun Nahar Misti, executive director of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation.

Every time

FROM PAGE 3

my wallet which was wrapped inside my lungi, then my hip, and finally exited through my lower abdomen," he added.

Bystanders quickly took him to Suhrawardy hospital, where doctors performed a two-and-a-half-hour colostomy surgery.

He is now on a colostomy bag to manage his bodily waste, the duty doctor told The Daily Star.

He required four bags of blood during the operation.

Yasin, the youngest of three siblings, is being accompanied by his father, Rouf Shikder, and his brother, Md Mizan.

"My son has been very anxious since the incident and keeps asking when he will recover. Every time he wakes up, he cries out in pain," said his father, who came all the way from Nazirpur upazila of Pirojpur.

Yasin's brother Mizan mentioned that despite promises of free treatment, they have already spent Tk 1 lakh, borrowed from others.

"We are very poor, and our family relies on our income, which is currently halted. We don't know if things will improve," said Mizan.

Failing to find elder

FROM PAGE 5

"We had an apprehension that our eldest brother might be arrested for his association with opposition political party. But why police arrested my innocent youngest brother?" asked Sagor, a fish trader.

Golam Mostafa Russell, Narayanganj superintendent of police, said, "Those who have carried out mass destruction are mostly involved with BNP or Jamaat. It is not possible to identify everyone instantly. If we find any involvement of the boy after verification, then he will be made accused in the case; otherwise, he will be released."

How could law enforcers open fire at students?

FROM PAGE 3

such extreme measures, how could they [law enforcement agencies] open fire? I want to know the answers," she added.

Jahangirnagar University teacher Snigda Rizwana criticised the PM for visiting the metro rail first rather than visiting the family members of the deceased and injured victims.

"To her [Sheikh Hasina], the metro rail is more important than lives," she said.

"You [PM] said that you poured water from a helicopter to extinguish the fire. Then who killed the child playing on the rooftop? Who killed the child staring outside from her window? Did your conscience not tell you to visit the ill-fated family members first? Are they also Razakars or militants to you?" she asked.

The teacher said the Awami League does not care about the lives of people, as the party did not come to power with the people's mandate.

"That is why you [PM] used all your forces to suppress the students' protests," she said.

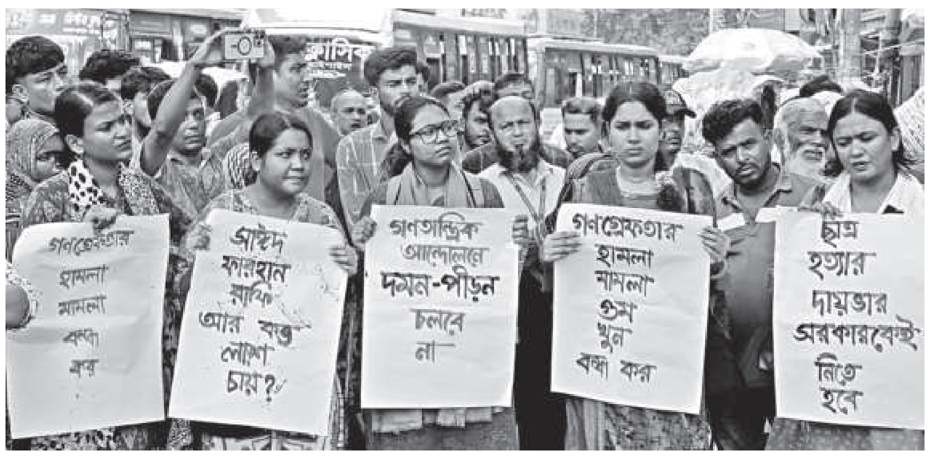

গণগ্রেফতার হামলা মামলা বন্ধ কর
আর কত লাশ চায়?
গণতান্ত্রিক আন্দোলনে দমন-পীড়ন চলবে না
গণগ্রেফতার হামলা মামলা গুম খুন বন্ধ কর
ছাত্র হত্যার দায়ভার সরকারকেই নিতে হবে

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Speaking at the rally, Jakia Shishir, grandmother of Mir Mugdho, who was killed during the student protest, said her grandson distributed water among the protesters during the movement.

"He was seen shouting 'water, water'. He asked the protesters if they needed water to drink. He served water to the protesters to quench their thirst, but he was killed within minutes," she said.

"You [PM] have killed numerous children like Mugdho... History says no one can remain in power by force," she added.

Amena Aktar, joint convener of Biplobi Nari Forum, asked the prime minister to step down from office for killing numerous people by using force.

Among others, women from different left-leaning political parties and cultural and social organisations spoke at the rally.

After the rally ended, they brought out a procession that concluded in front of the foreign ministry's office.

বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল
(বাংলাদেশ ডায়াবেটিক সমিতির একটি অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান)
১২২, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দৈনিক মজুরী ভিত্তিতে অস্থায়ীভাবে নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে জনবল নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে-

ক্রঃ #	পদের নাম	যোগ্যতা
১	৪র্থ শ্রেণীর বিভিন্ন পদ দৈনিক বেতন-৫৩৭/- টাকা	ন্যূনতম অষ্টম শ্রেণী পাশ। উচ্চতর শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন এবং যে কোন সেবা সংস্থার অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।
২	নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী দৈনিক বেতন-৫৩৭/- টাকা	Class VIII Pass having good physique. Preference will be given to the retired defence personnel.

৩০.০৬.২০২৪ তারিখে ক্রঃ# ১-এর জন্য ৩০ বছর এবং ক্রঃ# ০২-এর জন্য ৩৫ বছর (জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/বোর্ড সার্টিফিকেট অনুযায়ী) বয়স। বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল-এর ১৫ এবং ২২ # ক্যাশ কাউন্টারে ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকা জমা দিয়ে চাকুরীর আবেদন প্রতি কর্মদিবসে সকাল ৯:০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ১২:৩০মিঃ এর মধ্যে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।
আবেদন ফরমের সঙ্গে টাকা জমার মানি রিসিপ্ট এর নির্ধারিত অংশ সংযুক্তসহ উল্লেখিত প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র আগামী ২৯.০৮.২০২৪ তারিখের মধ্যে ২৩২ # কক্ষের সম্মুখে রক্ষিত বাক্সে জমা দিতে হবে অথবা ডাকযোগে পাঠাতে হবে। বিধি মোতাবেক সংক্ষিপ্ত তালিকাকৃত প্রার্থীদের পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে নির্বাচন করা হবে। অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

D-05

মহাপরিচালক, বারডেম

Curfew casts long shadow on low-income people

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Almost all low-income people in Khulna city have found themselves in dire straits amid the ongoing situation for over a week.

Shafiq Mandal, 65, who works as a porter and ticket broker at Sonadanga Bus Terminal in Khulna city, was seen sorting some rusted iron rods and bars at an abandoned car garage near the terminal on Friday noon.

Amid nationwide curfew over the past few days, he found no work to make ends meet and has been compelled to collect discarded metal pieces to sell as scraps.

"The terminal hardly had any passengers in the past few days due to curfew, so I had no work. Yesterday, I earned Tk 140 by selling scrap metal, but today [Friday], I won't probably be able to make more than Tk 80-90," he said.

Like him, almost all low-income people in Khulna city, including day labourers, hawkers, cobblers, rickshaw-pullers and vendors, have found themselves in dire straits amid the ongoing situation for over a week and are passing their days with frustration and struggling to stay afloat.

> **Like other times, day labourers were seen waiting at the city's Sat Rasta and Moilapota intersections on Friday and Saturday in the morning, looking for clients to hire them for work. However, even after waiting for more than four hours, less than half of them got any work.**

Like other times, day labourers were seen waiting at the city's Sat Rasta and Moilapota intersections on Friday and Saturday in the morning, looking for clients to hire them for work.

However, even after waiting for more than four hours, less than half of them got any work.

Homeowners are reluctant to engage in any kind of construction work amid the prevailing situation, said the workers.

Many workers and marginalised people were also seen at Khulna Rail Station and BIWTA Terminal sitting idle.

"After finding no work for a week, I resorted to borrowing some money to buy essentials for my family of five and some lemons, which I have been selling in the Bastuhara kitchen market for the last three days. However, there are not many buyers on the market. So how am I going to earn anything in this situation?" lamented Rabiul Alam, a day labourer.

Hanif Gazi, 33, a construction worker from Haldar Para in Khalishpur, said he had to borrow Tk 1,300 from a relative to put food on the plate for his family of four as the construction work he was employed in has been suspended amid the curfew.

"How long can you survive with Tk 1,300? I need to find some work, but no one is hiring workers amid the curfew," he added.

Al Amin Sheikh, 55, a rickshaw puller from Nayabati area, said he could not even earn a quarter of his usual daily income by pulling a rickshaw during the few hours when curfew gets relaxed.

Numerous other low-income and marginalised people shared similar plights with this correspondent.

Contacted, Kazi Aminul Haque, president of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said daily wage earners have been the most adversely affected amid the ongoing situation.

He called upon the government as well as affluent members of society to come forward and help those affected.

Failing to find elder brother, police pick up HSC examinee

STAR REPORT

Police picked up an HSC examinee after failing to find his elder brother during an early morning raid in Narayanganj on July 22.

Eighteen-year-old Abu Raihan, a student of Reboti Mohan Pilot School and College, is now in Narayanganj jail, said his family members.

They alleged that law enforcers in plainclothes raided their Atigram home under Siddhirganj upazila around 3:00am to arrest Raihan's elder brother Abdul Kader Jilani, who is the Siddhirganj Thana Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president.

Abu Raihan

"The law enforcers came to our house in search of our brother Jilani who usually stays away from home for his involvement in politics. Failing to find him, police picked up Raihan despite our mother telling them that he has been appearing in the HSC exam," Sagor, the second of three siblings, told The Daily Star.

Raihan, a student of science department, secured GPA 5 in the 2022 SSC exam, said Sagor, adding that his younger was not involved in politics.

Sagor said he was in another room when police were whisking away Raihan, saying that it would help them arrest Jilani.

The law enforcers told the single mother of three to appear at the Siddirganj Police Station with Raihan's exam admit card.

"We appeared at the police station with Raihan's admit card around 4:00am and stayed there till 11:00am before police told us that Raihan has been sent to the court. He was shown arrested under section 54," said Sagor.

He said they rushed to the court and appealed for Raihan's release through a lawyer. However, the court sent Raihan to jail the same day.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

With the help of a stick, Pushpa Rani plucking guavas from a tree in Bhimruli area of Jhalakathi yesterday. After collecting guavas, she stacks them on a boat and sails towards the floating market on Bhimruli canal. She sells the guavas for around Tk 500 per maund to traders there.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Security beefed up at Khulna jail

UNB, *Khulna*

Security has been tightened at Khulna District Jail considering the current situation in the country, including the recent attacks in Narsingdi jail.

"Surveillance has been increased in and around the jail while the leaves of all jail staffers have been cancelled," said Jail Superintendent Md Rafiqul Kader yesterday.

However, the jail authorities also suspended the visits of the relatives of the jail inmates, he said.

"Everyone is performing their duties continuously. Additional police have been deployed at the main gate of the jail," he said.

Security has been beefed up inside the jail and law enforcement agencies have been kept on alert, he added.

Currently, there are 1,421 prison inmates in the jail, against its capacity of accommodating 676 inmates.

Guarantee easy accessibility to climate finance

Says environment minister

UNB, *Dhaka*

Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury has called for the implementation of mechanisms that guarantee easy accessibility to climate finance for developing nations.

He highlighted the need for increased transparency in the allocation and distribution of these funds to ensure they effectively support the intended climate actions.

The minister said this while delivering a speech on the opening day of the two-day Head of Delegation retreat programme held in Shamakhi, Azerbaijan, on Friday.

The event, which brings together key international leaders, is focused on shaping the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.

Furthermore, the minister underscored the importance of considering the unique needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the formulation of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG).

He stressed the necessity of finalising a clear definition of climate finance, ensuring that it comprehensively covers adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage.

The Head of Delegation programme commenced with an in-depth discussion on setting the scene for the NCQG, which is poised to replace the current USD 100 billion climate finance goal set by developed countries for developing nations after 2025.

COASTS IN BAGERHAT

Solar power brings light, resilience

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY,
Bagerhat

In the coastal areas of Bagerhat's Kachua upazila, solar power has emerged as a boon for the people, especially amid natural disasters and routine power outages.

The renewable energy source has not only brightened homes in the villages of Sangdia, Afra, Sreerampur, Kalmibuniya, Mosni, and Bikul but also enabled residents to stay connected and maintain their daily activities without disruption.

"I purchased a solar panel and battery for Tk 20,000. During natural disasters, solar power helps us light our homes, recharge our mobile phones, torches, and even power banks. These devices are crucial for communication and safety in such critical times," said Mehedi Hasan Khan from Afra.

Echoing him, Bappi Debnath from Sreerampur noted that the use of solar power in these villages is not only a response to emergency situations but also a practical solution to daily challenges.

"Load-shedding is a common issue faced by rural people in summer. During power outages, the scorching heat is unbearable. Solar panels generate electricity harnessing energy from the sun, allowing us to run fans and lights during power cuts. At night, the charged batteries provide us with the necessary power to keep our homes lit and comfortable," he said.

Embracing the use of solar power has transformed the lives of many in Kachua upazila towards enhanced sustainability.

Ashim Chakrabortty from Sangdia said, "I received a solar panel from the government and later bought another for Tk 16,000. Solar power has revolutionised our lives. It's a cost-effective and eco-friendly solution to ensure that we are never left in the dark. The investment is worth every penny, given the long-term benefits."

Contacted, Rakhi Banerjee, upazila nirbahi officer of Kachua upazila, said, "At times of natural calamities, such as cyclones and storms, when conventional power grids are often the first to be affected, solar power systems remain largely unaffected, providing a steady source of energy."

The solar street lights in rural areas have also been incredibly useful, she added.

The UNO, however, expressed the need for renewed government support to distribute more solar power units in the coastal areas.

JAMUNA BASIN

FAO gives silo, cattle feed to 15,110 families

UNB, *Dhaka*

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has distributed silos and cattle feed to families across five districts of Jamuna River basin to mitigate the impacts of monsoon floods.

The project aims to safeguard livelihoods, reducing the adverse effects of climate-related disasters.

As part of the project FAO, with the budget of nearly USD 600,000, is distributing silos for the safe storage of food grains, seeds, clean water and other valuable assets during the monsoon flood and 50 kilogrammes of ruminant concentrated feed to 15,110 vulnerable farming households engaged in livestock production.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 28

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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ASSET DEVELOPMENTS

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Bangladesh Land Port Authority
বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দর
বেনাপোল, যশোর
www.blpa.gov.bd

স্মারক নং- ১৮.১৫.৪১৯০.০২৫.০০.২৬৮.২০১১-৪৬ তারিখ: ১১-০৭-২০২৪ খ্রি:

বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দরের ১৩টি টয়লেট কমপ্লেক্স ও গোসলখানা ইজারা প্রদানের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ স্থলবন্দর কর্তৃপক্ষের আওতাধীন বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দরের ১৩টি টয়লেট কমপ্লেক্স ও গোসলখানা পরিচালনা ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণের জন্য ইজারাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে আগ্রহী দরদাতাদের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	বিবরণ	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	ইজারার মেয়াদ
১.	বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দরের ১৩(তেরো)টি টয়লেট কমপ্লেক্স ও গোসলখানা।	২০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার)	মোট উদ্ধৃত দরের ৩ (তিন) শতাংশ	২(দুই) বছর

২। দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান ঃ
পরিচালক (ট্রাফিক) এর দপ্তর, হিসাব উপ-শাখা, বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দর, যশোর।
৩। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময় ঃ ১১/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়।
৪। দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময় ঃ ১২/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ, বেলা ১২:০০ টা।
৫। ইজারা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকায় প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে (সরকারি ছুটি ব্যতীত) আগামী ১২/০৮/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত পরিচালক (ট্রাফিক) এর কার্যালয়, প্রকৌশল উপ-শাখা, বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দর, বেনাপোল, যশোর এ নির্ধারিত বাক্সে দরপত্র জমা প্রদান করা যাবে এবং ডাকযোগেও ইজারা দরপত্র জমা প্রদান করা যাবে। তবে, ডাকযোগের ক্ষেত্রে আবশ্যিকভাবে সরকারি ডাক/রেজিষ্ট্রার্ড কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস এর মাধ্যমে প্রেরণ করতে হবে এবং তা নির্ধারিত সর্বশেষ তারিখ অর্থাৎ ১২/০৮/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে পৌঁছাতে হবে। নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের মধ্যে ডাকযোগে প্রাপ্ত দরপত্রসমূহ রেজিস্ট্রার এন্ট্রির মাধ্যমে সংরক্ষণ করা হবে।
৬। নির্ধারিত টেন্ডার বক্স ও ডাকযোগে নির্ধারিত সময়ে প্রাপ্ত ইজারা দরপত্র সমূহ আগামী ১২/০৮/২০২৪ তারিখ বেলা ২:৩০ টার সময় উপ-পরিচালক (প্রশাসন), বেনাপোল স্থলবন্দর, যশোর এর সভাপতিত্বে উপস্থিত দরদাতা/প্রতিনিধির সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হবে।
৭। ইজারা প্রদানের শর্তাবলী ও তথ্যাদি দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত আছে।
৮। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই কোন একটি বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।

মো: রেজাউল করিম
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S CHINA SEA ROW

China warns Philippines of 'resolute' response

AFP, *Vientiane*

China will "respond resolutely" to any violation by the Philippines of a recent deal to calm tensions between the two countries in the South China Sea, its top diplomat told his Filipino counterpart, Beijing said yesterday.

Manila is locked in a longstanding territorial row with Beijing over parts of the strategic waterway through which trillions of dollars worth of trade passes annually.

Last week, the two sides agreed to a "provisional arrangement" for resupply missions to Filipino troops stationed at Second Thomas Shoal, which has been the focus of violent clashes in recent months.

Wang Yi called on the Philippines to "honour its commitments" under the deal rather than "backtracking or creating complications", according to a readout of his meeting with Philippine foreign secretary Enrique Manalo at an Asean gathering in Laos.

"Otherwise, China will definitely respond resolutely," he said.

Wang also warned the Philippines against deploying a US missile defense system.

"If the Philippines introduces the US intermediate-range missile defense system, it will create tension and confrontation in the region and trigger an arms race," he said.

Speaking to reporters late Friday, Manalo said he hoped Beijing would keep its side of the bargain.

"If the parties implement, and we hope China implements the agreement, then we'll be able to resupply our military personnel on the ship without any obstruction," he said.

Fire crews work to put out hotspots in the Maligne Lodge in Jasper, Alberta, Canada on Friday. Severe wildfire seasons are increasingly hurting western Canada's lucrative tourism industry, with some visitors beginning to avoid the busy late-summer months due to concerns about uncontrolled blazes, smoke-filled skies and road closures.

PHOTO: AFP

Kyiv's statements on peace talks contradictory

Says Russia; Ukraine downs 4 Russian drones

AFP, *Vientiane*

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday he "does not listen" to what he called Ukraine's contradictory statements on peace talks.

Lavrov spoke after Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba visited China for talks this week. President Volodymyr Zelensky then said Beijing sent a "clear signal" it supported Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Answering questions from Russian journalists on the sidelines of a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in the Laos capital, Lavrov referred dismissively to Zelensky and Kuleba's comments.

Kuleba, in an interview with Ukraine's TSN channel Friday about his visit to Beijing, said Kyiv could not be forced to negotiate and that China, which has sought to paint itself as a mediator after Russia's invasion, respected Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Kuleba "is saying this not for the first time and has sometimes said completely opposite things," Lavrov said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's air defences shot down four attack drones and one missile fired by Russia in an overnight attack yesterday, the Ukrainian air force said.

Start peace process

Asean urges Myanmar, condemns violence against civilians

REUTERS

Foreign ministers of the Southeast Asian regional bloc Asean yesterday condemned violence against civilians in the military-ruled Myanmar and urged all parties to end hostilities and follow an agreed peace plan.

In a joint communique issued two days after their closed-doors retreat in Laos, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also welcomed unspecified practical measures to reduce tension in the South China Sea and prevent accidents and miscalculations.

It described North Korea's missile tests as worrisome developments and urged peaceful resolutions to the conflicts in Ukraine, as well as Gaza, expressing concern over the dire humanitarian situation and "alarming casualties" there.

Earlier in the day, Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong called on Myanmar's junta to "take a different path" from its bloody crackdown on dissent, saying the situation in the war-torn country is "not sustainable".

"Myanmar is deeply concerning, we see it in the economy, instability, insecurity, deaths," Wong told journalists at a press conference.

"The message I want to send to the military regime is 'this is not sustainable for you and your people'."

"We urge them to take a different path and reflect the five-point consensus."

The junta has been barred from high-level Asean meetings over its crackdown on dissent.

It had previously refused to send "non-political representatives" but two senior bureaucrats are representing the country at the talks in Vientiane.

A Southeast Asian diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity earlier this week that the military's readiness to re-engage diplomatically was a sign of its "weakened position".

In recent weeks, ethnic minority armed groups have renewed an offensive against the military in northern Shan state, seizing territory along a vital highway to China.

Indian soldier, intruder killed in J&K

AFP, *New Delhi*

A gunfight in Kashmir killed the eleventh Indian soldier to die in the restive Himalayan territory this month, India's military said yesterday.

The military said an armed intruder from bordering Pakistan was also killed in the exchange of fire.

India's military said a group of two or three people crossed the de facto frontier dividing the territory and fired at an army post in Kupwara district "from close proximity". An Indian army soldier succumbed to his injuries during treatment, while another was injured but in stable condition.

Mobile internet

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People with knowledge of the matter said the outage was ordered by the government.

The Daily Star has visited the data centres in question and found no sign of damage to the building that housed them.

Officials of the data centres also confirmed that there was no fire in the building. However, the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) building was torched and that fire partially damaged some overhead cables connected to the data centres located nearby buildings.

On July 17, the government shut down mobile internet. Palak said it was "in light of the current crisis in the country and to stop the spread of fake news on social media."

The next day, the DDM building was torched.

Around 8:00pm, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh said the fire might have cut 30-40 percent of the bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

However, officials of internet service providers said this would disrupt partial internet traffic. An hour later, the entire Bangladesh was without internet.

The government reopened broadband internet in selected areas on July 23 and restored connections on a trial basis nationwide the next day.

Ensure inquiry into killings

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Human Rights chief.

The signatories include luminaries such as writer Amitav Ghosh, philosophers such as Étienne Balibar and Sandra Laugier, and leaders in humanities and social sciences such as Didier Fassin, Diana Eck, and Ash Amin.

The petition, which has drawn support from universities around the world, speaks to global concerns about preserving academic freedom, and democratic rights.

Many academics and civil rights organisations have faced intimidation from the authorities in Bangladesh and now fear for the safety of their families if they join our efforts to seek immediate action on behalf of the victims, the letter said.

"We urge you that this is a moment of urgent action," says the letter, expressing grave concern about the violent clashes that left over 150 dead.

The letter said that due to the continuing blockade on news, there is very little information on the brutal violence that has been unleashed on students, teachers, journalists, and others.

"Still, from what we can gather from our colleagues in Bangladesh, we understand that the police have killed protestors in the hundreds and injured them in the thousands."

Draconian measures such as arbitrary arrests and detention without show cause notice, denial of the right to be represented by a lawyer, infliction of injuries, and torture on the arrested call for immediate action to stop these blatant violations of human rights by the present government in Bangladesh, the letter reads.

"Given the atmosphere of intimidation and repression, we urge you, as the High Commissioner of Human Rights, to press for an independent inquiry into these grievous events that would fix responsibility for the lethal violence against protesters and the blockade on news and communication."

The letter said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has lost all moral and legal legitimacy in allowing these grave violations and must answer for the loss of so many lives.

Some other scholars signing the letter include David Ludden, professor of history, New York University; Sheldon Pollock, Arvind Raghunathan professor emeritus of South Asian studies, Columbia University; Etienne Balibar, emeritus professor, University of Paris-Nanterre; Partha Chatterjee, professor emeritus of anthropology, Columbia University; Naomi Hossain, global research professor, SOAS; Diana Eck, Frederic Wertham, Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society, Harvard University; Andrew Brandel, associate instructional professor, University of Chicago; Piergiorgio Donatelli, professor and chair of philosophy, Sapienza University, Rome; Ashutosh Varshney, director, Saxena Center for Contemporary South Asia; Sol Goldman, professor of international studies and the social sciences, Brown University; Faisal Devji, professor of Indian history, University of Oxford; Akeel Bilgrami, Sidney Morgenbesser, professor of philosophy, Columbia University; Sandra Laugier, professor of philosophy, University of Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne; Gyan Prakash, Dayton-Stockton professor of history, Princeton University; Iftikhar Dadi, John H Burris, professor, Cornell University; Prasenjit Duara, Oscar Tang, professor of East Asian studies, Duke University; Shruti Kapila, Professor of history and politics, Cambridge University; Joya Misra, distinguished professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Meanwhile, Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, yesterday said she was deeply disturbed by reports from Bangladesh that three leaders of the Students Against Discrimination movement have been forcibly taken from hospital by police.

"They were reportedly in hospital in the first place due to police torture. This madness must stop," she said in a post on social media platform X.

Over 8,000 held in 10 days

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people were arrested in 35 districts.

Of them, six were arrested in Thakurgaon; one in Madaripur; one in Dinajpur; 17 in Rangpur; six in Feni; 34 in Gazipur; four in Sylhet; 10 in Tangail; 29 in Rajshahi; 16 in Bogura; 50 in Narsingdi; three in Gaibandha; four in Barguna; 51 in Narayanganj; nine in Joypurhat; seven in Khulna; two in Jamalpur; 33 in Pabna; five in Kushtia; eight in Mymensingh; 15 in Kishoreganj; seven in Netrokona; one in Satkhira; six in Cox's Bazar; 12 in Naogaon; 17 in Cumilla; five in Natore; two in Panchagarh; 61 in Chattogram; 14 in Chandpur; one in Chuadanga; three in Meherpur; three in Jhenaidah; 10 in Savar and 13 in Barishal.

Rab yesterday morning said they have so far arrested 290 people across the country, including 71 in Dhaka, since July 18 in connection with the violence.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Metropolitan and the district police arrested 847 people, including BNP-Jamaat men, till yesterday, according to police.

In Narayanganj, two new cases of violence, vandalism and arson were filed yesterday.

With these, the total number of cases in five police stations of the district stands at 24 and the number of arrestees has reached 487.

In Gazipur, at least 396 people were arrested over the same 36-hour period.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed three people, including BNP's Publicity Secretary Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie on a seven-day remand each in a case filed over vandalising and setting fire to the Bangladesh Television centre in Rampura on July 18.

Mohammad Yasin Shikder, an inspector of the Detective Branch of police and the case's investigating officer, produced them before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

Five others were remanded in connection with a case over the vandalism carried out at the Mirpur-10 Metro Rail Station. According to the case documents, some 5,000-6,000 people attacked the station between 4:30pm and 7:30pm on July 19, resulting in damages worth Tk 500 crore.

STUDENTS BEING ARRESTED

Despite government officials' saying that students will not be harassed during the crackdown on perpetrators of the recent violence and sabotage centring the quota reform movement, hundreds of students have been implicated in separated cases filed across the country.

As of yesterday, at least 62 students in seven districts have been arrested, with dozens of others also accused in the cases.

In Narsingdi, at least 34 students were arrested over the last week.

Among them, 19 are madrasa students, and 15 are students from different schools, colleges, and universities. The students' lawyer Advocate Suman Ahmed, confirmed the arrest of the 15.

From July 18-26, police filed 11 cases on various charges: assault, vandalism, looting of weapons, obstruction of government work, attempted murder of police officials, possession of firearms and explosives, and causing public disturbance in the Narsingdi district jail.

Around 2,000 people were listed as "unidentified accused" in the cases.

Of them, police arrested 182 individuals from July 18-26, said Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, superintendent of Narsingdi police.

In Khulna, at least two students were arrested in three cases under the Special Powers Act, filed with three police stations.

The arrestees are Al Amin Sheikh, a student of North Western University and the central organising secretary of the Bangladesh Students Federation; and Md Nazim Uddin Shamim, convener of the Azam Khan Government Commerce College Chhatra Dal.

Md Ahsan Habib, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Khulna Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that a total of 100 people were arrested from July 17-27 on charges of violent agitation and engaging in sabotage under the guise of the quota reform protesters.

In Satkhira, at least 98, including 16 students, have so far been arrested. On July 19, the 16 were sent to jail by a court order, said Mohidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Satkhira Police Station.

They are: Imran Hossain, Arman Hossain, Kazi Nur Siam, Shahrukuzzaman, Loinul Islam, Kazi Sakib Hasan, Tanvir Hossain, Ibrahim Hossain, Fahim, Zahid Hossain, Asadullah, Oliur Rahman, Tasin Farhan, Mahi Rahman, Rakibul Islam, and Nafizul Islam.

On the night of July 18, Bajra Kishore Pal of Satkhira Sadar Police Station filed the case against 30 named and 250-300 unnamed individuals, accusing them of breaking into the police station and attacking officers.

In Magura, five students were arrested in a sabotage case, according to Md Kalimullah, additional superintendent of police in the district.

In Natore, some 97 people, including four students, were arrested in eight different cases, police sources said.

In Narayanganj's Siddhirganj area, plainclothes men detained a student named Abu Raihan, an HSC examinee, on the night of July 22 after they could not locate his elder brother Abdul Kader Jilani, is the president of the Siddhirganj thana Chhatra Dal.

Raihan was later sent to jail by a court order.

In Patuakhali, a case was filed at Dumki Police Station against 25 named and 30 unnamed persons on July 19. At least 20 students were made accused, said Ahmad Mainul Hasan, additional superintendent of police (administration) in Patuakhali.

Earlier, Law Minister Anisul Huq had said that no common students will be accused or harassed for their involvement in the quota reform movement and that cases will be filed only against those involved in the vandalism of government establishments.

Hold law enforcers accountable

FROM PAGE 1

minister on Wednesday was issued by the missions of the US, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Australia and the European Union.

At least 162 people were killed in the recent violence in Dhaka and other parts of the country, according to the count of this paper. The actual death toll may be much higher.

Police have so far arrested over 8,000 people in a nationwide crackdown.

"The letter said that it is crucial to ensure due legal process for the people arrested," a source said.

The letter also said it is important to preserve the right to free speech and the right to peaceful assembly.

The foreign missions said all parties concerned need to find a sustainable solution to the ongoing crisis and avoid further casualties.

They requested that the authorities ensure that the law enforcers do not use excessive force and that they are held accountable for any wrongdoings.

The foreign missions have also requested full restoration of internet services, saying that the curfew declared on July 19 and the restrictions on internet services have far-reaching impact on the people.

They said the economy of the country as well as the communication between the foreign missions and the government have been heavily affected in the absence of full internet services.

On July 21, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud held a diplomatic briefing with more than 80 representatives of the foreign missions, UN agencies, and other international aid agencies.

There, the foreign ministry screened a documentary on the massive destruction of public properties. Later, the ministry also arranged a tour of the foreign diplomats to the sites of the destruction.

MASSIVE SABOTAGE

French train services still disrupted

AFP, *Paris*

Traffic on three major French high-speed train lines remained disrupted yesterday, a day after saboteurs paralysed much of the rail network ahead of the Olympic Games opening ceremony in Paris.

Seven out of 10 trains ran yesterday on the three key routes with delays averaging one to two hours, the state railroad SNCF said.

Kathleen Cuvellier, speaking in the northern city of Lille, said her journey to Avignon in the south was going to be "hell" now.

Cuvellier, travelling with her two-year-old son, said she now had to take a slower train to Paris to take another one for Avignon, adding: "The travel time was four hours and now it's going to be seven".

Cecile Bonnefond, whose train from Lille to the western city of Nantes was cancelled, added: "One doesn't have any choice".

Palestinians inspect the damage following an Israeli strike on the Khadija school housing displaced people in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: **AFP**

'It'll be fixed!'

Trump tells supporters they won't have to vote in the future

REUTERS, *Washington*

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump told Christians on Friday that if they vote for him this November, "in four years, you don't have to vote again. We'll have it fixed so good, you're not gonna have to vote."

It was not clear what the former president meant by his remarks, in an election campaign where his Democratic opponents accuse him of being a threat to democracy, and after his attempt to overturn his 2020 defeat to President Joe Biden, an effort that led to the deadly insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to a request for clarification of his comments. Trump was speaking at an event organized by the conservative group Turning Point Action in West Palm Beach, Florida. Trump said: "Christians, get out and vote, just this time. "You won't have to do it anymore. Four more years, you know what, it will be fixed, it will be fine, you won't have to vote anymore, my beautiful Christians."

He added: "I love you Christians. I'm a Christian. I love you, get out, you gotta get out and vote. In four years, you don't have to vote again, we'll have it fixed so good you're not going to have to vote," Trump said. In an interview with Fox News in December, Trump said that if he won the November 5 election he would be a dictator, but only on "day one", to close the southern border with Mexico and expand oil drilling.

Concern grows as Venezuela blocks polls observers

AFP, *Caracas*

Concerns grew Friday over the fairness of Venezuela's presidential elections as Caracas was accused of blocking international observers from arriving for today's vote, including a delegation of ex-presidents.

In the latest blow to an already fraught election run-up, Panama said authorities had prevented a flight carrying former Latin American leaders -- all critics of President Nicolas Maduro -- from leaving its international airport.

Colombian officials reported being denied entry at Caracas airport, as did conservative Spanish MPs and Chilean senators.

Socialist Maduro, 61, will seek reelection today to a third six-year term amid accusations of opposition harassment by an authoritarian regime.

His government agreed with the opposition last year to hold free and fair elections in 2024, with international observers present -- winning a temporary easing of sanctions from the United States.

But he since reneged on some of the conditions, and loyalist institutions barred opposition leader Maria Corina Machado from running against him.

INTENSE FIGHTING IN KHAN YOUNIS

More than 180,000 Gaza civilians displaced: UN

AFP, *Khan Younis*

More than 180,000 Palestinians have fled fierce fighting around the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis in four days, the United Nations said Friday, after an Israeli operation to extract captives' bodies from the area.

Recent "intensified hostilities" in the Khan Younis area, more than nine months into the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, have fuelled "new waves of internal displacement across Gaza", said the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA.

The vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by fighting: UN

It said "about 182,000 people" have been displaced from central and eastern Khan Younis between Monday and Thursday, and hundreds are "stranded in eastern Khan Younis".

The Israeli military on Monday ordered the evacuation of parts of the southern city, announcing its forces would "forcefully operate" there, including in an area previously declared a safe humanitarian zone.

Yesterday, the Israeli military told Palestinians to temporarily evacuate southern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis region.

On Wednesday, Israel said five bodies of captives seized. Israel's military said on Friday that its forces had "eliminated approximately 100 terrorists" in the city this week.

Israel's military chief, Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi said the captives' bodies were pulled from underground tunnels and walls in "a hidden place".

Troops "were near those fallen bodies in the past, we did not know how to reach them" until this week, Halevi said in a statement.

Witnesses and rescuers said heavy battles continued around eastern Khan Yunis on Friday. The Nasser Hospital said 26 bodies were brought to the medical site.

According to UN figures, the vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by the fighting.

In a separate development, an Israeli military commander said Friday that troops in the country's north were preparing for "a decisive offensive" against Lebanon's Hezbollah after months of deadly cross-border exchanges.

Israeli forces have traded near-daily fire with Hamas ally Hezbollah.

Major General Ori Gordin, Israel's commanding officer in the north, told troops that "we have already eliminated more than 500 terrorists in Lebanon, the great majority of them from Hezbollah", an army statement said.

According to an AFP tally, more than nine months of violence have killed at least 523 people in Lebanon.

Most of them, 342 people, have been confirmed to be Hezbollah militants but the tally also includes 104 civilians. Gordin did not mention civilian casualties.

In northern Israel, at least 18 Israeli soldiers and 13 civilians have been killed, according to the military.

S AFRICA SCHOOL

Video shows 'auction' of black pupils

AFP, *Cape Town*

A Cape Town school is investigating allegations of racist bullying after a video emerged that appears to show pupils pretending to auction off their black classmates, the education department said Friday.

The video shared on WhatsApp and leaked to the media shows at least two male black pupils behind a gate in a fenced-off area as several mixed-race "coloured" students appear to be shouting bids for them.

The video, entitled "Slavery at school is crazy", was "deeply disturbing and hurtful", Western Cape Education Department spokesperson Bronagh Hammond said.

The school has opened a disciplinary investigation into allegations of racist bullying, she said.

News24 cited a parent as saying that a group of boys had tried to force her son into a cage but he escaped.

"They were picking up black boys and putting them in the cage," the unidentified woman was quoted as saying.

Although a minority nationally, mixed-race South Africans who identify themselves as "coloured" mostly live in Western Cape province, of which Cape Town is the capital.

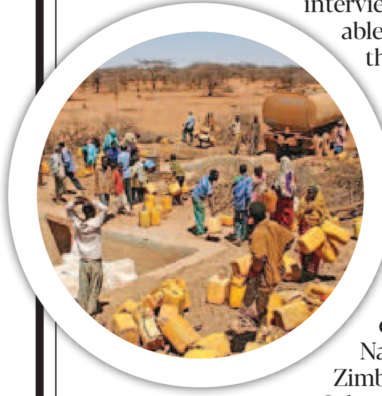
SOUTH AFRICAN DROUGHT

Worst yet to come in once-in-a-century: WFP

AFP, *Johannesburg*

A record drought that has devastated crops across southern Africa, causing millions of people to go hungry and pushing five countries to declare a national disaster, is entering its worst stage, the UN warned.

The UN's World Food Programme said it expected the number of people struggling to put enough food on the table to increase as the lean season, the period between harvests when food is scarcest, gets underway. "The worst period comes now," WFP's acting regional director for southern Africa, Lola Castro, told AFP in an interview. "People haven't been able to pick anything and the problem is the next harvest is only in April 2025."



The small kingdom of Lesotho became two weeks ago the latest country to declare a state of national disaster over the El Nino-induced dry spell, after Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Other countries, like Angola and Mozambique, might follow soon or signal a gap between the food they have and the food they need, said Castro. According to some estimates, the drought is the worst to hit the region in 100 years, she said.

At least 27 million people have been affected in a region where many rely on agriculture to survive, Castro said, speaking from Johannesburg on Friday. The drought has wiped out 70 percent of the harvest in Zambia and 80 percent in Zimbabwe, severely reducing supply and pushing up food prices, she said. "When you go now to rural productive areas of Southern Africa, what you see is a devastated scenario," she said.

SOUTHEASTERN SERBIA

30 Afghan, Nepali migrants hurt as van overturns

AFP, *Belgrade*

Thirty Afghan and Nepali migrants were injured when a van transporting them overturned in southeastern Serbia, the RTS state-run television reported yesterday.

Three migrants remained in a hospital while the others received medical care and were placed at a reception centre run by the country's commissariat for refugees, RTS said.

The migrants are men from Nepal and Afghanistan, the broadcaster reported citing the commissariat.

The accident occurred on Friday on a highway near the town Bela Palanka when the van, transporting nearly 50 migrants, slipped off the road.

Serbia lies along the so-called Balkans route used by migrants heading towards the European Union.

In 2023, nearly 100,000 migrants used the route, according to the bloc's border surveillance agency Frontex.

Migrants take perilous journey every year to reach Europe.

A boat with at least 45 refugees has capsized off the coast of Yemen's Taiz on Wednesday night, and there are only four survivors, the UN refugee agency in Yemen said on Thursday.

The boat capsized because of strong winds and overloading, the agency added. It said it was working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist the survivors and provide protection.

No further details were provided about the rest of the refugees. In June, at least 49 migrants died and 140 went missing after their vessel, which departed from Somalia carrying 260 migrants, capsized of the Yemeni coast.

A bulldozer is used to put out flames off Highway 32 near Forest Ranch, California, US on Friday night. A huge, fast-moving and rapidly growing wildfire in northern California has forced more than 4,000 people to evacuate as firefighters battle gusty winds and perilously dry conditions, authorities said.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

US defends law forcing sale of TikTok app

AFP, *San Francisco*

TikTok's collection of user data makes it a national security threat, the US Justice Department said Friday in response to a civil suit by the Chinese-owned firm aimed at preventing the forced sale of the app.

TikTok's suit in a Washington federal court argues that a law, which forces the video platform to be sold next year or face a US ban, violates First Amendment rights of free speech.

"Given TikTok's broad reach within the United States, the capacity for China to use TikTok's features to achieve its overarching objective to undermine American interests creates a national-security threat of immense depth and scale," the Justice Department wrote in its filing.

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Star BUSINESS

Govt may miss IMF's revenue collection target

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* **AM JAHID**

Bangladesh is unlikely to fulfil the revenue collection target set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of its conditions for the fourth tranche of a $4.7 billion loan programme.

The target is measured through the performance of both revenue collection by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and non-NBR taxes.

As per the IMF target, the government was supposed to collect Tk 394,530 crore in taxes in fiscal year 2023-24.

According to the NBR's provisional data, the tax administrator collected Tk 371,842 crore in FY24 against a collection target of Tk 410,000 crore in the revised budget.

On the other hand, the collection target for non-NBR taxes was Tk 19,000 crore in the revised budget.

Although data for non-NBR tax was not available for the entire fiscal year, finance ministry statistics showed that only Tk 5,109 crore was collected as non-NBR taxes in the first eight months of the last fiscal year.

This means that even if the target set in the revised budget is met, it will still not be possible to meet the revenue collection target set by the IMF.

In FY23, only Tk 7,978 crore was collected as non-NBR taxes.

Finance ministry officials said the country may fail to meet the target for revenue collection but it had already met the target for forex reserves.

Bangladesh was tasked with keeping net international reserves (NIR) of $14.79 billion on June 30. On that date, Bangladesh had an NIR of $16.7 billion.

> **According to the NBR's provisional data, the tax administrator collected Tk 371,842 crore in FY24 against a collection target of Tk 410,000 crore in the revised budget.**

Prior to that, the country had failed to fulfil the NIR target ahead of each instalment of the loan.

The country could achieve the target for the first time after record budgetary assistance from global creditors as several bilateral and multilateral lenders approved $4.8 billion in June alone.

The IMF approved the $4.7 billion in January last year.

In its first review, Bangladesh failed to fulfil the conditions for both revenue collection and NIR.

As a result, Bangladesh sought a waiver from the global lender's board against the two key conditions.

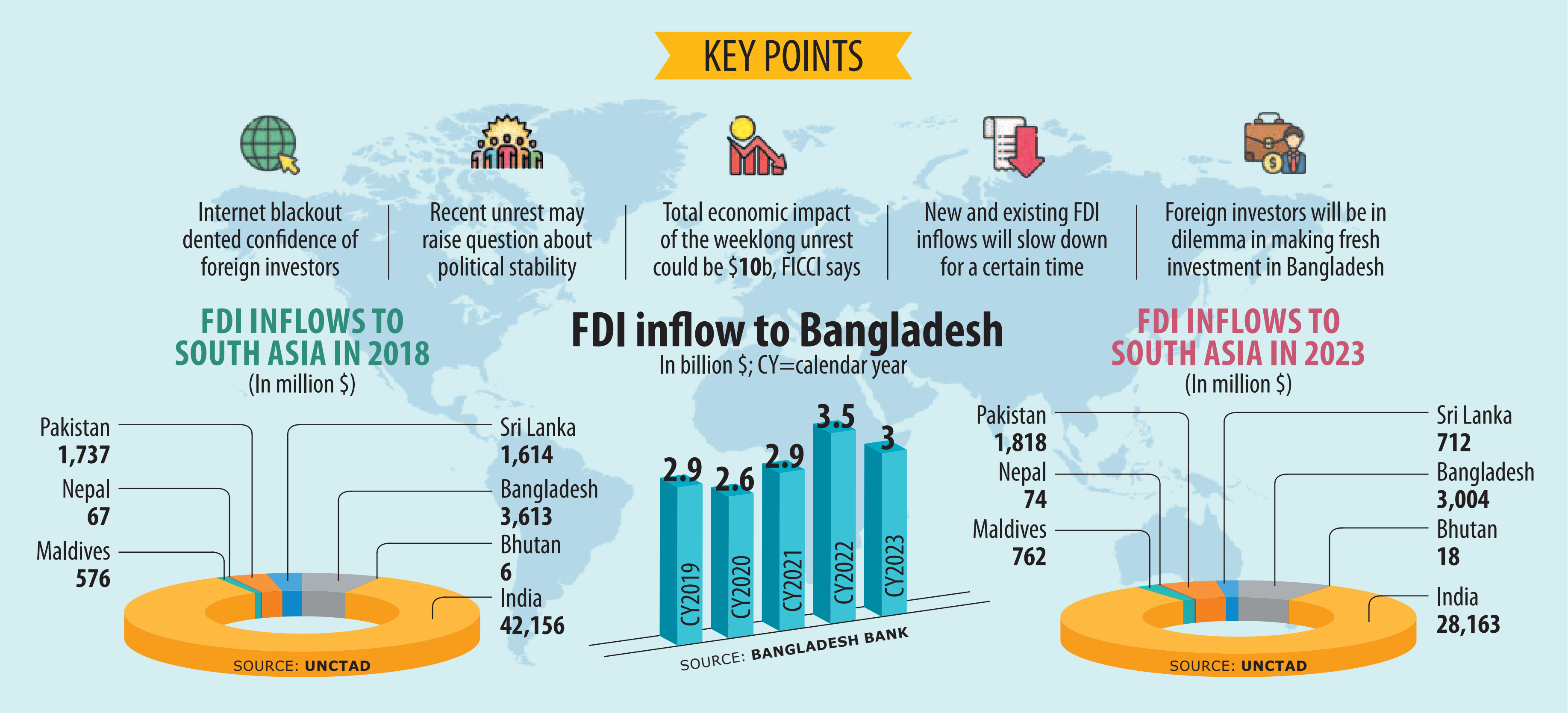
In the IMF's second review, which was based on the performance of December last year, Bangladesh successfully fulfilled both targets as the NIR target was revised down to $14.78 billion from $20.10 billion.

In May this year, Bangladesh also requested the IMF to revise down the revenue collection target but the lender did not do it.

An IMF mission is likely to visit Bangladesh to review the conditions by the end of this year. The fourth tranche is expected in December this year.

Internet outage, curfew leave foreign investors in a bind

Future FDI inflow may be affected, say experts



KEY POINTS

- Internet blackout dented confidence of foreign investors
- Recent unrest may raise question about political stability
- Total economic impact of the weeklong unrest could be $**10**b, FICCI says
- New and existing FDI inflows will slow down for a certain time
- Foreign investors will be in dilemma in making fresh investment in Bangladesh

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Violence centring the quota reform movement as well as a five-day internet blackout and the ongoing curfew has shaken foreign investors' confidence in Bangladesh, tarnishing the country's image as a reliable investment destination.

This is likely to affect the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) at a time when Bangladesh is in desperate need of foreign funds to diversify its manufacturing bases, enable technology transfer, and attain its goal of becoming a developed economy by 2041.

The country needs to annually attract FDI equivalent to 1.66 percent of its GDP, which was around $459 billion in FY24, to become an advanced economy by 2041.

In regards to luring investors, a country's reputation as a reliable investment destination is vital. In that sense, the damage done in the recent week was severe.

"Beyond financial impacts, the image issue that the country is facing cannot be quantified as the reputation has been severely damaged in the past few weeks," said Zaved Akhtar, president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

"The credibility of Bangladesh as a reliable investment destination is in question. It is not just important but crucial that we work on rebuilding Bangladesh's reputation as a stable nation and resilient economy, capable of delivering results regardless of circumstances. Rebuilding the confidence of existing investors by smoothening operations and improving the ease of doing business is also critical," he added.

His comments came following an internet outage in the aftermath of the violence centring the quota reform movement, which claimed at least 161 lives, left thousands injured and led to the vandalism of public and private properties.

The FICCI president said the recent shutdown had an economic impact of over $10 billion on Bangladesh in the last seven days.

The fast-moving consumer goods industry faced a setback of over $100 million during the past week as supply lines and operations were significantly impacted, Zaved added.

The recent upheaval affected export-oriented industries, e-commerce, freelancing, ride-hailing, software development, and many micro, small and medium enterprises that rely on social commerce.

"While the country is slowly recovering with limited online and physical connectivity, full operations are yet to revive. We are at best meeting 50 percent of our economic potential," he said.

He added that industries require full broadband and mobile connectivity to operate to their full potential.

Furthermore, businesses are facing challenges related to the release of goods from ports and accumulating demurrage because of the recent inactivity.

"Numerous existing investors are currently in uncertainty as their teams aim to resume regular operations. Challenges and inefficiencies in terms of goods release, running operations and physical reach are driving up the cost of business," he said.

Bangladesh Bank data shows that net FDI inflow fell to $3.8 billion in the July-May period of FY24, down 6.5 percent from $4 billion during the same period the year prior.

Yuji Ando, country representative of the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), said there would be a tremendous negative impact on FDI as Bangladesh failed to ensure internet connectivity, which hindered business operations significantly.

He said Japanese companies in Bangladesh could only resume operations on July 24 after the curfew was relaxed and the internet was restored.

This is because around 20 percent of Japanese companies work remotely, he said. Moreover, some Japanese companies have evacuated their employees due to safety concerns.

According to Ando, at this moment, two major factors are needed to grow FDI inflow. The most fundamental one is to ensure safety. Secondly, internet facilities must be provided without restriction.

M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, said: "The economic impacts of last week's incidents can be grim... some foreign investors are nervous about a potential repetition of what occurred over the past week and what it means for their investment on the ground."

According to him, one common concern among investors was that they were almost completely cut off from communications with foreign buyers due to the lack of internet, which is quite rare in today's world where uninterrupted business communication is considered an essential feature of any trade and investment destination.

Reaz added that foreign investors with a stake in the export sector are anticipating losses and increased expenses due to overtime bills as workers will be required to make up for production loss over the past six days.

READ FULL STORY ONLINE

RMG factories resort to weekend production to minimise loss

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The garment and textile millers kept factories open on last Friday in an effort to meet the sharp deadline set by their international retailers, as the latest weeklong countrywide violence ate up four vital days of their peak production season.

Amid the perennial inadequate supply of gas and power outages, last week's internet shutdown came as a major challenge for the manufacturers, as they failed to send the inspection reports to their buyers online, which they have to do regularly.

The local garment manufacturers are frantically trying to cover up the losses as July, August and September are the peak months for shipping goods to the western buyers, which they will sell in the upcoming Christmas, the biggest retail sales season in the western world.

Many owners are also running their factories for additional hours, using overtime to adhere to the strict lead time in an effort to avoid going for expensive air shipments, giving big discounts or cancellation of work orders from the buyers.

The violence centring the quota reform movement eroded the foreign retailers' confidence in Bangladesh to a great extent, as many of the local garment suppliers have received 30 percent to 40 percent fewer work orders than usual as the buyers are following a go-slow policy.

Consequently, the international retailers and brands did not place fresh work orders and also did not confirm the price level for the goods meant for the next summer and spring, which they were supposed to do last week, the exporters said.

"I have been running my unit even on Friday as I have counted a huge loss because of the four-day factory shutdowns following the violence," said a garment exporter asking not to be named.

However, the exporter could not run the factory on Friday in full swing because of long power cuts.

"I am worried about how I will pay the workers' July salary as I made a loss this month and I failed to confirm goods' prices due to the internet disruption," the exporter said.

Shaif Ullah Mansur, managing director of Chattogram-based Mellow Fashions Ltd, said he used to run night shifts in his factory in peak production seasons when pressure from the buyers increases.

But this year he preferred not going for night shifts amid fears of being affected by violence although the work pressure is immense now.

Garment makers are desperately trying to meet deadlines as July, August and September are the peak season for shipping goods to buyers.

PHOTO: **PALASH KHAN**

Mansur said the monthly income from his 800-worker factory is Tk 5 crore and he lost Tk 1 crore of his monthly income because of the weeklong violence.

"My American buyers are now asking me whether I am capable of supplying the goods in time if new work orders are placed."

Mohammad Zaber, managing director of Noman Group, the single largest textile and garment exporter of Bangladesh, said his company lost 40 percent of the monthly work orders because of the factory and mill shutdown and internet suspension.

This is the peak season for Zaber's company for the confirmation of work orders for the next summer and spring seasons.

He said his company has been communicating with the buyers for a time extension for shipment. Moreover, the shipment time extension does not end the problem, he said.

The commercial shipping vessels, which carry the export goods, have to follow a tight global schedule to meet the increased competitiveness since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and the Red Sea crisis, he said.

Instant communication is very important in garment trade and both the buyers and suppliers use WhatsApp now, but the sad part is the service is down now, he added.

Two garment exporters said they lost one million pieces of garment production each during the last weeklong violence and now he is working day and night to cover up the losses and ship goods timely.

Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said many factory managements ran their units on Friday but still many of them will have to face air shipment.

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Piled-up containers in the Chattogram port are slowing down goods' discharge from vessels, increasing their stay time, officials said.

Ctg port still reeling from container congestion

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, *Ctg*

Chattogram port is still suffering from container congestion although delivery of imported goods gained significant pace in the last three days after the relaxation of curfew and resumption of broadband internet.

Delivery from yards came almost to a halt for countrywide unrest for five days to July 22, when the port was choked with 42,150 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of containers, occupying over 79 percent of its storage capacity of 53,118 TEUs.

The situation started improving from the next day and on July 25 around 5,500 TEUs got delivered, bringing the number of stored containers to below 40,000 TEUs.

Although 3,500 TEUs were released on Friday, the port's struggle for release of containers and cargoes intensified when an increased number of vehicles of importers and prime movers crowded the yard to take delivery of their goods.

Piled-up containers are slowing down goods' discharge from vessels, which is also raising the ships' stay time, said Nazmul Haque, executive director of Saif Powertec, the berth operator of the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), the biggest of the three terminals of Chattogram port.

The containers are usually kept in three to at best four layers in the yards, but the last week's crisis pushed the operators to stake them in five layers in most areas, he said.

The problem arises when one comes to take out a container from the bottom layer, the official said.

The operator has to lift all the four upper containers at first to bring out the lowest one and then place the top four to their earlier spot again, which is completely an unproductive and time-killing work, he said.

The yard's functioning equipment like rubber-tyred gantry cranes and others are also taking extra pressure and many are breaking down, he said.

The release of goods is slow now, as Klarion Designs could take delivery of some 90 TEUs out of their 120 TEUs, which reached the port last week, said Ataullah Siddique, managing director of the Chattogram-based garment factory.

Moreover, the covered van owners are charging higher fares amid a shortage of goods-carrying vehicles, he said.

Container congestion is causing longer than usual stay time and delayed sailing of the ships, said an importer.

SITCL Qiuming, a vessel, berthed at a jetty of the NCT on July 23 carrying around 1,500 TEUs of import containers, said an official of the berth operating firm.

It took a day and a half for the vessel to get go-ahead from the customs and port to unload goods due to the lack of smooth internet, the official said.

The vessel, which was scheduled to sail out yesterday, needs one more day to complete the unloading and loading of around 1,500 TEUs of export and empty containers, he said.

Another vessel, MV Increase, berthed at another jetty of the NCT on July 22.

Usually, vessels like MV Increase leave within 48 hours after completing unloading and loading, but this time it took five days and it left yesterday.

Nazmul Haque of Saif Powertec assumes it would take one or two more weeks to get rid of the huge pile of containers.

The port officials are working hard to keep the port running and the situation would improve in a few days if container delivery keeps going at the present pace, said Md Omar Faruk, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority.

Food delivery hit hard by internet disruption

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Bangladesh's burgeoning online food delivery sector has been severely hit by the internet disruptions, bringing operations of the platforms to a near halt.

This affected the livelihoods of delivery riders, small and medium restaurants and home-based chefs.

Although broadband internet has been reinstated, the absence of mobile internet, essential for riders to receive orders, has been a major impediment to the services becoming fully operational.

The platforms were closed for six days, from July 18 to July 23, when Bangladesh experienced a complete internet blackout. On reopening, the businesses operated for limited hours due to a curfew.

Insiders said the sector is facing significant revenue losses every day.

According to Fahim Ahmed, chief executive officer of Pathao, a food delivery platform, the sector's daily transactions amount to Tk 6 crore on an average day.

"Despite resuming operations, restaurants are operating for fewer hours, and certain establishments remain closed," Ahmed said.

"As mobile internet is still unavailable to delivery personnel, we are working with restaurants to ensure that their broadband networks are accessible," he said.

So far, more than 50 percent of restaurants onboarded with Pathao are still closed and 65 percent of the riders have not returned to work as of last Friday.

On Friday, despite it being a weekend, the volume of orders recovered by less than 50 percent.

Industry experts said mobile internet is essential for smooth food delivery as it enables real-time order placement, tracking, and communication between customers, delivery riders and restaurants.

It ensures efficient route navigation, timely updates and quick problem resolution, enhancing overall service reliability and customer satisfaction.

Without mobile internet, food delivery platforms relying solely on broadband would face delays, limited rider mobility, and communication issues, leading to inefficiencies.

Following widespread protest over quota reforms in public jobs, the government shut down mobile internet on July 18.

Since then, delivery personnel have been left out of their means of an income. Many left Dhaka for their hometowns.

A Hussain, a rider for foodpanda Bangladesh, said he left for his hometown in Dinajpur a week earlier.

"I am facing financial issues as it was a significant part of my income," said Hussain, a part-time delivery person.

Those who relied on food delivery as a full-time income were more severely hit.

Mojibur Rahman, who works full-time delivering processed and frozen food for an F-commerce page, said his family has fallen into a financial crisis since the internet blackout started.

"My daily average income was Tk 900 to Tk 1,000. One week without the internet has left me without money," he said.

"On Friday, my wife was sick, and I had only Tk 10 in my pocket. I had to borrow Tk 1,400 to take her to the doctor," he said.

On Saturday, he earned some money delivering only three orders.

Like any other internet and app-based service provider, foodpanda Bangladesh, the top delivery platform garnering the highest demand, has also seen its business being impacted due to the nationwide internet shutdown for almost a week.

As broadband connectivity has been restored, foodpanda Bangladesh has gradually resumed its food and grocery delivery services in some areas.

"Now we have been running our operations partially. Unless mobile data is back, it would be very difficult to run operations smoothly," said Zubair Siddiky, managing director at foodpanda Bangladesh.

"We hope that the internet service will be restored soon," he added.

Sultan's Dine

Food delivery services cannot become fully operational due to the absence of mobile internet. The photo was taken from Baily Road yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Diesel sales jump as curfew eases

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, *Chattogram*

As traffic movement on highways resumed following the relaxation of the nationwide curfew imposed by the government, fuel transportation from depots to filling stations started in full swing on Wednesday.

Although fuel sales decreased 89.3 percent in the first four days of the past week, sales of diesel jumped to almost twice the usual daily demand on Wednesday and Thursday.

Of all the fuel used in Bangladesh, around 70 percent of the requirement is met by diesel.

However, sales of fuel returned to a normal level on Saturday, said officials concerned.

According to leaders of the Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association (BPPOA), owners of filling stations faced several problems due to a delay in submitting pay orders because of shortened banking hours during the curfew.

Many were unable to collect fuel as they were unable to deposit money, they said.

Additionally, traders were also worried about the safe passage of fuel-laden tankers from depots to filling stations.

According to Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) officials, there is a sufficient stock of fuel in depots.

As per BPC data, Bangladesh has a daily demand of 15,000 tonnes of diesel on average while the daily demand for octane and petrol is around 4,000 tonnes each.

Due to the volatile situation across the country and the announcement of general holidays from July 20-24, the activities of 27 depots under the control of BPC were halted. Consequently, fuel sales reduced by about 89.3 percent.

However, since Wednesday, fuel sales have recovered, with sales of diesel witnessing a significant increase.

BPC officials said about 30,000 tonnes of diesel, 3,000 tonnes of petrol, and 1,900 tonnes of octane were sold across the country on Wednesday.

Similarly, 29,500 tonnes of diesel, 2,200 tonnes of octane, 2,900 tonnes of petrol, 7,000 tonnes of furnace oil and 1,200 tonnes of jet fuel were sold on Thursday.

It is mentionable that the daily demand for furnace oil on a usual day is around 2,500 tonnes.

BPC Chairman Aminul Ahsan told The Daily Star that the supply of jet fuel to the four airports of the country was normal during the curfew.

On the other hand, BPPOA Secretary General Nazmul Haque claimed that the highways were not yet safe for fuel transportation.

He told The Daily Star that as fuel is extremely flammable, there are safety concerns regarding the transportation of fuel.

"I have demanded the BPC authority to deploy security personnel for the transportation of fuel tankers, similar to that of railway wagons," he said.

Shop owners will need a lot of time to recover from losses

Says president of the owners' association

WEEKLY INTERVIEW

SUKANTA HALDER

The students' movement for reforming the quota system in public jobs and the subsequent violence and curfew have adversely affected businesses, said Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association.

It will take businesses a lot of time to recover, he said during an interview with The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

Shops and shopping centres reopened on July 24 after four days of curfew but they hardly saw any sales, he said.

People have been suffering from high inflationary pressure for a long time and the present situation compounded their woes, said Helal.

The scenario necessitates people to give a lot of thought when making any purchase and limit themselves to availing just the bare necessities, he added.

Annual average inflation in Bangladesh surged to its highest level in 12 years in the just-concluded fiscal year despite easing in June, reflecting persistent erosion of real income and deterioration of living standards of low-income groups.

Annual inflation rose to 9.73 percent in fiscal year 2023-24, the highest since fiscal year 2011-12 when it was 10.62 percent, overshooting the government's target of limiting it to 7.5 percent, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Although there were breaks for a couple of hours every day during the curfew, people are not leaving their homes if it is not absolutely necessary, said Helal.

"There was no business for 10-12 days. Many businesses will struggle to pay shop rent and staff salaries at the end of this month," he said.

The president of the shop owners' association said the government relaxed the curfew so that businesses could run their trade at least from morning till afternoon but there were barely any shoppers.

"As a result, there is growing concern among traders over how they would be able to run their businesses. If they end up being forced to take loans from banks, how will they repay the loans?" he asked.

Students launched the quota reform movement on July 1 citing that it discriminated against general students seeking to secure public jobs.

The demonstrators started to stage sit-ins on the roads at different areas blocking traffic since July 15 and law enforcers later tried to disperse them by force, causing the movement to turn chaotic and violent.

The government imposed the curfew for an indefinite period from midnight of July 19 and deployed the armed forces to contain violence.

The curfew was relaxed every day – for two hours on Saturday and Sunday, three hours on Monday and four hours on Tuesday. During this time, only shops selling essential food commodities stayed open. The curfew was relaxed for seven hours starting 10:00am on Wednesday and all types of shops opened for business in the morning.

It has been tough doing business over the past six months and it was even tougher for the traders to survive, said Helal.

"Our backs are against the wall. We demanded that the government take appropriate measures to bring relief to the lives of common people as soon as possible," he added.

"Because people are still gripped by a kind of fear. Shops and shopping centres will not return to normalcy until this is addressed," he said.

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Many businesses will struggle to pay shop rent and staff salaries at the end of this month, said Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association. The photo was taken from Baily Road yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The intersection of osteoarthritis, physical activity, and mental health

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a prevalent chronic condition affecting millions globally, leading to significant pain and disability. Beyond its physical toll, OA is frequently associated with high rates of depression, exacerbating the overall burden on individuals. While managing the physical symptoms of OA remains a primary focus, addressing the associated mental health issues is equally crucial. One promising avenue in this regard is physical activity.

Physical activity has long been recognised for its myriad health benefits, including enhancing mood and reducing symptoms of depression. However, its specific impact on individuals with OA, particularly concerning how pain levels influence this relationship, is not fully understood. This gap in knowledge is critical, given the high prevalence of both OA and depression.

A recent study published in PLOS Global Public Health sought to unravel this complex relationship. Researchers recruited individuals with OA awaiting orthopaedic consultation at a public hospital in Melbourne, Australia. They collected data on participants' pain levels, physical activity engagement, and depression symptoms.

The findings revealed that the relationship between physical activity and depression was influenced by pain levels. Specifically, the benefits of physical activity on reducing depression symptoms were more pronounced in individuals experiencing higher levels of pain. Additionally, engaging in physical activity helped reduce pain, which in turn led to a decrease in depression symptoms.

These results underscore the importance of physical activity, particularly for individuals with greater OA-related pain, as it offers significant mental health benefits. Encouraging physical activity could be a vital strategy in managing depression among OA patients, providing a holistic approach to their care and well-being.

BREAKING BARRIERS

Munich AIDS conference unveils new HIV cure case and bold global projections

STAR HEALTH DESK

The 25th International AIDS Conference, held in Munich, Germany, from July 22-26, 2024, brought together thousands of scientists, policymakers, and advocates to discuss the latest advancements in HIV research. This year's conference, hosted by the International AIDS Society (IAS), was marked by groundbreaking developments, including a unique HIV cure case, new global HIV projections, and promising advancements in HIV and STI prevention strategies.

One of the most notable highlights was the announcement of the "next Berlin Patient," the seventh person in the world to be cured of HIV following a stem cell transplant. This case was particularly significant because, for the first time, the donor had a single CCR5-delta32 mutation rather than the double mutation seen in previous cases. This finding could have profound implications for future research into scalable HIV cure strategies.

The "next Berlin Patient," an adult male who had both leukaemia and HIV, received a stem cell transplant for leukaemia in late 2015. In late 2018, he stopped taking antiretroviral treatment for HIV, and over five-and-a-half years later, he remained in HIV remission. The patient's donor had inherited just one copy of the CCR5-delta32 mutation, known as heterozygous, which allows individuals to acquire HIV but generally causes the virus to progress slowly without antiretroviral treatment.

This contrasts with previous cases where donors had two copies of the mutation, making them essentially immune to HIV. This new finding suggested that effective HIV remission could be achieved with a broader pool of donors, which holds promise for future gene therapy-based HIV cure strategies.

In addition to this groundbreaking case, the conference also unveiled new projections from UNAIDS, highlighting the urgent need for bold action in the global HIV response. The projections indicated that without significant efforts, there could be nearly 35 million new HIV acquisitions and nearly 18 million AIDS-related deaths between 2021 and 2050. The analysis emphasised the critical importance of achieving the "95-95-95" targets, where 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of those who know their status are on treatment, and 95% of those on treatment are virally suppressed. Failing to meet these targets would result in significant human and economic costs, with the study estimating an average cost of inaction per capita of USD 670 in low- and middle-income countries by 2050.

Promising advancements in HIV and STI prevention were also highlighted. Two studies presented at the conference suggested that doxycycline pre-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPrEP) could be a highly effective strategy for preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). One study involving female sex workers in Tokyo found that DoxyPrEP significantly reduced the incidence of STIs with high adherence and minimal adverse effects reported. These findings supported the potential of DoxyPrEP as a valuable prevention strategy for populations at high risk of STIs.

Another key study from the Netherlands explored the potential benefits of reducing the frequency of monitoring visits for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) users. The study found that screening PrEP users for STIs every six months instead of the standard three months could reduce the burden on users and cut costs without increasing STI rates.

The conference also included the presentation of late-breaking full results from the PURPOSE 1 trial of long-acting injectable lenacapavir for HIV prevention, which demonstrated 100% efficacy in cisgender women. This marked another significant advancement in the ongoing effort to develop effective HIV prevention strategies.

BIRTH DEFECTS

Re-evaluating paternal metformin use

In recent years, concerns have emerged regarding the potential impact of paternal use of metformin, a common diabetes medication, on the risk of birth defects in offspring.

A provocative Danish study published in 2022 in the Annals of Internal Medicine suggested that men who took metformin shortly before conception had an increased risk of fathering children with birth defects. This study hypothesised that metformin could adversely affect spermatogenesis, a mechanism observed in some animal studies.

A new study, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, has now investigated this issue in a different population. Researchers analysed data from 1,730 fathers with diabetes in an Israeli health system database who were on metformin during the 90 days before conception. Their findings provide a more nuanced perspective on the potential risks associated with metformin use by prospective fathers.

The study adjusted for various potential confounders, including demographic, cardiometabolic, and maternal factors. The results indicated that metformin monotherapy was not linked to an increased risk of major congenital malformations when compared to the offspring of 380,000 control fathers who had no exposure to diabetes medications. However, the offspring of men who took metformin in combination with other diabetes medications showed a slightly higher incidence of malformations, though this finding was only of borderline statistical significance.

These findings offer some reassurance for men with diabetes who require metformin therapy but also underscore the importance of further research to fully understand the potential reproductive implications of diabetes medications.

Occupational therapy for Parkinson's disease

RABEYA FERDOUS

Parkinson's disease is a very common disorder in our country. According to the latest World Health Organisation (WHO) data published in 2020, Parkinson's disease deaths in Bangladesh reached 3,782 or 0.53% of total deaths. In Bangladesh, death rank is 125 among the world.

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that leads to shaking, stiffness, and difficulty with walking, balance, and coordination.

Symptoms may vary from mild to severe. Some common symptoms are given below:

- Bradykinesia or slowness of movement
- Tremor
- Postural imbalance
- Speech difficulty
- Writing problem
- Dementia
- Emotional changes
- Memory training

Occupation means activity. An occupational therapist helps to make their life independent in their daily activities. Regular exercises may increase the thinking power. It can increase patients's cognitive skills.

According to the patient's condition, the occupational therapist provides the following therapy:

- Functional gait retraining
- Functional balancing exercises
- Practice bilateral hand activity
- Practice fine motor skills
- ADL's training like dressing, eating, grooming, etc.
- Practice writing
- Falling intervention by modifying their home. e.g., bathroom/kitchen/bedroom modification
- Educate patients about energy conservation techniques
- In the late stage, educate the patient and their carer about appropriate transferring techniques
- Engaging the patients in leisure activities to refresh their minds, like gardening, watching movies, or visiting their relatives house or other places

- Moderate to Strong evidence for targeted physical activity training that addressed motor performance, postural stability, and balance

An occupational therapist helps to search for the right equipment to help with difficulties.

Though Parkinson's disease is a degenerative neurological condition, research has consistently found certain types of interventions improve function. Additionally, continuation of services is crucial to maintaining therapeutic gains.

Interventions for individuals with Parkinson's disease consistently fall into three categories:

(1) exercise or physical activity,

(2) environmental cues, stimuli, and objects, and

(3) self-management and cognitive behavioural strategies.

Clinical application points to the provision of intervention that focuses on targeted physical activity to address specific functional outcomes.

When you have patients with Parkinson's disease, then contact a qualified occupational therapist. S/he can help your patient become independent in day-to-day activities.

The writer is an occupational therapist at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospitals (NINS&H). Email: rabeya1988@gmail.com

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Machine learning models predict disability progression in multiple sclerosis

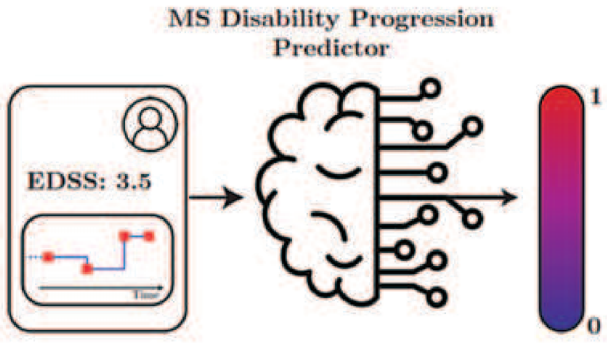
STAR HEALTH REPORT

A recent study has demonstrated that machine learning models can effectively predict how multiple sclerosis (MS) will progress in patients, offering new hope for improved disease management. The research, led by Edward De Brouwer from KU Leuven in Belgium, was published this week in PLOS Digital Health.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic and progressive disease where the immune system attacks the protective sheath around nerves, leading to worsening disability over time. With the global prevalence of MS rising by more than 30% over the past decade, predicting its progression has become increasingly important. Accurate forecasts can help patients plan their lives better and allow doctors to tailor treatments more effectively.

The study analysed data from 15,240 adults with at least three years of MS history. These patients were treated at 146 MS centres across 40 countries, providing a comprehensive dataset. Researchers used this data to train sophisticated machine learning models to predict the likelihood of disease progression over the next few months and years.

The results were promising. The models showed an average predictive accuracy score of 0.71 out of 1. This score, known as the area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (ROC-AUC), reflects how well the models can predict future disability progression. Higher scores indicate better performance. Importantly, the study found that a patient's past disability progression was a stronger predictor of future progression than their treatment or relapse history.



Edward De Brouwer highlighted the significance of the study, stating, "Using the clinical history of more than 15,000 people with multiple sclerosis, we trained a machine learning model capable of reliably predicting the probability of disability progression in the next two years. The model only uses routinely collected clinical variables, which makes it widely applicable."

These findings suggest that machine learning models could greatly enhance how MS is managed. By providing accurate predictions, these models can help doctors make better treatment decisions and assist patients in planning for their future. Since the models use standard clinical data, they could be easily integrated into everyday clinical practice.

The researchers believe their models have significant potential to improve the quality of life for MS patients. They recommend further studies to test the models' effectiveness in real-world settings. The advancements in machine learning represent a major step forward in understanding and managing complex diseases like multiple sclerosis.

This study highlights how technology can provide valuable insights and support better healthcare decisions, offering new hope for patients dealing with chronic and progressive conditions.

Physiotherapy approaches for functional neurologic disorders

Functional neurologic disorders (FNDs), previously known as conversion or psychogenic disorders, are characterised by neurological symptoms that lack an obvious physical cause on standard diagnostic tests. These disorders are believed to stem from disruptions in brain network function rather than structural abnormalities. The effectiveness of specialised physiotherapy in treating these conditions remains unclear.

A recent trial published in The Lancet Neurology sought to address this gap by comparing the clinical effectiveness of specialised physiotherapy versus usual physiotherapy in managing functional motor disorders.

The study highlights that while both physiotherapy approaches led to improvements in physical functioning, further research is needed to determine the optimal timing, components, and intensity of physiotherapy for FND.

Future trials should also focus on identifying which patients are most likely to benefit from such interventions.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Three successful TAVR performed in one day at United Hospital

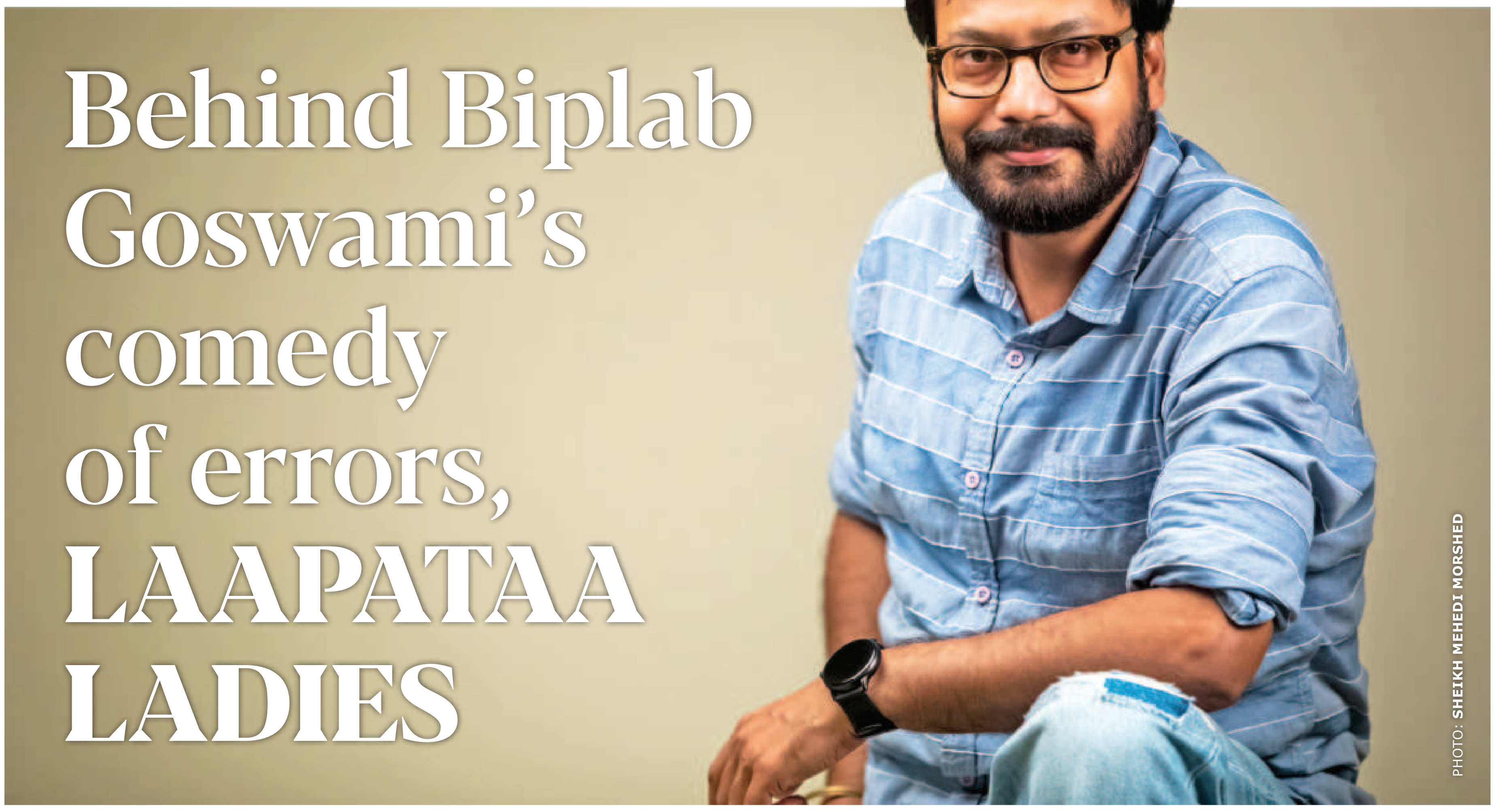
At United Hospital in the capital, three patients underwent successful artificial aortic valve replacement without cardiac surgery on the same day, which is a breakthrough in heart disease treatment in Bangladesh, says a press release.

For the first time in Bangladesh, one of the TAVR cases was successfully performed, protecting the main blood vessels of the heart.

Renowned cardiologist Dr NAM Momenuzzaman and Professor Afzalur Rahman performed the procedures.

Aortic valve stenosis or damage to the heart requires treatment with an artificial valve replacement. Valve replacement is usually done surgically. However, in developed countries, valve replacement is now an accepted treatment method for elderly or over 65-year-old and complex patients, known as TAVR.

Early in 2017, NAM Momenuzzaman and his team performed the first TAVR in Bangladesh at United Hospital. It is highly recommended that the main blood vessel of the heart be protected (coronary protection) during valve replacement for aged patients with narrow blood vessels or aortas. This complex procedure is now being successfully performed in Bangladesh.



Behind Biplab Goswami's comedy of errors, LAAPATAA LADIES

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

To make a film is to tell a story, and when it's a cumulation of collective consciousness, to find a common social ground, values, ordinary yet telltale stories that creates the base of development of human thought and psyche is a perfect example of a much needed social and cultural commentary.

DOWEL BISWAS

Creating a visual story, with an intention to attract and aware people from all walks of life is difficult. However, to persist on this thread of storytelling in a varied cultural landscape like India, where poverty, social injustice, cultural stigma and gender discrimination looms over, it's more than challenging.

With Kiran Rao on her first directorial chair, critically and commercially acclaimed comedy drama film ***Laapataa Ladies*** does it all. What is more intriguing is the mind of Bengali screenwriter Biplab Goswami, who had put a story known to all on a Bihar landscape with subtle nuances and weights put on two distinguishably different women in a patriarchal backdrop.

"If you are a film critic, cinema enthusiast or a socially-aware person, ***Laapataa Ladies*** will seem like satire to you. If you want to have a good time watching a film, it is a comedy. If you are in for making people aware through entertainment and the magic of cinema, you are like me," said the mild-mannered screenwriter Biplab in an exclusive interview at The Daily Star office.

JIO STUDIOS PRESENTS
AAMIR KHAN PRODUCTIONS'
LAAPATAA LADIES

JIO STUDIOS PRESENTS
AAMIR KHAN PRODUCTIONS'
LOST LADIES
DIRECTED BY KIRAN RAO
5TH JANUARY 2024
tiff

Biplab, who considers himself a sociological observer of time, art, and culture, drew inspiration from his early life in Agartala and his fascination with trains, which symbolize communication and connection. These elements add depth and authenticity to his narratives. His father, Karunamoy Goswami, had a deep appreciation for arts and culture, which influenced Biplab's career choice.

"Although in urban areas, gender disparity has somewhat become tolerable in terms of professional, sociological, and educational sectors, it is still prevalent in rural areas. This thought always prompted me to do something, even if it doesn't make an immediate impact," said the mild-natured Biplab with a polite grin on his face.

After studying at the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute in Kolkata, Biplab worked on various projects in Mumbai, including editing films, producing documentaries, and eventually focusing on writing and directing.

The story of ***Laapataa Ladies*** began nearly ten years ago when Biplab wrote an outline that deeply resonated with him. He entered a prestigious screenplay competition in Mumbai, judged by industry stalwarts like Aamir Khan and Rajkumar Hirani. His screenplay, initially titled ***Two Brides***, won second place out of nearly four thousand entries, catching the attention of Kiran Rao, who decided to direct the film, and Aamir Khan, who joined as a producer.

"The concept for ***Laapataa Ladies*** emerged from my lifelong observations of gender discrimination, starkly evident from childhood and increasingly pronounced in adulthood. This issue persists in the 21st century. A vivid memory from a village visit years ago, where I saw a girl alone in fields, veiled despite no one around, struck me deeply. This image epitomized the gender disparities prevalent in our society," Biplab said while explaining his process of narrating a story that resonates with the mass.

Laapataa Ladies is a personal endeavor to illuminate the challenges women face in a manner that doesn't hurt anyone's sentiments, whether they are patriarchal agents of society or feminists. Biplab sees everyone as part of society and aims to explore society's resilience amid pervasive inequality across varied landscapes—cities, villages, and hills. He considers himself a feminist but opposes stereotyping, as he believes it excludes a significant part of society.

"I never thought of making a fiction-only formula film. I wanted my script to be closer to life, corresponding to a truthful social commentary while being entertaining to people from all spheres," he said.

With this idea in mind, Biplab framed the story of ***Laapataa Ladies*** as a humorous social commentary that can be both entertaining and commercially successful. He believes the film is more of a satire of the current sociological structure.

"The story is about societal complexities, but the complexity itself was the path for the characters to attain their respective independence and empowerment," he explained. "Patriarchal 'male ego' or self-righteousness not only harms women but also harms men, as they fall prey to their own schemes. It's not about patriarchy or feminism; equality is a prerequisite to making a society that is equal and free."

Biplab emphasised that he did not want to make a direct statement through the film but rather to show where the problem lies through ease, simplicity, humour, comedy, and the strength of cinema from a neutral standpoint. This approach allows audiences from all spheres to enjoy the film and make their own judgments without feeling any ideas being forced upon them.

The success of ***Laapataa Ladies*** has opened doors for Biplab, bringing offers from the Mumbai, Telugu, Tamil, and Bangladeshi film industries. Despite this newfound recognition, he remains focused on creating films that reflect his vision and storytelling style. Passionate about making films in Bengali, he dreams of collaborating with artists from both sides of the Bengal border.

NACHIKETA
Insistent on Dhaka concert

Nachiketa Chakraborty's eagerly awaited performance at the Krishibid Institute in the capital, initially set for Friday (July 26), has been postponed to a later date by the event organising body, Ajob Karkhana. They have recently unveiled the new official date to the media. The organisation has now set a new date for the concert, stating that if conditions improve, it will take place on September 6.

The decision came preemptively amid the ongoing turmoil in Bangladesh, where violent clashes resulting from the quota reform movement protests have led to widespread unrest. As the situation begins to become subdued, the organisers have now announced the new date for the concert.

Nachiketa, showing remarkable determination, insisted on performing in Dhaka despite unrest and advice from West Bengal's CM Mamata Banerjee to cancel. Ultimately, the organisers decided to reschedule the concert.

They also assured ticket holders that their existing tickets will remain valid for the rescheduled concert date.

Babita recovers from COVID

On July 18, the iconic actress Babita tested positive for the coronavirus. The news was confirmed to the media by her younger sister actress Champa.

On Saturday, July 27, Champa announced that after four days of treatment at a private hospital in Dhaka, Babita tested negative for COVID-19. Following the doctor's advice, she returned home but continued to experience physical weakness.

Champa shared, "*Apa* had been feeling body aches for several days. Though there was no fever, she felt unwell. After getting tested, we learned she was COVID-19 positive. Without any delay, I admitted her to the hospital on July 18."

Champa also mentioned, "The situation in the country was quite concerning at the time. Amidst all this, the news of *Apa* contracting COVID-19 came as a shock to us. Alone, I felt uncertain about how to proceed. Then, after discussing with our elder sister, actress Shuchanda, we decided to get her admitted to the hospital promptly. After four days of continuous care, she returned home free from the virus. We are relieved for now."

This wasn't the first time Babita had been infected with Coronavirus.

Could have been my daughter: Iresh Zaker

Six-year-old Riya Gope made headlines nationwide, after being killed by a stray bullet while playing on her rooftop in Narayanganj, during confrontations between agitators, law enforcement, and ruling party supporters. Her death has saddened the country, with condolences shared on social media.

Reflecting upon the current situatio, actor and producer Iresh Zaker wrote on Facebook, "Our five-year-old daughter Meha could have been playing on the roof. I wouldn't have stopped her if she were in university and wanted to protest."

During the quota reform movement, many protesting students were injured or killed in violent incidents. Iresh wrote, "If Meha hadn't returned from those clashes, my life would have been destroyed, but I would have been proud. I would have wanted the state to honour her as a hero and bring her killers to justice."

Iresh Zaker and Mim Rashid's daughter, Meha, was born on August 7, 2019, and is now almost five. Her grandparents are Aly Zaker and Sara Zaker.

No sane person can support such destruction: Tareen Jahan

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Following the triumph of her initial film debut in West Bengal, Tareen Jahan is now poised to embark on her second feature film project in Kolkata.

She is all set to be featured in Manasi Sinha's second directorial venture ***5 Number Swapnamoy Lane***. The shooting for the project will commence in the first week of August in Kolkata, as confirmed by Tareen.

"My debut film in Tollywood was also the director's first directorial film, she earned praise for the previous one. I am sure that she will be appreciated for this second project of hers as well," shared the actress.

It was her birthday on July 26, but this year's one was especially grim. She mentioned that after her father's demise, she never lavishly celebrated her birthday. Also, the country is going through a critical phase, and this is not a time for celebration. "Despite everything, many well-wishers and fans have reached out to me, and I am grateful to them," she said.

Tareen was a child artiste in Bangladesh Television (BTV) and was the winner of ***Notun Kuri*** in 1985. She expressed her grief after learning about the attack on the television station during the violence. "I am an enlisted artiste of the channel; I grew up working for the channel. I never imagined that I would have had to witness such a horrific incident. Those who have attacked the channel are the enemies of the country."

Tareen also remarked, "After many hurdles, we have brought our country this far, and those who are attacking the developmental progress of the country are traitors."

In further explanation of her remark, she said, "Those who have tried to harm the country in various curses are unforgivable. They should be punished by the law. No sane person can support such destruction."

As she concluded the chat she left a message for the readers, "The love for our country comes first. Let's love our country and our people. Violence can never really be a solution to any problem."

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Denial, intimidation won't solve the crisis

Ensuring students' safety should be a key priority

We are dismayed at the steps the government is taking which, in an already volatile situation ensuing from the brutal crackdown on protesters, can only serve to intensify public distrust and fear. Let's focus on the way students are being dealt with, leaving aside the violence and destruction caused by groups taking advantage of the situation. According to reports in the media, including our paper, police have picked up three key organisers of the quota reform protests—Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, and Abu Baker Majumder—from a city hospital before taking them into the custody of the Detective Branch. Nahid and Asif were still undergoing treatment after being picked up and tortured earlier.

Meanwhile, police have filed a First Information Report (FIR) regarding the death of university student Abu Sayed which completely contradicts the widely circulated video footage of him being shot by police within a short distance. The FIR accuses 2,000-3,000 unidentified men, including BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists, of the killing. It is incredible what lengths are being taken to distort the facts. The Amnesty International has independently verified the video footage using satellite images to geolocate the positions of Sayed and responsible police officers, and found that they were about 15 metres apart during the shooting. As seen in the video, Sayed posed no threat to the police. Yet they repeatedly shot him, leading to his death.

In addition to these repressive measures, we have heard of various cases being filed against university students along with the arrests of thousands of other people suspected to be members of BNP, Jamaat and Shibir. For example, on July 21, according to a report by this daily, police sued 20 students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, along with many unnamed people, for demonstrating unlawfully and assaulting police.

If the government is trying to "normalise" the situation through such legal actions, it is the wrong way to do it. No matter what kind of counter-versions it creates, the government cannot ignore the concerns of the public regarding the unprecedented number of deaths centring on the quota reform movement. Instead of trying to mitigate the severe deficit of trust, of the students in particular, the government has decided to take the hardline once again. Picking up student organisers while they are undergoing medical treatment is illegal, and will only serve to further corrode students' faith in its sincerity to solve the crisis and harm any prospect of dialogue with them in the future. Similarly, denying the role of law enforcement and other security forces in the deaths of students and other people and arresting student protesters will further add fuel to the fire.

This is not the time to try to control the situation with fear, intimidation, and distortion of facts. The government must immediately release the three student organisers and allow them to get treatment. It must ensure their safety and that of all other students, put a stop to legal harassment, and discard the FIR in question (and others that may follow) that deliberately falsifies truths. It must own up to the fatal mistakes it has made and sincerely try to heal the deep wounds inflicted on the students and the public as a whole.

Restoring confidence among expats is vital

Recent events, if unaddressed, may impact remittance inflow

We are concerned about the growing effects of the recent violence and subsequent disturbances through curfew and internet shutdown on our economy, which was already grappling with consistently high inflation, falling exports, and a dollar crisis. Over the past few days, the media has highlighted the risks and losses in various sectors owing to the unrest and forced closures. One key sector where a similar impact could be expected is remittance from migrant workers. After a return to growth over the months since March, which saw the lowest remittances sent in 2024, the country, according to a report, could again be in for a rough ride thanks to a campaign by a section of migrant workers to halt remittances through formal channels.

Many migrants, disturbed by the brutal crackdown on protesters amid a total internet blackout, which largely cut off communications with their families back home, organised rallies and protests in various countries including in Europe, Asia, Middle East, and the UK and USA. Some of these rallies even called for a "shutdown" of remittances in solidarity with the quota reform protesters' call for a "complete shutdown" since July 18. In the UAE, the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal already sentenced 57 Bangladeshi nationals to long prison terms after they carried out protests in multiple locations. Protests in some other countries, especially in Middle East, were more muted because of local restrictions. The government has already sent letters to our missions in foreign countries asking about those involved in such protests and the reasons for their agitation.

In all likelihood, the fallout of recent events may rumble on unless the government takes steps to restore confidence among our migrant workers. A Bangladesh Bank official, while acknowledging the campaign to boycott formal channels and use informal channels like hundi to send remittances, has expressed hope that migrants will not respond to such calls. It is understandable that remittances were down during the recent bank and internet closures, but since many expatriates receive their salaries at the end or beginning of a month, the true effect of the resistance against formal transactions, which crucially add to our foreign exchange reserves, can be determined over the next week or so.

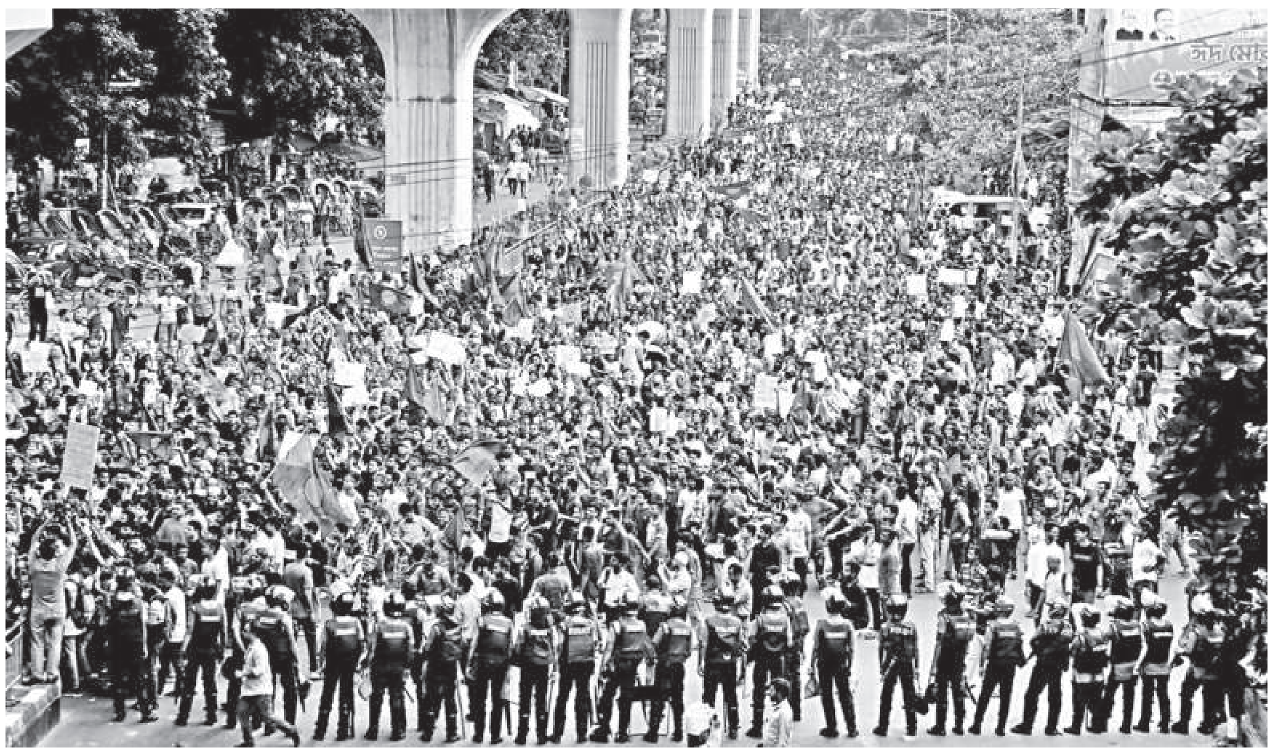
These developments come at a time when the government's initiatives to encourage formal transactions and investments by Bangladeshi nationals living aboard are being criticised for being inadequate. Even though the government hopes that recent events will not discourage foreign direct investment, the fact is, such concerns go long back thanks to preexisting issues like corruption, systemic barriers, anti-competitive environment, etc. It is crucial that our expatriates and foreign investors do not turn away from us at this critical economic juncture. To restore confidence among migrants perturbed by recent violence and internet shutdown, we urge the government to do everything necessary, including ensuring uninterrupted communications, ensuring those who have been jailed abroad for protesting are released, listening to migrants' other grievances, and addressing the root causes of recent unrest with complete transparency and accountability.

An entity showing serious cracks

Zillur Rahman
is the executive director of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and a television talk show host. His X handle is @zillur

ZILLUR RAHMAN

It began as a simple protest: reform the government job quota system—a basic demand arising from a fundamental problem. Young people in Bangladesh are facing unprecedented levels of unemployment, while reports from February indicated that more than a quarter of the 1.9 million government job seats remained vacant. Adding fuel to the fire was a controversial high court verdict to restore the highly unpopular 56 percent job reservation system. Thus, you have the recipe for a massive nationwide student mobilisation demanding a solution to a broken system.



The government has so far solved all its problems through force.

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

The answer to this growing unrest was simple. The government is no stranger to angry students on the streets. Whether that be the earlier road safety movement, the movement opposing VAT on private universities, or the previous movements against the quota, the answer was always the same—clear and non-antagonistic channels for dialogue. Who could have guessed that the government could fumble the ball so hard? Who would have imagined that such a simple demand would end up with the blood of hundreds on the streets?

> **After the internet ban was partially lifted, the images of horror that filled social media feed seemed to be straight out of some war movie. Helicopters performing strafing runs, shooting sound grenades at crowds of people. Tanks rolling past burnt-out remains of vehicles. Security forces clearly using lethal weapons against unarmed protesters. And scores and scores of other atrocities, too numerous to list.**

After the internet ban was partially lifted, the images of horror that filled social media feed seemed to be straight out of some war movie. Helicopters performing strafing runs, shooting sound grenades at crowds of people. Tanks rolling past burnt-out remains of vehicles. Security forces clearly using lethal weapons against unarmed protesters. And scores and scores of other atrocities, too numerous to list. Accounts and websites have been created solely to document and preserve these recorded atrocities. These resources are a mere Google search away for anyone who needs a quick, sobering dose of reality. At the time of writing, the number of dead is over 200, according to what some media outlets could verify. Who knows what the real count will turn out to be. But that is not all. Nearly five thousand have been arrested in over a week. Mothers and fathers helplessly roaming hospitals to find their missing children. Emotional eulogies of brothers and sisters who have been martyred in the violence. These are the images that will be burnt into the collective psyche of our nation. There will be no cover-up. We will not forget.

This monumental failure of the government to control the situation cannot simply be analysed as a monolith. If we peel back the surface of this failure, we see the incompetence, arrogance, and ineptitude unfurl like some kind of rotten onion. The first fumble was a remark by the prime minister, indirectly implicating all students asking for quota reforms as having some link with "razakar". The second fumble was the letting loose of the goons of student and youth wing of the ruling party, who then proceeded to turn a non-violent movement into one of needless violence. And the final fumble was the complete shutdown of the internet in Bangladesh, decimating Bangladesh's already faltering economy, as if to cut off the nose to spite the face.

There are many more layers to this chain of failures. Using tanks, vehicles, and helicopters—few of which were clearly marked with the UN logo—to subjugate the incensed masses. A complete failure to protect the nation's key point installations, such as the BTV building, metro rail station, and BRTA headquarters, etc. A comically weak attempt to convince the population that the internet shutdown was not a clear government overreaction. And a continuous and embarrassing disregard of our leaders for the bloody elephant in the room, which is the pile of dead bodies of our children, our best and brightest, who had to give their lives simply to earn the opportunity for a possible government job.

You know, I know, they know. This was a total and utter mess of an affair. Words simply fall short of describing its magnitude. It is such a mess that perhaps the government might even feel ashamed to admit it. Enemies are being invented out of thin air to justify using the military to quell the unrest. Perhaps if they try hard enough, they might even start to believe the narrative they are spewing. Whatever progressive image the ruling party had tried to build for itself over the last decade or so has been severely fractured. And once the layers of failure are peeled off to expose the rotten core, we are only left with two options: reckless ineptitude or malicious intent. These are the only two cards the government has to play.

There has been an ongoing trend of both the ruling party and the opposition to regard the government as some kind of omnipotent political entity capable of exercising incredible amounts of control over its population with the aid of foreign surveillance technology. Clearly, this has not worked. All it took to shut down Bangladesh's digital infrastructure was one building fire in the capital and a cut wire. Or perhaps the true mechanism of control was never sophisticated intelligence apparatus or assistance from foreign powers. The government has so far solved all its problems through force. Either through official institutions, the student political wing, or security forces in plain clothes, time after time, they have resorted to force their way out of all political hurdles.

However, the key strategic takeaway for the government from all of this should be to take a good, hard look at the means by which they have been ruling so far. Times are changing, and they may realise that the foundation of their rule is not as solid as they might have fooled themselves into believing so far. A closer inspection might reveal the true nature of their political entity. And this entity is now showing serious cracks.

We cannot let ourselves become comfortably numb

Mahabuba Rahman
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MAHABUBA RAHMAN

The toddlers of the current generation are called the "reels-generation", as they cannot be fed without a screen in front of them showing them seconds-long reels on social media websites. From little kids to adults, all are now addicted to scrolling through these short videos. They also tend to lose interest if they cannot find something newer and more interesting in every scroll. So, the race of being on trend has become a real competition for the social media influencers.

It probably started with the game "Guess the Goat" and continued with Argentina's victory in the Copa America final. In between we experienced some significant movements like the university teachers' strike over the new pension scheme, and the beginning of the quota reform movement by students. Within a week, those movements lost their position on the list when news of question leaks in Bangladesh Civil Service exams, along with the tale of the millionaire driver, came out. When it seemed that we would almost start to forget that those issues are real and not reels, our young generation made sure that this time they are not leaving the streets until their demands are fulfilled. People around the world witnessed Bangladeshi students suffering on the streets for days in order to ensure reformation of the quota system. And then, we lost our internet connections, at a time when many of those young protestors were being brutally killed on the streets.

I remember when we didn't have cable connection; we used to wait eagerly for Friday afternoons to watch a movie on BTV or a drama in the evening. Nowadays, entertainment channels are so abundant that the excitement has left us. We are buying subscriptions for Netflix, HBO and other streaming platforms. Similarly, our national issues are so numerous at this time that it has become difficult to pay attention to a single one. Without reaching the resolution of a single issue, we are asked to wait for a bit longer so that we get bored of the news that is starting to get stale and start looking for something newer and more exciting. As the internet has been restored in a limited capacity across the country recently, we are eagerly awaiting for things to get back to normal even at a time such as this, forgetting what abnormality we experienced a few days ago. Will the martyred young minds be forgotten as they are not drawing enough attention anymore?

> **When it seemed that we would almost start to forget that those issues are real and not reels, our young generation made sure that this time they are not leaving the streets until their demands are fulfilled. People around the world witnessed Bangladeshi students suffering on the streets for days in order to ensure reformation of the quota system. And then, we lost our internet connections, at a time when many of those young protestors were being brutally killed on the streets.**

Even though we don't want to admit it, we must come to terms with the fact that we have thickened our skin over the years and now we have almost become numb to the blows we get from the news. We did not speak when lower income people had to stop buying meat and fish due to unbearable price hikes. We did not look for any resolution when we got to know about people who loaded their bags with black money and ran away. We were not loud enough when another group of people were on the same streets asking for their rights. We kept scrolling further down for "trending" issues as we ignored our duties.

Even now, our respected crisis resolvers are waiting for us to "get tired of it" till we find something new to get busy with. With our collective inability to pay attention, it is not unlikely that we will forget this too, as soon as we scroll down to the latest Ambani wedding videos.

This country is now desperately in need of optimistic and creative minds . This time, people must not forget the past. Showing respect to the lost lives, we should hope for better future leaders among today's unbeatable young blood who won't say "it is what it is" and move on, who won't get tired of waiting for the rights they deserve, and whose voices cannot be silenced because "it does not concern them", and who won't let us get too comfortable with our numbness.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
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VISUAL: STAR

The (reformed) quota scheme, our state, and the marginalised

Psymhe Wadud
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PSYMHE WADUD

The quota reform movement took a rather avoidable violent turn, particularly agitating and disconcerting teachers of law, who research and lecture university students on rights, justice, and constitutionalism.

The movement tabled for us the logical demand to reform the quota scheme in public service. Indeed, the quota scheme needed substantive reform. By substantive, I refer to reform that goes beyond specifying the percentages. In the face of the overwhelming loss of lives, disproportionate and careless use of force, condemnable violence against police personnel, jailbreaks, and mindless destructions caused by "vested quarters" to public properties and national establishments, it was understandably not possible to go into the substance of quota reform. But while we heave a sigh of relief, it is important to also reflect on how different things could have been, had the state taken a dialogic approach with the protesting students early on. Even with regard to the strategic mayhem apparently planned and perpetrated by third-party political and/or extremist elements, we cannot understate the accountability of the state mechanism on account of their share of omissions to make sure that the student movement does not slide into violence and is not taken "advantage" of (for example, failing to collate and build required security intelligence or not strategising/deploying preventive and countering measures early on).

One may say that I am imposing too daunting of a burden on the state and that in fact the students should have shown "maturity" and framed their demands the right way. Interestingly, for instance, it is argued by state officials that the protesting students, including women, did not want quotas for women. However, we ought to be mindful to the legal, normative, and epistemic authority that the state has over us—the governed.

This piece may seem rather pedantic at this point. However, as a feminist who deeply cares about substantive equality, I cannot help emphasising that had things panned out differently, the quota percentages could also have been specified based on data-driven grassroots evidence on substantive inequalities and statistical analyses on the marginalised communities. As it transpires, we (the state as a whole) lost the righteous high ground to negotiate with the protesting students.

There are many ways to justify quotas. First, they further the cause of substantive equality. Quotas offer support to the otherwise marginalised to compete on equal terms with those who are not. A second justification for quotas is they work as "recognition" for past intentional discrimination, oppression, or harms. A third justification is that quotas tend to contribute to diversity. However, the diversity argument reduces humans to group identities—to something of use—something that adds value to a setting. In a way, it views humans as instruments and not as beings having intrinsic value. Nonetheless, diversity is a valid argument to justify quotas.

Clearly, quotas are not an exception to equality—as per the tenets of anti-discrimination law jurisprudence. Courts across jurisdictions have observed on multiple occasions how affirmative actions are an intrinsic part of formal equality, and not an exception to it. However, for quotas to work as an intrinsic element of formal equality and to further the cause of substantive equality, they need to be implemented with an overarching vision. For quotas to be beneficial, it is important that they take a "prioritarian" approach and do not generalise or essentialise groups or categories that they target. In other words, to further the cause of substantive equality, it is crucial that quotas do not compromise with qualification in the longer run, do not perpetuate stereotypes, and are not over- or under-inclusive. Quotas, at the end of the day, are remedial, they are not supposed to treat the structural barriers or systemic causes of substantive inequalities. However, with vision of an egalitarian society, it is important that quotas are utilised as a "plus" to treating the root causes of inequality, discrimination, and marginalisation, and not as a tokenistic scheme to mask inequalities that lurk underneath formal equality or as means to engender further discrimination or inequalities. Evidently, the state lacked a vision: it never knew what it wanted quotas to do. Alternatively, the state failed to meaningfully communicate a vision to the protesting students.

While upholding a race conscious admission policy by the University of Michigan, the US Supreme Court observed that a quota policy must be sufficiently flexible to ensure that each applicant is evaluated as an individual and not in a manner that makes ethnicity or race the defining feature of an application. Thus, race or ethnicity may be considered only as a "plus" to a particular applicant's profile. In other words, when there is one position and two equally qualified persons, then the balance shall tilt in favour of the one who has a quota in their favour. Indeed, this is one of the ways quotas can do their job and still not compromise with qualification. Another way is to choose a quota-candidate over a non-quota candidate (both equally qualified) unless there are additional factors favouring the case of the latter. What we have in our country are automatic quotas, meaning that when quotas come in play, they do not work as a "plus" to the applicants' profile, rather become the defining factor of their applications. Hence, instead of unmindfully retaining or reducing automatic quota provisions, it was (and still is) important to craft a plan on transitioning from automatic quotas to a more nuanced application of quota provisions based on certain benchmarks (for example, obtaining critical mass).

The answer to the question of over-inclusivity lies with a prioritarian approach to executing quotas. India is illustrative in this regard for sub-dividing marginalised groups. Indeed, sub-dividing beneficiary groups and prioritising the most marginalised within a specific group, if perfectly executed, is one way through which quotas can really do the job they are supposed to do. This is where excluding the "creamy layer" or otherwise socioeconomically advanced section within specific groups comes into play. In order to prevent under-inclusivity, quotas need to be regularly monitored and revised based on disaggregated data and evidence on marginalisation and intersectional harms sustained by members of specific groups.

History shows how the "woman question", "indigenous question", "transgender question", and "disabled question" get subsumed in the midst of dominant voices and how marginalised voices get deliberately silenced amid battling causes and agendas. The quota reform movement, the state's initial nonchalance, and the mayhem befalling the country afterwards serves as a case study for such subsuming and silencing. Indeed, the reformed scheme does a great disservice to women by entirely foregoing quotas for them. It's true that for a privileged class of mostly urban women, quotas are no longer needed. However, they do not represent all women—particularly those who sustain harms on multiple intersecting grounds. In order to recognise the historical wrongs perpetrated against women in general and to cater to the needs of the vast majority of women with no access to basic goods and services, quotas are a necessity and will continue to be so for quite a while. One per cent quota for the indigenous population is certainly not backed by evidence either. Amid all, specifying quota for the "third gender" individuals is commendable. However, the clubbing of persons with disabilities with "third gender" individuals (with one per cent quota) do not add value to the cause of equality since the two are different categories, sustain distinct harms, and have varied needs. Unmindful to the majoritarian backlash against transgender people, the new scheme also reifies the regressive agenda of distinguishing "third gender" individuals from non-cisgender people in general and thereby hierarchising gender identities. Does it also reinforce the regressive stigma attached to non-cisgender people to the effect that they are persons with (gendered) disabilities? I do not know.

At the end of the day, what we have with the new quota scheme are "subaltern" lives and lived experiences, that will remain, perhaps indefinitely, almost unaccounted for within the public employment sector—due to the political-apolitical 'sensitivity' now attached to the scheme in general.

Above all, we have the burden of the lost lives to account for.

Drivers of bank run in Bangladesh

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MD MAIN UDDIN

Banks are in the business of borrowing short from surplus units and lending long to deficit units. This creates the problem of maturity mismatch and consequently banks face liquidity problem. Banks are largely dependent on trust which can be broken when they fail to honour the cheques of their depositors.

If depositors are gripped by collective distrust and decide to withdraw their deposits all at the same time in a short period, banks are unable to satisfy these withdrawals as their assets are mostly illiquid. This gives rise to "bank run". If run on a bank is not handled carefully, it may lead to bank failure—a situation where a bank is unable to meet its obligations to its depositors or other creditors because it has become insolvent.

Poor liquidity management or even rumours about a bank may lead to bank run. Notably, a run can occur whether the bank is insolvent or not—that is, the fear of a run may be enough to produce one. Therefore, the perceptions of depositors are clearly related with bank run.

Previous research discovered that the fear of losing one's savings is positively connected with individuals' behaviour during a bank run scenario. Studies showed that when depositors can be assured that banks are not facing a liquidity crisis, rather mismanagement of liquidity prevails in the banking system, they may postpone their withdrawal. In other words, postponement of deposit withdrawal will take place when depositors know that the banking system as a whole does not face any liquidity crisis. Deposit insurance reduces the probability of bank run as it guarantees depositors' savings in the banks. Although a full coverage by deposit insurance certainly eliminates bank run, partial deposit insurance cannot. Generally, deposit insurance reduces depositors' incentive to make a run on the bank.

At present, there are 61 banks in Bangladesh. There are six state-owned commercial banks (SCB), three specialised banks (SB), 43 private commercial banks (PCB) and nine foreign commercial banks (FCB). Among the private commercial banks, 33 are conventional and 10 Islami Shariah based. The country is overbanked which creates an unhealthy competition among banks. The banking sector of Bangladesh is engulfed with many problems that can initiate bank run. Yet no such research has been carried out that could provide a better understanding of the factors which cause bank run. It is essential to know the factors related to bank run, otherwise a major gap in risk management process will remain unexplored.

A recent study was carried out to discover the factors that may cause bank run in Bangladesh. It attempts to identify the factors that drive depositors' perceptions toward bank run. Personal interviews using closed-ended questions were used to collect data between July and October 2023 from 400 respondents of which 77 percent were from PCB and 23 percent from SCB.

More than half of the respondents (61 percent) were male and more than 57 percent had business education. A whopping 83 percent of the depositors were knowledgeable about the problems in the banking sector, including loan scams, high non-performing assets, shortage of capital deficiency and liquidity problems. A mere 36 percent of customers were familiar with deposit insurance scheme—a scheme of Bangladesh Bank (BB) which gives protection to deposits up to Tk 100,000 against each account.

The study found a significant relationship between category of education and bank run. Depositors with non-business education are 1.76 times more likely to run for cash withdrawal than depositors with business education because the former do not understand why banks face crises, the magnitude of crises and how they affect banks. Thus, they tend to run on deposits.

The research discovered an important connection between depositors' awareness of liquidity problem and bank run. The depositors who are not aware about liquidity problem are 1.74 times more likely to rush for cash withdrawal than those who understand the issue. Liquidity problem arises from maturity mismatch, high non-performing loans, mismanagement of funds and inability to obtain financing. Some are easily manageable while others are not. Hence, it is quite natural that the depositors, who are not familiar with the causes of liquidity problem, are more inclined to rush for cash withdrawal.

There is strong evidence that knowledge about banking sector problems and bank run are well associated. Depositors who know about banking sector's problems are 2.36 times more likely to rush for cash withdrawal than those who are not aware of the issues. Knowledge about banking sector problems make them more panicked, so they are more likely to make a run on the bank.

Finally, the research identified that bank run is affected by knowledge about deposit insurance scheme. Depositors who are unfamiliar with this system are 4.32 times more likely to run on deposits than people who know about the insurance scheme. A large number of depositors do not have any knowledge about this scheme, let alone its operational procedures.

The results have implications for bank regulations and financial crisis literature. Bank run as this research indicates can occur in Bangladesh and it is affected by some factors. In recent years, for example, some banks, that faced liquidity constrains, had to borrow from money markets at abnormally high interest rates. Other times they resorted to Bangladesh Bank (BB) finding no other alternatives.

For about the last five years, BB had to extend special credit support to some banks to help them overcome their liquidity problem. The central bank also requested people not to be panicked while several banks were in serious liquidity problem. BB had to assure people that no bank will fail in the country. All these initiatives were taken to avoid potential bank run. If those banks were not supported by BB, they would have faced bank run. Some of them might have failed too.

If several banks face losses simultaneously due to bank run, the government may fail to save them and rescuing them could be expensive. Thus, banks need to be efficient and resilient to avoid bank run. If run on deposits cannot be prevented *ex ante* it may create havoc in the entire economy *ex post*. People must also be educated and made aware about banking sector issues so that they are not driven by irrational behaviour that can cause bank run.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Entices
7 "Waterloo" group
11 Stressed type
12 Placed down
13 Venus's sister
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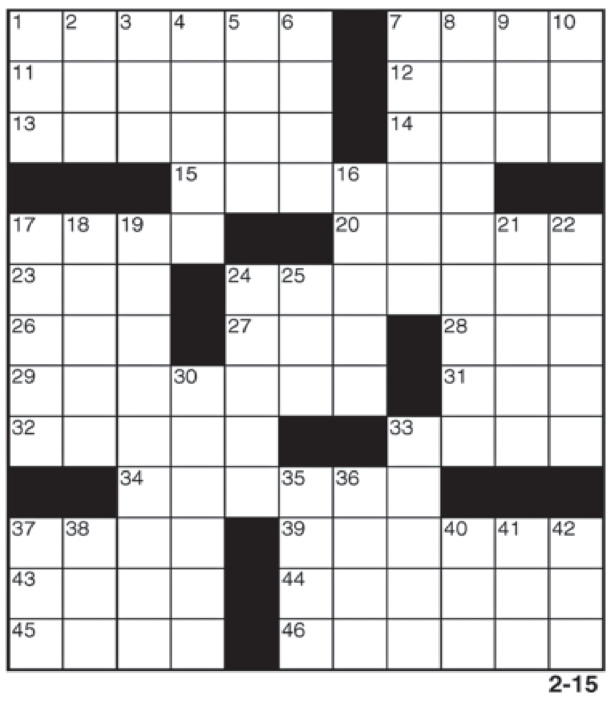
30 Kennel club categories
33 Car type
35 Lights-out music
36 Doozy
37 Quarterback Manning
38 Block up
40 Neither Dem. nor Rep.
41 Earl Grey, e.g.
42 Pig place



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

L	I	N	E	D	■	S	U	I	N	G
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W	O	M	A	N	I	N	L	O	V	E
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■	■	■	D	E	N	I	M	■	■	■
R	O	S	E	S	■	N	I	N	E	R
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G	E	N	T	S	■	C	U	P	I	D
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C	R	A	Z	Y	I	N	L	O	V	E
T	I	M	E	R	■	C	E	D	E	S
S	P	A	N	S	■	H	E	A	R	T

Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to **dsopinion@gmail.com**

"It's not logical for me that you have someone withdraws from singles and you call up a doubles player to play singles. I don't think it's a good image for the sport, to be honest."

Novak Djokovic called for a change in the rules governing late call-ups at the Olympics after his 6-0, 6-1 rout of unranked Matthew Ebden in just 53 minutes on Saturday.

Butler blames defence after labouring win

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Peter Butler blamed his defence after Bangladesh women's team laboured to a 4-2 win against Bhutan in the second match of the two FIFA friendly matches at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu on Saturday.

The charges of Butler had fought back from a goal down to win the first match 5-1 on Wednesday, but the performance in the second match was much worse from the reigning SAFF women's champions as they went two goals down before finding their feet and edging past the home side.

The coach had made six changes to his starting eleven, including drafting in last match's hattrick hero Mosammat Sagorika as well as Mile Akter in goal. However, the women in red and green made a terrible start, conceding a 15th minute lead when a defender failed to clear a long ball from midfield, with Deki Lhazom chesting the ball home following a cross from skipper Pema Tshering.

It was only the second goal that Bangladesh had conceded against their South Asian counterparts in six meetings, but things would go from bad to worse for the visitors as Lhazom doubled the home side's lead seven minutes later, smashing home from the centre of the box with Mile failing to stop the straightforward attempt.

Butler, who was highly critical of his team's critics following the first match, said the physical inferiority of his side and the style of play of the opposition caught them off-guard.

"I thought we defended very very poorly," Butler said after the match. "Even though we dominated possession -- we probably had 75-80 percent possession but with the way they play (which is) very very direct and with us not being of big size, anything over the top causes a few problems."

The coach made an early change, bringing on reliable midfielder Maria Manda in place of Sapna Rani as Bangladesh slowly took control of the midfield. But it was captain Sabina Khatun who reduced the margin in the 35th minute with a clever finish following a long-ball from Masura Parvin before Sagorika equalised with a fine chip following some clever play inside the box by Sabina and Matsushima Sumaya five minutes later.

Sagorika then wasted two glorious chances early in the second half before substitute Ritu Porna Chakma's deflected shot handed the visitors a fortuitous lead in the 62nd minute. The left-winer ensured Bangladesh's victory with her second goal 24 minutes later, finding the net from a goalmouth melee as Bangladesh maintained their 100 percent win record against Bhutan.

Despite the lacklustre performance, Butler felt it was more of a case of the opposition improving than his charges regressing.

"I think you have to give credit where its due. They've improved," Butler said. "They don't have a real methodology in terms of how they play. If you don't defend stoutly and strongly and resolutely, you're going to get found out."

Rejaur, Mondol earn HP lead over Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacers Ripon Mondol and Rejaur Rahman Raja starred as Bangladesh Cricket Board High Performance (HP) Unit bowled out Pakistan Shaheens for 179 in their first innings on Day 2 of their four-day match at the Marrara Oval in Darwin yesterday.

Ripon claimed 4-71 while Rejaur took 3-33, helping the HP Unit to a 79-run first innings lead.

The HP team then reached 84-3 at stumps on Day 2, with Skipper Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Aich Mollah unbeaten on 39 and eight respectively, extending the lead to 163.

Earlier, Pakistan Shaheens resumed the day's play on 39-2, in reply to HP unit's first innings tally of 258.

Rejaur struck on the second over of the day, getting Omair Yousuf caught for seven.

The Shaheens lost two more wickets in quick succession and were stuttering on 69-5 before Kamran Ghulam and Tayyab Tahir formed a 78-run partnership for the sixth wicket to steady the innings.

Rejaur broke the stand by getting Kamran caught behind for 48. His departure initiated another collapse as Pakistan Shaheens lost their remaining four wickets for just 32 runs.

Jessy to officiate in Women's Asia Cup final

SPORTS REPORTER

Even though Bangladesh crashed out of the Women's Asia Cup with a crushing defeat to India in the semifinal, there will be some Bangladeshi representation in the final between India and Sri Lanka in Dambulla today in the form of umpire Shathira Jakir Jessy.

Jessy, who is officiating in the Asia Cup for the first time, confirmed The Daily Star yesterday that she has been chosen as one of the three umpires for the all-important match and will be working as an on-field umpire.

The former Bangladesh cricketer, who has officiated in five matches in the tournament -- three as an on-field umpire and two as a TV umpire -- explained that she was chosen for the final as one of the best umpires in the tournament and not as a neutral umpire.

"They selected me on the basis of performance. They have ranked the umpires on the basis of their performance in the Asia Cup and I was amongst the top three," Jessy said.

"Earlier, they would only chose neutral umpires. But this time they have changed their policy, now they are giving it to the best performers. Even if Bangladesh had qualified for the final, I would've been chosen," she added.

'There is every possibility of bigger humiliations'

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh's lacklustre Women's Asia Cup mission ended on Friday with a humiliating 10-wicket defeat to India in the semifinal, a drubbing that could be the precursor to more such embarrassments in the forthcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup at home.

The Tigresses have been struggling since the start of the year and went into the regional competition after conceding back-to-back series defeats to Australia and India on home soil.

The players then featured in the Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League and also had a two-week training camp at the BKSP ahead of the meet, but could hardly put up a fight against hosts Sri Lanka in their opening game, which they lost by seven wickets.

Bangladesh went on the win against Thailand and Malaysia to book a place in the last four, where they came across seven-time champions India, against whom they had conceded a 5-0 defeat in a five-match series recently.

In the semifinal, the difference in quality of the two sides came to the fore as the Tigresses got mauled by their Indian counterparts in all three departments.

As Bangladesh are bracketed with tough opponents like England, the West Indies and South Africa in the T20 World Cup, which is set to start on October 3, things aren't looking great for the hosts at the moment.

"There is every possibility of bigger humiliations in the upcoming World Cup," Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who mentored the women's team during their 2018 Asia Cup success in Malaysia, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It wouldn't be surprising if we don't do well. There will be more criticism and I don't think they [players] would be able to handle that. I think it would be even more difficult for them.

"There was a time when we gave tough fight to India while Pakistan and Sri Lanka were similar to us. But now the latter teams have reached a new level while we are going backwards and becoming like Thailand and the UAE," he added.

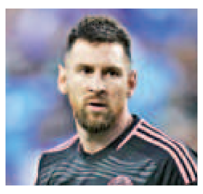
Fahim was critical of the quality of women's domestic cricket in Bangladesh while he lambasted the team management for their continuous failure.

"The quality of our domestic cricket is so poor that we can't actually think of getting players for international level from there. Our domestic cricket is little better than Thailand and the UAE and because of that, we feel comfortable playing against them.

"There was an attempt to develop women's cricket [after Asia Cup win]. But I don't know how things have gradually regressed in the last two to three years. I think we lack a competitive culture in our cricket. We should have been in the place behind India but above Pakistan, Sri Lanka. But we failed to maintain the continuity. I think it's not clear to many for what objectives and purpose we play cricket.

"I don't think the current management of the women's team can bring better results. This management has been working with the team for quite a long time. If they could've gotten better results, they would have done it by now. I fear that things can go worse," he concluded.

SHORT CORNER



Injured Messi out for defending champ Miami as Leagues Cup begins
Lionel Messi will not play for Inter Miami as the defending Leagues Cup champions begin their repeat bid on Saturday (Sunday morning in Bangladesh time) at home against Puebla, Miami coach Gerardo Martino said Friday. The 37-year-old Argentine striker suffered a right ankle injury in his nation's victory over Colombia in the Copa America final this month.

Zimbabwe keeper Madande sets new Test record of 42 byes against Ireland
Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Clive Madande broke a 90-year unwanted record when he conceded 42 byes in a Test innings against Ireland on Friday. The runs given away by the 24-year-old Madande, enduring a tough debut after he was out for a duck on Thursday's first day at Stormont, were more than Ireland's 40-run first-innings lead as they made 250 in reply to Zimbabwe's 210.

ECB to pay Zimbabwe touring fee for 2025 Test
The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will become the first host board in the modern era to pay a touring fee in bilateral cricket when Zimbabwe arrive for a one-off Test next year, ECB chief Richard Gould said. Gould told Sky Sports on Friday that the ECB and other financially strong boards, such as the Indian and Australian boards, had a huge responsibility to ensure the competitiveness of Test cricket.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Emotional Endrick realises Madrid 'dream'

AGENCIES

A visibly emotional Endrick was presented as a Real Madrid player in front of a packed Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday, with the Brazilian teenage sensation revealing that he had long dreamt of becoming a Real Madrid player.

Madrid agreed a deal to sign forward Endrick from Palmeiras in December 2022, but the prospect could not formally join the club until his 18th birthday on July 21, 2024.

"This is crazy," Endrick said. "I am so happy, since I was a kid I have always been a Madrid fan and now I am going to play for Madrid.

"I am here, I am going to play, I am so happy, my family are as well. I don't have words to describe what I am feeling. I always wanted to be here. I wanted to play for Madrid. It was a dream. Today it is a reality."

The stadium was packed, with only just over 200 tickets left available to the general public on the morning of the event, as fans turned out. In particular, there was a strong Brazilian contingent to the crowd, wearing shirts of their country, Palmeiras, and various Real Madrid legends.

Also in attendance were Endrick's parents, girlfriend, wider family and entourage.

Endrick will compete for a place in the Real Madrid attack alongside Brazil teammates Vinícius Junior and Rodrygo, and another new arrival, Kylian Mbappe.

The Brazilian teenager underwent a medical and put pen to paper on his contract at Valdebebas yesterday morning, before heading to Chamartín at midday to be officially presented in front of fans.

It was also confirmed that he would don the number 16 jersey during his first season at the club. The number had been vacant, having last been worn by Alvaro Odriozola before his return to Real Sociedad last summer.

Endrick is now expected to travel to the U.S. on Sunday for the club's pre-season tour, where he will arrive ahead of his Brazil teammates who were also at the Copa América and who are not expected to arrive until late next week.

That means that the teenager will work alongside Carlo Ancelotti and his teammates with the hope of featuring in some of their upcoming friendly fixtures against AC Milan, Barcelona, and Chelsea, ahead of the European Super Cup where the Champions League winners will play Europa League winners Atalanta in Warsaw, on August 14.

England batter Joe Root celebrates after reaching his 63rd Test half-century on Day 2 of the third test against the West Indies at Edgbaston yesterday. Root rescued England after they slumped to 54 for five in response to West Indies' first innings total of 282 as the right-handed batter put away seven fours for his 87 and put together a 115-run stand with skipper Ben Stokes. He also reached another milestone as he became the seventh player to score 12,000 runs in the format and leapfrogged Brain Lara into seventh place in the list of all-time leading run-getters.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 2
England vs West Indies
Third Test, Day 3
Live from 4:00 pm

T SPORTS
Women's Asia Cup
Final
Sri Lanka vs India
Live from 3:30 pm
India vs Sri Lanka
Second T20I
Live from 7:30 pm

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FRENCH FLAIR FLAUNTED in Olympics opening

AFP, *Paris*

A historic boat parade down the River Seine launched the Paris Olympics with spectacular French flair Friday, as the City of Light welcomed the world's greatest athletes for a sporting extravaganza.

A show-stopping performance by Celine Dion, a flaming Olympic cauldron lifted into the night sky by hot-air balloon, and a dazzling Eiffel Tower light show brought the curtain down on a four-hour celebration of French culture, history and art.

Braving torrential rain, some 300,000 people had lined the river banks to cheer on the armada carrying competitors past the city's iconic sights: the Eiffel Tower bearing the five Olympic rings, the Louvre and Notre Dame Cathedral.

The wildly ambitious display was the first time the Olympic opening ceremony has been staged outside the main stadium, making it the biggest-ever launch for the "Greatest Show on Earth".

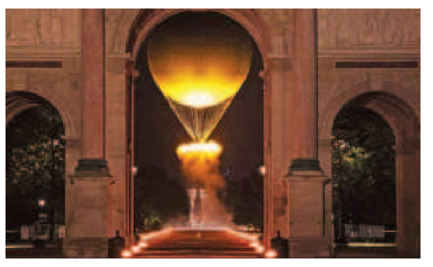
But that gamble also made the ceremony hostage to the weather, with spectators, VIPs, and athletes alike drenched or huddling in transparent ponchos.

In the City of Love, the ceremony stressed togetherness and unity in a world that has suffered wars, massacres, and political upheaval since the Covid-delayed Tokyo Olympics.

For just over a fortnight, organisers hope the superhuman performances of stars like gymnast Simone Biles, tennis champion Novak Djokovic or sprinter Noah Lyles will provide the world with much-needed distraction.

Beach volleyball at the Eiffel Tower, breakdancing in Place de la Concorde, equestrian sport at the Palace of Versailles: 100 years since Paris last staged the Olympics, the city will provide a stunning backdrop to the sport.

"I declare open the Games of Paris celebrating the 33rd Olympiad of the modern era," said President Emmanuel Macron. In a symbol of the Games' message of gender parity, French track legend Marie-Jose Perec and three-time Olympic judo champion Teddy Riner lit the Olympic cauldron together.



Dion closed the show from the first level of the Eiffel Tower, with her first public performance since revealing she was suffering from a rare illness.

Paris 2024 organiser Tony Estanguet had said the opening ceremony needed to "push the limits as far as possible", showing from the start France's ambition for the Games.

And from Moulin Rouge performers doing the cancan to a video showing dancers on the scaffolding of fire-damaged Notre Dame, it was a colourful festival of all things French.

Led out by Greece through jets of water cascading from a bridge, accompanied by an accordion player, around 7,000 athletes cruised down a six-kilometre (four-mile) stretch of the Seine to the Eiffel Tower on 85 boats.

In a city where memories of the November 2015 terrorist attacks are still raw, the unprecedented ceremony sparked a colossal security operation: Snipers, specialist frogmen, and AI-augmented cameras were deployed, with airspace closed and the area around the Seine virtually locked down.

To everyone's relief, the ceremony passed off without major incident.

Sporting royalty mingled with celebrities and world leaders on and off the Seine, which will host triathlon and the swimming marathon after a historic clean-up to make it swimmable.

The ceremony kicked off with a video of French football legend Zinedine Zidane, who took the torch on an offbeat journey through the Metro, and the Paris catacombs.

Basketball icon LeBron James and tennis player Coco Gauff carried the flag for Team USA, which has topped the medal table at every Olympics since Beijing in 2008.

True to its slogan "Games Wide Open", the Paris Olympics can boast gender equality for the first time ever -- for Paris 1924, the last time the Olympics took place in the city, four percent of athletes were women.

But the ceremony did not shy away from the chaos in the world -- to the strains of John Lennon's "Imagine", the city was plunged into darkness in an invitation to reflect.

But with the Games now open, the stars are aligned for sporting brilliance as the stage is set for the 10,500 athletes to fulfil their dreams and turn in the performance of their lives.

'I couldn't imagine a better place': Tamberi after losing wedding ring in Seine

REUTERS, *Paris*

High jumper Gianmarco Tamberi issued a profuse apology to his wife on Saturday after his wedding ring slipped off his finger while he was serving as Italy's flag bearer on a boat in the Seine River during the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics.

"Too much water, too many kilos lost in the last few months or maybe the irrepressible enthusiasm of what we were doing," Tamberi, who won gold at the Tokyo Games, wrote on Instagram in a post directed at his wife, Chiara Bontempi Tamberi.

"Probably all three things, the fact remains that I felt it (my ring) slip away, I saw it fly.... I followed it with my gaze until I saw it bounce inside the boat."

Tamberi said that his wedding ring then bounced into the waters of the Seine in what he described as "a few moments that lasted forever."

"But if it really had to happen, if I really had to lose it, I couldn't imagine a better place," Tamberi added. "It will remain forever in the riverbed of the City of Love."

"May it be a good omen to return home with an even bigger gold!" he wrote.

IOC apologises to South Korea over opening ceremony gaffe

REUTERS, *Paris*

The International Olympic Committee apologised to South Korea on Saturday after its delegation of athletes were introduced as from rival North Korea at theParis Olympics opening ceremony.

South Korea's vice minister for sports and culture, Jang Mi-ran, who was in Paris, said IOC President Thomas Bach planned to speak with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol to convey an apology.

"It was clearly deeply regrettable and we apologise wholeheartedly," IOC spokesperson Mark Adams told a press conference on Saturday.

South Korea's National Olympic Committee immediately referred the incident to the Games' organisers and requested that the error will not be repeated.

South Korea's delegation includes 143 athletes competing in 21 events. North Korea, which is returning to the Games for the first time since Rio 2016, has sent 16 athletes.

China's teen duo grabs FIRST GOLD

REUTERS, *Chateauroux*

Social media-savvy teenaged duo Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao upheld a Chinese shooting tradition as they won the first gold of the Paris Olympics in the 10 metres air rifle mixed team event on Saturday.

Chinese shooters have claimed their country's first gold of the Games more times than athletes in any other sport and that trend continued with Huang and Sheng triumphing at the Chateauroux Shooting Centre.

Their 16-12 win, quelling a late challenge from the South Korean pair of Keum Ji-hyeon and Park Ha-jun, ensured China remain the only country to win the gold in the mixed team event introduced in Tokyo three years ago.

Three years after China's Yang Qian and Yang Haoran won the gold in Tokyo, reigning world champions Huang and Sheng topped the qualifying round ahead of their Korean rivals to signal their intent.

The gold medal contest was not really a cakewalk though despite them racing to a 14-8 lead after the 11th round.

Keum and Park staged a late comeback to reduce the gap at 14-12 but the Chinese pair prevailed in the end.

Huang said she was jittery when the Koreans started breathing down their neck.

"I was quite tense to be honest," said the 17-year-old, whose puppy hair-clips are quite popular among her social media fans back home.

Huang and Sheng will be gunning for a second gold in Paris but said the team event result would have no bearing on their individual rifle competitions.

Argentina's Ezequiel Fernandez celebrates with teammates after putting the game to bed in the 84th minute in a 3-1 win against Iraq in a Group B fixture at the Lyon Stadium in Decines-Charpieu yesterday. The victory helped Argentina men's team bounce back from the emotional blow suffered in a defeat against Morocco under controversial circumstances in their 2024 Paris Olympics campaign opener.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

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POST-VIOLENCE CRACKDOWN

Over 8,000 held in 10 days

726 arrested in 36hrs; students detained despite promise of not being harassed

STAR REPORT

At least 726 more people were arrested in the capital and elsewhere in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday as the nationwide crackdown against protesters and opposition parties continues.

They were arrested in cases filed over the recent violence across the country.

Over 8,000 people, including many BNP and Jamaat leaders, were arrested in 553 cases in 42 districts, including Dhaka, over the last 10 days.

Of them, 5,514 people were held outside the capital.

So far, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested 2,536 people in 207 cases filed with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson, said said KN Roy Niyati, additional deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

Of them, 252 were arrested yesterday, he added.

According to court documents, 153 people, including several BNP and Jamaat leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, in 51 cases yesterday.

Between 6:00am Thursday and 6:00pm yesterday, 466

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A deserted platform of Kamalapur Railway Station as train services across the country remain suspended since July 18 due to violence. The railway authorities said a decision on resumption of services may be taken within a day or two. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Office time 9 to 3, curfew pause 7am to 6pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended curfew pauses and office hours for three days from today.

Public and private offices will be open for six hours from 9:00am to 3:00pm, which was 11:00am to 3:00pm last week.

However, banks will open at 10:00am and transactions will conclude at 3:00pm. The banks will stay open till 3:30pm.

The curfew pauses in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Narsingdi will be for 11 hours from 7:00am.

After Tuesday, the office schedule will be fixed again.

Following the quota reform protests that later turned violent, the government imposed curfew and deployed armed forces on July 19 night.

Government offices reopened on a limited scale on Wednesday after a three-day (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday) general holiday.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal last night said district magistrates and police commissioners will fix the curfew time of the districts under their jurisdictions.

Webb discovers 'super-Jupiter' exoplanet

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A "super-Jupiter" giant exoplanet has been discovered orbiting a nearby star.

The observed exoplanet – a planet outside the solar system – is very bright and cold, with a mass more than six times that of Jupiter.

The detection is unusual in several ways, including that it shows the first exoplanet imaged with the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) that had not already been imaged from the ground.

It is also much colder than the gas planets JWST has studied so far.

The planet, named Eps Ind Ab, revolves around the main component of the nearby triple star system Epsilon Indi, or Eps Ind for short, which is only 12 light years from Earth. It needs around 200 years to orbit its star.

Elisabeth Matthews, a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy in Heidelberg, Germany, one of the authors of the paper, said: "We were excited when we realised we had imaged this new planet.

"To our surprise, the bright spot that appeared in our MIRI (Mid-Infrared Instrument) images did not match the position we were expecting for the planet.

"Previous studies had correctly identified a planet in this system but underestimated this super-Jupiter gas giant's mass and orbital separation."

Vacate southern Khan Younis areas

Israeli military tells Gaza civilians ahead of new ops; 30 Palestinians killed in strike on school

REUTERS, *Jerusalem*

The Israeli military yesterday told Palestinians to temporarily evacuate southern neighbourhoods of Gaza's Khan Younis region so it could "forcefully operate" there, telling them to relocate to a humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi.

The fighting underlined the difficulty the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) has in eliminating fighters of the Hamas group amid continued resistance.

On Friday, the military said troops battled Palestinian fighters in Khan Younis, a city in the south of the enclave, and destroyed tunnels and other infrastructure, as they sought to suppress small Hamas units that have continued to hit troops with mortar fire.

Palestinian official media said that at least 14 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks in Khan Younis since dawn yesterday and that their bodies were brought to Nasser Medical Complex.

In the west of Gaza's Deir al-Balah, at least 30 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack on a school housing displaced people, Gaza's Civil Defence service said.

More than 39,258 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli strikes in the enclave, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not distinguish between fighters and non-combatants. The toll includes 83 deaths in 48 hours.

The military said yesterday its calls to evacuate were communicated to the population via several mediums in order to mitigate danger to civilians.

- Heavy battles continue around Khan Younis areas
- CIA chief to meet Israeli, Qatari, Egyptian officials for talks
- Death toll in enclave now 39,258

UN and humanitarian officials accuse Israel of using disproportionate force in the offensive, which it denies.

CIA Director William Burns will meet this weekend in Rome with his Israeli and Egyptian counterparts and Qatar's prime minister for talks on a ceasefire and the release of hostages by Hamas, a source familiar with the matter said on Friday.

The source, who requested anonymity, said Burns would meet Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and the Egyptian and Israeli intelligence chiefs today.

The CIA declined to comment. The meeting was first reported by Axios.

It comes as Israel seeks changes to a plan for a truce in Gaza and the release of hostages by Hamas, complicating a final deal to halt more than nine months of offensive that has devastated the enclave, according to a Western official, a Palestinian and two Egyptian sources.

In a separate development, US President Joe Biden and Jordan's King Abdullah discussed efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza during a call on Friday, the two sides said.

In a statement, the White House said Biden briefed Abdullah on "preparations for a surge in humanitarian assistance during a ceasefire period."

They also discussed reforms to the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and ensuring it has access to revenue, the White House said.

Jordan's royal palace said the two men discussed what it described as the "dangerous developments in Gaza".

Ensure inquiry into killings

140 scholars, writers, intellectuals urge UN rights chief on recent violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

More than 140 scholars, writers, and public intellectuals from across the world have urged the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk to press for an independent inquiry into the brutal killing and injuring of students and other protesters in Bangladesh.

> **Draconian measures such as arbitrary arrests and detention without show cause notice, denial of the right to be represented by a lawyer, infliction of injuries, and torture on the arrested call for immediate action to stop these blatant violations of human rights.**

"As a group of scholars affiliated with universities and other educational institutions around the world, we write to express our grave concern about the brutal killing and injuring of students and others taking part in public protests, which not only violates the fundamental right to protest in a democracy but also makes a mockery of the right to life guaranteed under Article 32 of Constitution of Bangladesh," they said in the open letter.

Indian writer Amitav Ghosh put the letter up on his X account yesterday, saying they are signing the letter in view of the fact that the government appears to be paying no heed to the various appeals against continuing repression, including the strong appeal made by the UN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

RECENT VIOLENCE

Two more injured die

Death toll now 162

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, who were injured during the recent clashes between agitators and law enforcers, have died.

Yeamin Chowdhury, a 19-year-old garment worker, died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Abdul Majeed, 20-year-old transport worker, died at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

With their deaths, at least 162 lives have been lost in the violence since July 16.

Yeamin, of Kishoreganj, who sustained bullet wounds in the capital's Badda on July 19, died around 11:00am yesterday at the DMCH, according to hospital records.

Majeed, who suffered shotgun pellet injuries during clashes related to the quota reform protests in Chandpur district, died on Thursday noon at the CMCH, confirmed the hospital's Director Brigadier General Taslim Uddin to The Daily Star.

Majeed of Khagrachhari was shot on July 18. He had been undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care of Unit of the CMCH since July 20.

An injured Palestinian man covers his face as another walks with him at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mobile internet may be restored by tomorrow

Says Palak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government officials and mobile network operators will meet today to discuss restoring mobile internet, which has been switched off by the government for almost 10 days now.

"After discussing with the operators, we are trying to reopen the mobile 4G network by tomorrow [Sunday] or the day after," said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for telecom and ICT, yesterday.

The government can resume mobile internet within hours if it wants, according to industry insiders who spoke to The Daily Star on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The telecom sector has suffered physical damage amounting to Tk 500 crore and an additional Tk 500 crore in lost revenue due to the ongoing unrest, Palak said.

He was delivering a speech during the inauguration of the 'Trees for Peace' programme, in which 100,000 tree saplings will be planted to celebrate the birthday of Sajeeb Wazed, information and communication technology affairs adviser to the Prime Minister.

"The government hasn't shut down the internet. The shutdown was due to the optical fibre cable connecting Dhaka-Chattogram being torched by miscreants and fire that made the data centres non-operational," he added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

FINESSE IN KITCHEN SINK
ROSA
BEYOND BEAUTY

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW
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SECOND EDITION
DHAKA MONDAY JULY 29, 2024
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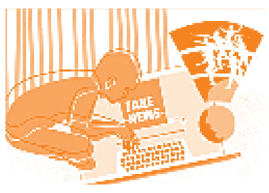
Sri Lanka break India's dominance
P11



Internet shutdown sets a dangerous precedent
P9

Responsibility lies squarely with the govt
P8

They are more than just numbers
P3

CASES AFTER VIOLENCE

Over 2 lakh accused in Dhaka city

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI *and* **TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY**

Over 2.13 lakh people, most of them unnamed, are accused in around 200 cases filed with police stations in the capital over the recent violence centring the quota reform movement.

Almost all the cases were filed by police, and in at least 16 of them, between 5,000 and 10,000 people have been accused, records show.

Law enforcers have arrested over 2,500 people, including political leaders, activists and students, in the last 12 days in different parts of the city, according to the court documents.

However, the actual numbers of cases and arrests could be much higher and are likely to rise further as law enforcers continue to raid different neighbourhoods in the capital.

The country witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale over the last week. The peaceful demonstrations turned deadly on July 15 when Chhatra League attacked the protesting students on different university campuses.

In the following days, violence escalated in Dhaka and elsewhere, leaving at least 162 dead as per The Daily Star data. However, the death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

- 229 cases filed so far in Dhaka city alone
- 2.13 lakh accused in 178 cases
- Most of the accused are unnamed
- 2,506 arrestees produced before court

Also, many families reportedly took the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

According to Prothom Alo, at least 210 people were confirmed dead as of yesterday.

The government is trying to bring the situation under its control by imposing night-time curfews, deploying army across the country, and carrying out raids.

Meanwhile, rights activists, family members of those arrested or injured, and political parties are decrying law enforcers' high-handedness and misuse of power. The government maintains that the cases are based on specific evidence.

CASES FILED IN CAPITAL

Dhaka Metropolitan Police filed 229 cases with 50 police stations as of yesterday.

This newspaper has so far been able to get documents related to 178 cases filed since July 17. The number of accused in these cases is 2,13,834. Of them, only 1,310 were named.

It is not known how many people are accused in the remaining 51 cases.

The unnamed accused leaves room for the law enforcers to arrest anyone they want.

Police had not mentioned any name or number of accused in 60 cases, and in at least two, 10,000 unnamed people were accused.

One of the two cases was filed with Badda Police Station on July 18 over violence near Brac University in Merul Badda area.

The other one was filed with Lalbagh Police Station on July 21 over violence in Azimpur. The accused are unnamed BNP-Jamaat activists.

The Metro rail authorities filed a case against 9,000 unnamed people in connection with vandalism at Mirpur-10 metro station on July 19.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PHOTO: **SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM**

Jhunu Begum, 65, wailing in front of a Narayanganj court moments after her grandson, 19-year-old mason Arif Hossain, was taken away in a prison van. Jhunu was pleading to the police that her grandson was innocent and that he was not involved in politics. Arif was picked up from his Parameshwardi home in Narayanganj on July 23 following the recent violence.

Those involved in the killings will be brought to justice: PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday vowed to bring those responsible for the recent violence during the quota reform protest to book.

"My effort will be to find those involved in these murders. They must be punished," she said.

The premier made the remarks while handing over financial assistance to the families of 34 victims, including Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayeed, who lost their lives in the violence, at the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina, also chief of the ruling Awami League, sought help of people in identifying the perpetrators. "I need [your] help too. If you know anything, please tell us."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

From 'DB office', 6 organisers lift protest programme

One more organiser 'picked up by DB'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six organisers of the quota reform protest, who are in custody of the Detective Branch of police, yesterday announced the withdrawal of their protest programmes apparently from the DB office on Minto Road in the capital.

Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers, along with five other coordinators made the announcement via video message, which was distributed to media outlets from the DB office.

Nahid was seen reading out a statement last night, minutes after a photo posted by Harun or Rashid, chief of the DMP's detective branch, on Facebook that showed them having food with Harun in a room apparently at the DB office.

The Daily Star could not reach Nahid despite repeated calls to his phone.

"Many people were unexpectedly injured and killed due to the quota

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

WHO CAN PROVIDE MORE SECURITY THAN THE FAMILY? -- PAGE 3

PROTEST COORDINATORS

Detention by DB unconstitutional

Say legal experts, academician

ASHUTOSH SARKAR *and* **MD ABBAS**

The Detective Branch's picking up of key coordinators of the quota reform protest "for the sake of security" is unconstitutional, said two legal experts and an academician.

They heavily criticised the move while talking to The Daily Star. However, a Supreme Court lawyer said such move could be made "considering the prevailing situation".

The DB picked up six coordinators of quota reform protest, including Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, over the last three days.

At a press briefing at the DB headquarters yesterday, its chief Harun-or-Rashid said they took the coordinators into their custody "to prevent any harm to students or the protest", reports UNB.

ZI Khan Panna, a Supreme Court lawyer, said according to the Appellate Division's guidelines in detention and remand-related cases, if anybody is detained or arrested, he or she must be informed about the reason within three hours of detention.

Their nominated lawyers and parents must be allowed to meet them and be produced before the nearby magistrate's court within 24 hours after the detention, he said.

"The law enforcers kept protesting students detained in violation of the Supreme Court guidelines and the relevant provisions of the law and constitution," said Panna, also a human rights activist.

Jyotirmoy Barua, another SC lawyer, said there are no laws in the country under which anyone can be arbitrarily picked up.

"There is no terminology for picking up someone to provide security. Picking up someone is abduction, and abduction is a criminal offence. If they [police] want to arrest anyone, they have to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

70 pellets in 16-year-old student's body

Father claims police unjustly killed his son

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Khalid Hasan

It was around 5:30pm on July 18. Khalid Hasan, a first-year student of Ideal College in Dhanmondi, was heading back to his Amligola home in Lalbagh after offering Asr prayers at the Azimpur Government Staff Quarter mosque.

As he took a few steps, the 16-year-old saw a group of protesters rushing inside the colony and scatter.

Puzzled, Khalid stood there for a few moments in his attempt to figure out what was going on.

But police personnel appeared out of nowhere and started firing indiscriminately.

Khalid along with three to four others was shot. Khalid died instantly. His body had at least 70 shotgun pellet wounds in the tummy and chest.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

QUOTA PROTESTS

Govt puts death toll at 147 so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 147 people have so far lost their lives in the recent violence over the quota reform protests, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

The victims include students, people from various professions, police personnel, Awami League leaders and activists, said the home minister during a press meet at the secretariat while revealing the first official death toll.

"We have a list of those who lost their lives in the violence. Our investigation is on. If we get news of one or two more, we will include them [in the list]," said Asaduzzaman Khan.

The home minister said they are putting the death toll forward to quash any confusion.

According to The Daily Star database, at least 162 lives have been lost in the violence since July 16.

However, the overall death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Makbul Hossain, father of Abu Sayed who was killed in police firing in Rangpur during the quota reform protest, meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: **PID**

Dhaka eateries crying out for customers

SUKANTA HALDER

Eateries in Dhaka are seeing a substantial drop in takings because of the ongoing unrest and the nationwide curfew.

After a four-day closure, the 25,000-odd eateries in Dhaka started to reopen their shutters and kitchens with the relaxation of the curfew from July 24 and yet, the turnout of customers remains sparse.

Some operators said they are seeing just 10 percent of their usual turnout.

"There is still panic among people -- this is why customer footfall has plummeted," said Shamim Islam Mridha, manager of Yellow Knife Restaurant at the Zoo Road in the capital's Mirpur-1.

The restaurant was empty when the correspondent walked in at 12:20 pm yesterday. Usually, the restaurant has 7 to 10 tables occupied at this hour of the day.

In the same area, an official of a chain restaurant on condition of anonymity said they reopened the outlet on July 25. But receipts have been one-fourth their usual.

Over at Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi, KOI Thé, an outlet serving bubble tea, had only two customers in the afternoon, when it is usually packed with university students.

The branch's daily sales have dropped

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

VIOLENCE OVER QUOTA PROTESTS

Criminals to be tried following due process

Foreign ministry assures int'l community; says innocents won't face harassment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has assured the international community that law enforcement agencies will bring individuals responsible for the recent violence to justice using evidence, without any form of reprisal or harassment against protesting students or innocent civilians.

The law enforcement agencies have been given clear instructions to this end, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement yesterday.

The government is ensuring that due process is followed in guaranteeing accountability and justice for reported terrorist acts and that law enforcement agencies avoid excessive use of force under any circumstances, it stated.

The statement comes after the United Nations (UN), western countries, and global rights bodies condemned the recent violence, encouraged a durable solution to the present crisis, and stressed due process in the justice system and upholding fundamental human rights.

As per the home ministry, the death toll in last week's violence reached 147, while according to independent media reports, it was close to 200.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Construction workers, hit by days of unemployment amid the curfew, are whiling away the morning in the Bypass area of Khulna city in the hope of getting hired.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

55 police officers get postings, transfers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major move, the government yesterday transferred and posted 55 police officers including two additional Inspector Generals of Police (additional IGP) and five Additional Deputy Inspector Generals (Additional DIG).

The list also includes 48 officers of the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP).

These transfers and postings were announced through four separate circulars by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

All of these officials got the promotion to supernumerary (officials who hold the same position and perform the same duties after their elevation) a year back. And now, they finally got the regular posting, according to officials of the Police Headquarters.

Among the two additional IGPs, Deputy Inspector General of Police Telecom (promoted to the post of Supernumerary Additional IGP) AKM Shahidur Rahman has been posted as the Additional IGP in the PHQ, and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Over 2 lakh accused

FROM PAGE 1

Another case was filed against 8,000, two cases against 7,000, seven against 6,000, and three against 5,000.

Most of the accused face charges of gathering illegally, rioting, assaulting law enforcers, and damaging properties.

ARRESTS IN DHAKA

Police produced 2,506, including 98 yesterday, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in at least 158 cases between July 17 and July 28.

In 15 cases filed with Jatrabari Police Station, 335 people were arrested. The area saw continuous violence for almost a week starting on July 17.

Mirpur police arrested 168 people under 10 cases while Uttara (east) arrested 164 under 10 cases, Paltan police arrested 145 under eight cases, and Badda police arrested 130 people under four cases.

Mirpur, Uttara, Badda and Paltan areas too witnessed fierce clashes.

Five cases were filed over killing policemen, a student and a police informant. One was filed under Cyber Security Act.

70 pellets

FROM PAGE 1

"The police could have shot my son in the leg. If they did so, he would have lived, even as a cripple. My son was intentionally killed by police," Kamrul Hasan told The Daily Star as tears rolled down his cheeks.

He said as the situation, stemming from the quota protest, was deteriorating, he had asked his son not to go outside.

Khalid would only go out for prayers, he said.

"My son was a threat to no one. He was not involved in the protest. The police unjustly shot my innocent son," said Kamrul, a teacher at a madrasa in Lalbagh.

A witness, who also suffered shotgun pellet injuries close to his eye, said, "Everything happened so fast that we could not fathom what was going on. We were getting out of the colony when the protesters ran inside. Before we could understand anything, a policeman pointed his gun at us and fired."

Some people later took Khalid and him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he said, wishing anonymity fearing reprisal.

Hearing the news, Kamrul went to the DMCH. "I saw my son lying on a bed and blood oozing out of his mouth and nose. My innocent son was dead."

The family's ordeal didn't end there. He said they faced immense difficulties in getting Khalid's body from the hospital morgue.

"At 2:30am on July 20, I went to the Lalbagh Police Station for clearance, without which the hospital authorities would not release the body. The police questioned me and told me to come back at 9:00am," Kamrul told The Daily Star.

"I went again but they did not cooperate. Two days later, they finally gave the clearance, and I received my son's body. During this time, I visited the police station four to five times a day."

Around 4:30pm on July 21, Kamrul received his son's body. Khalid was buried at their family graveyard in Bhadashon village in Faridpur's Bhanga.

Kamrul said, "We had a hope that Khalid [his eldest son] would become a lawyer. Our family is poor, and he wanted to contribute tot he family. Who will I ask for justice now?"

Khalid's mother gave to this correspondent just one line: "They did not let my son live."

Those involved in the killings

FROM PAGE 1

She emphasised that the government would not allow anyone to jeopardise the future of Bangladesh and its people. "We will not allow anyone to play with the fate of Bangladesh, so I need all-out cooperation and assistance from you."

Hasina expressed her determination to prevent such criminal activities from recurring in the country. "I don't know how to console you. But I can understand your pain," she said, addressing the grieving families.

Questioning the motives of the attackers, she asked, "What was the fault of general public? Why they were killed and had to face immense suffering? Killing people to topple the government? How it is possible?"

While trying to console the victims' families, Hasina shared her own losses. "... I am like you: an orphan who has lost parents and brothers. I understand your pain. I will be by your side."

Condemning the brutality of the attacks, she remarked, "Burning down everything is never acceptable. It is unthinkably brutal to hang a person after killing them. How can a Muslim hang the body of another Muslim? Those who are involved in these crimes will surely face trial."

She stressed the need for bringing the culprits to book to ensure the safety of the people. "People cannot be protected unless they are tried."

She urged the victims' families to remain patient. "I am with you as long as I live."

PM VISITS BSMMU, POLICE HOSPITALS

Later in the day, Hasina visited Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and Central Police hospitals to see those who were injured in the violence.

She went to the Central Police Hospital around 5:00pm after visiting BSMMU. She enquired about the health of those undergoing treatment there.

The premier gave necessary instructions to the hospital authorities to ensure their proper treatment.

During her visit to BSMMU in Shahbagh, VC Prof Deen Mohd Noorul Huq and BSMMU Hospital Director Brig Gen Md Rezaur Rahman briefed the prime minister on the treatment measures taken for the injured.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun were among the officials present during her visit to the Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh.

As many as 39 police members are now undergoing treatment at the Central Police Hospital. Three police personnel were killed, and 1,131 others injured in the mayhem.

Hasina also visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Friday and the National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation on Saturday to see the victims of the violence.

From 'DB office'

FROM PAGE 1

reform movement and the situation that arose in its wake. Moreover, there were many incidents of violence, including torching of government buildings. We strongly condemn all these untoward incidents and demand speedy justice through fair investigation," said the statement.

"Our main demand was logical quota reform which has already been fulfilled by the government. Now we strongly urge the government to open educational institutions to ensure a fair environment for education. In the interest of all, we are withdrawing our programmes right now," he said.

On Friday night, Nahid, Asif Mahmud, and Abu Baker Majumder -- three key organisers of the quota reform movement -- were picked up by the DB from a city hospital, where Nahid and Asif were receiving treatment.

The DB on Saturday took two more protest organisers -- Sarjis Alam and Hasnat Abdullah -- into their custody, saying the move was "to ensure their security and to get information about recent incidents".

Protest organiser Nusrat Tabassum, a student of political science at Dhaka University, was picked up from her cousin's home in Mirpur early yesterday.

She was seen in the photo posted by Harun and also alongside Nahid in the video message.

Meanwhile, rejecting the statement of the six coordinators, Abdul Kader, another coordinator of Quota reform protest, announced protest rallies across the country today.

Kader via WhatsApp said he strongly condemns the scripted statement of the coordinators made "at the DB office at gunpoint".

Arif

Nusrat

He said they were determined and will remain firm on their demands.

In the meantime, a seventh organiser was also picked up allegedly by DB officers.

Some eight to 10 men in plain clothes, identifying themselves as DB officials, picked up protest organiser Arif Sohel, a student of international relations at Jahangirnagar University, from his home near the campus around 4:00am, said Arif's younger sister Umme Khair Hridi.

"At 3:50am, the group of DB men gathered in front of the house and asked us to open the gate. When my father wanted to know their identities, they said they were DB police and showed their IDs. As we didn't want to open the gate, they threatened to break the gate down. Later we opened it, and they entered and took everyone's phones," Hridi told our Savar correspondent.

"They took some pictures from Arif's computer and then took Arif and my elder brother. They said they would take them to the Ashulia Police Station.

"Later, my elder brother was released in Genda area. But we have not been able to find Arif," she said.

Asked, Riaz Uddin Ahmed Biplab, officer-in-charge of Dhaka district North DB Police, told The Daily Star that no JU leader of quota reform protest was picked up.

Besides, men in plain clothes posing as detectives also detained Asif Mahtab, a former teacher of BRAC University, at his Uttara home early yesterday, his family said.

Shahabur Rahman, father of Asif, went to the DB office on Minto Road yesterday to know the whereabouts of his son.

He said his son was picked up from their Uttara home by a group of people identifying themselves as DB officials early yesterday.

"I want to know where he is. I want to know whether he is still alive," he said.

Detention by DB unconstitutional

FROM PAGE 1

"Only police can arrest someone who is specifically accused in any case or has a warrant or anyone who is a deserter from any force, or is on the run in any case, or an accused of any criminal charges. Except for police, no force has the legal jurisdiction to arrest anyone in any way," he said.

He said there is no law to keep anyone confined to a jail for over 24 hours.

In 2009, the High Court said section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is contradictory to fundamental rights and amended it with 15 directives, mentioning that if police want to arrest anyone on suspicion, they must explain the reason in writing, said the legal expert.

"When police go for any arrest, they will tell the family members from which police station they have come and ask them if they want to talk to any lawyers," Jyotirmoy said.

Plainclothes police now pick up anyone and subsequently deny family members from any contact with them, he added.

"We never heard that people were picked up to provide them with security. This is a kind of fallacy. This is a criminal offence."

Veteran SC lawyer and former law minister Shafique Ahmed said the reasons behind such confinement must be known specifically and the protesters could go to the High Court for necessary remedy if they are not satisfied with the reason.

However, senior SC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said the protesters have reportedly been taken into safe custody amid the prevailing situation, which is not illegal or unconstitutional.

"They were not detained or arrested in any case and therefore, there is no need to produce them before any magistrate," he said.

Rushad Faridi, an assistant professor of Dhaka University's economics department, found the DB's rationale for picking them up ridiculous.

"One, who needs security, and his family will decide where he or she will stay for their safety. No force can decide it. What type of security is it to pick up someone who is undergoing treatment at a hospital without the permission of the person and their family?"

"They [government] want to create a reign of terror. It indicates that the authorities will no longer tolerate any such protest in future."

Dhaka eateries crying out for customers

FROM PAGE 1

by 90 percent since it reopened on July 24, said Mohammad Rashedul Islam, team leader of the branch, which was shut from July 18 to July 23.

"A number of our food items have expired due to the six-day closure. As a result, we incurred losses," he added.

Bipu Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Nawabi Voj, which runs four branches in the capital, said the recent unrest could not come at a worse time.

"We have just returned to business after the fire incident on Bailey Road. Business was almost back to normal. Once again, I am counting a big loss," he said.

Customer turnout at Nawabi Voj's four branches started declining on July 15, when the students' quota reform movement picked up pace. The company had to keep its restaurants shut from July 19 to July 25.

After reopening, the chain is seeing just 30 percent of its usual turnout.

"It appears that there is a kind of fear among people," Chowdhury said.

The internet blackout for five days has also robbed them of online sales as the food delivery platforms were off-grid.

Parcel delivery has started by the end of last week as broadband internet service resumed, but business has not been good, he added.

After opening the restaurant on July 25, customer turnout is gradually increasing but it was far from normal, said Sabikoon Nahar, manager of the Saudi Arabian fast food chain Herfy.

Imran Hassan, secretary general of the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association (BROA), demanded the government ensure low-cost loans to help restaurant owners recoup losses and stay afloat.

This is the second big hit to the eateries in Dhaka in 2024 after the government agencies indiscriminately shut down establishments on health and safety grounds following a fire incident in the capital's Bailey Road in February that caused the loss of 46 lives.

The hit to the restaurant business also comes when establishments are struggling with the persistently high inflation for the best part of two years.

Hassan urged the authorities to extend the curfew relaxation period so that the eateries can remain open for longer.

Currently, Bangladesh has 4.81 lakh restaurants, employing 30 lakh people. Overall, two crore people are reliant on the sector, directly and indirectly, according to the BROA.

Stars turn out in droves as Biles dazzles

FROM PAGE 12

of America and we are so proud and excited for them. Let's go USA."

And Biles did not disappoint as she made a stunning return to Olympic competition, powering through left calf pain to get her multiple-medal bid off to a rousing start.

The US superstar, aiming to add to the four gold medals she won in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, tweaked her left calf warming up for her second apparatus, the floor exercise.

It didn't stop her from soaring through her signature Yurchenko double pike vault -- now known as the Biles II -- which even with a big step back on landing earned a 9.4 for execution for a massive total of 15.800 points.

She had another step back landing her second vault, but laughed as she crawled back towards her teammates on her hands and knees.

That was all it took for Biles's coach Cecile Landi to know that for Biles "It's on. It's OK."

Landi, who said Biles aggravated a minor injury she'd been dealing with for a couple of weeks, said there was never any question the superstar gymnast would not continue.

"Never in her mind, no, no. Just no," Landi said, adding that she was also confident Biles would be ready to go for the team final on Tuesday and the individual events to follow.

Landi said Biles was already feeling better by the time she closed out her day by sticking the landing on her uneven bars routine -- receiving another huge ovation and beaming as she shared a dance with teammate Jordan Chiles.

With two of the five qualifying sessions complete Biles topped the all-around standings with 59.566 points.

"It was pretty amazing, 59.5," Landi said. "Not perfect, so she still can improve ... just really good."

Govt puts death toll at 147 so far

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

According to the Prothom Alo, at least 210 people were confirmed dead as of yesterday.

In response to a query, Asaduzzaman stated that the police exhibited maximum restraint and only resorted to using firearms when absolutely necessary.

Asked about the mass arrests over the attacks on government establishments during the violence, he said that "no innocent person" was being arrested.

"The accused are being arrested based on video evidence. We will definitely identify those responsible and bring them to book. We will not spare anyone," he said.

Asked about arrests of children in block raids, the minister, "Did children take to the street for violence? There is information about using teen gangs in exchange for money in this work (violence)," he said.

পূবালী ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং
শরী'আহ্ ভিত্তিক ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা
AAA Rated Bank
পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.
Open your Account from anywhere
PI Banking - a Pubali Bank apps
Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches

Our society needs radical change: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said a radical change needs to be brought to the society as unexpected incidents are taking place.

"State properties are being damaged mindlessly. A policeman was killed and kept hanging. Can you imagine how brutal it is? On the other hand, police reportedly did not hesitate to shoot a person even when he was dying. The people of this country do not respect the police like that in the past."

"Our teachers are divided on party lines. Teachers motivate students while politicians incite... Who will they learn from? We have to make drastic changes in our society," said the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu.

The court made the comments while hearing a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer JR Khan

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Sitting on his rickshaw, a man looks at his smartphone, finally able to experience the internet again after mobile data connections were restored yesterday. While broadband was restored on July 23, a large number of internet users, who rely on mobile data service, remained disconnected until last afternoon. The photo was taken on Fuller Road.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Jamaat-Shibir intruded into quota protests

PM tells Spanish envoy

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said "Jamaat-Shibir terrorists" initially kept a low profile within the quota reform protests and later emerged on the frontlines dangerously.

She made the remarks during a meeting with Spanish Ambassador to Bangladesh Gabriel Maria Sistiaga Ochoa de Chinchetru at Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary M Nayeemul Islam Khan briefed reporters after the meeting.

The prime minister accused them of attacking structures symbolising the government's achievements.

"All of our development symbols, which gave comfort and convenience to the masses, became their targets of destruction," she said.

Regarding the army's role in handling the situation, Hasina praised their patience and restraint.

She also mentioned that 21 Awami League members were killed in the unrest. Irrespective of party affiliation, the PM said she is helping all who

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

More than just NUMBERS

A 14-year-old boy shot and killed in Savar. A 22-year-old Chittagong University student died from bullet wounds at DMCH. A 27-year-old car driver fatally shot in Dhaka. At least 162 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters during the recent unrest. But these victims are not just statistics; they are sons, husbands, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.

How will I raise our son alone?

Asks wife of Mamun who was shot in Mohakhali

ANWARUL HAIDER *and* **NILIMA JAHAN**

The air in the home of 27-year-old private car driver Mamun Hossain is thick with grief following his tragic death on July 19.

He left behind his grieving parents, his wife Sultana Rahman, and their three-and-a-half-year-old son Musab Hasan.

Mamun, from Jalial village in Noakhali's Binodpur, was fatally shot on the Mohakhali flyover while heading back to his home from his aunt's residence in Shaheenbag, Dhaka.

The bullet hit his back and pierced through his stomach, leaving him unconscious and bleeding profusely.

Locals rushed him to a nearby hospital, which then referred him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

As DMCH was filled to the brim with other bullet-hit patients, they had to take him to another hospital in Mohakhali. He died around 3:30am the next day.

Mamun's father, Abdul Mateen, is a driver by profession, as are three of his four sons, who live in the Mohakhali area of the capital.

"My son was innocent, a hardworking man trying to support his family. He was walking home because he couldn't find any transport on the road. But he was shot down like an animal. We demand justice and support for his son's future."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Why did cops shoot my boy? He was only 14

Says father of Saad who was killed in Savar

ZAHANGIR SHAH, *Manikganj*

It was around 6:30pm on July 20 when 14-year old Saad Mahmud was fatally shot during a clash between the law enforcers and quota reform protesters.

Saad was playing with his cousin on the roof of a rented house in the Shahibagh area in Savar.

From the rooftop, he noticed smoke on nearby Chapain Road.

Driven by curiosity, he went to the New Market side of the road, where he was caught in police firing and sustained serious injuries, as per witnesses.

He succumbed to his wounds on the way to Enam Medical College Hospital.

With tears in his eyes, Saad's father, Bahadur Khan, recalled the incident at their village home in Manikganj's Singair yesterday afternoon.

"No one's son should die from police firing like mine. I will never get my child back," he said, tears streaming down his face.

Originally from Dhalla Khanpara village in Singair upazila, Manikganj, Bahadur had moved to Savar for his children's education.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dreams dashed by a bullet

CU student Hridoy dies of bullet wounds at DMCH

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

Hridoy Chandra Taruya, a 22-year-old student from Chittagong University, dreamed of becoming a BCS cadre after completing his education.

He joined the recent protests with hopes of eradicating what he has perceived as the discriminatory quota system in the civil service entrance exam.

However, Hridoy's life was tragically cut short on July 18 after a bullet pierced through his back during clashes between protesters, law enforcers, and Chhatra League.

He was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital first, then to a local private hospital and finally to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after his condition kept deteriorating.

Then, he succumbed to his injuries at DMCH on July 23, five days after being shot during the protest in Chattogram.

His untimely death has devastated his family, who had pinned their hopes on him leading the family after securing a good job.

On Tuesday night, July 26, Hridoy's body was cremated at his village in Patuakhali.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

There was conspiracy to occupy Gono Bhaban

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants had a plan to occupy the Gono Bhaban like protesters occupied the Sri Lankan prime minister's office in 2022, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

However, the curfew announcement derailed their plan, he added.

Quader made the remarks while addressing a programme held at the Dhaka district Awami League office in Tejgaon.

He also said the government needed to verify whether certain individuals, including Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, had any connection with the quota reform protests and the recent violence.

Who can provide more security than the family?

Questions Nahid's mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Momtaz Nahar, mother of Nahid Islam, one of the key coordinators of quota reform protests, yesterday questioned the move by authorities of picking up the organisers one by one on the grounds of "providing security".

"Who can provide more security than the family?" she said replying to a query of a journalist at Minto Road when Nahid's family went to the DB office to see him. However, they were not allowed to meet him, she said.

A day before, detectives picked up three organisers, including Nahid, from a city hospital and yesterday DB took more two organisers into their custody "to ensure their security".

"We came [here] to meet my son. But we were not allowed. DB did not allow us to enter the office. Not only us, even Nahid's teachers were not allowed to meet him. I want to see my son. He must be returned to me safely," Nahid's mother said.

"I have not been able to contact Nahid since he was picked up. He was picked up for a second time... This time from a hospital. Nahid's physical condition is not good. I want the release of all [quota protest coordinators], who have been detained, including my child," Momtaz said.

Ensure justice for all deaths

Demands Sector Commanders Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sector Commanders Forum, Liberation War '71 yesterday demanded justice for every murder and damage to government properties through an acceptable investigation.

In a statement, they called for the reopening of all educational institutions as soon as possible.

They also urged the students to provide all-out support to the government to ensure normalcy at educational institutions, as the government has already met their original demand.

They said the damaged government properties do not belong to any party or government; rather, they are the property of the country's people.

Students' protest for quota reform has caused major changes in the country, which was spontaneous and, at the same time, a wake-up call for the future, the statement says.

"A huge number of people, including freedom fighters, realised the fairness of the movement. But the most unfortunate thing is that the movement turned violent due to the involvement of anti-government groups, especially anti-Liberation War people," said the statement.

"This is why the movement moved away from its real character and resorted to serious violence, which was very unfortunate," it added.

On one side, a large number of people died and got injured, and on the other side, huge government properties have been damaged, it said.

"It should be remembered that the freedom fighters did not sacrifice their lives for any quota or their own interests. The freedom fighters are the architects of the national flags that protesters carried," the statement added.

"Freedom fighters fought against Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators. So, the situation became complicated when religious fundamentalist groups got involved in the movement," it also said.

The statement was signed by Sector Commanders Forum's Executive President Md Nurul Alam, Vice Presidents M Hamid and AKM Sahidul Haq, Secretary General Harun Habib, Joint Secretary General Abdul Mabud, Organising Secretary Ansar Ali Khan, alongside freedom fighters Shahjahan Mridha Benu, Dr Amzad Hossain, and Maj Gen (retd) Mohammad Ali Shikdar.

Jamaat-Shibir

FROM PAGE 3

were affected.

Addressing the demands of the quota reform protesters, she pointed out that the quota system was not in effect at the height of the protests due to a Supreme Court status quo. "What would be the logical basis of their demand at that time?" she questioned.

The prime minister assured that the government is taking effective steps to support the families of those killed and injured, including financial assistance and free medical treatment.

Ambassador Chinchetru appreciated the military deployment and curfew imposed to maintain peace and prosperity. "Everything is gradually improving now," he noted, according to PM's press secretary.

Boatmen in Barishal are counting losses as their engine-driven trawlers remain anchored on the bank of the Kirtankhola river amid the ongoing curfew. However, with the curfew being relaxed for longer hours, things are slowly returning to normal. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

Soaring veggie prices leave people in a pickle

MINTU DESHWARA, *Moulvibazar*

Prices of vegetables have surged sharply over the past one week in markets across Moulvibazar due to a shortage of vehicles for transporting the produce amid the ongoing nationwide curfew, as well as potential price manipulation by traders.

For instance, price of potato has gone up by Tk 60-65 per kilogramme from around Tk 50 per kg last week.

Visiting the Moulvibazar TCB market and Paschimbazar kitchen market yesterday, this correspondent observed that even though different vegetables are in adequate supply, the prices are significantly higher compared to the previous week.

At the markets, the prices per kg for vegetables were as follows: green chilli Tk 400-450, carrot Tk 150-180, tomato Tk 180-200, brinjal Tk 80-100, potato Tk 100-120, coriander Tk 200-300, bitter gourd Tk 100-150, cucumber Tk 100-120, taro roots Tk 100-120, and yard bean Tk 120-140.

Also, gourds were being sold at Tk 100-120 each, and pumpkin at Tk 80-100 per kg.

"After eight days of unrest and curfew, I returned to work yesterday and earned Tk 700. Earlier, I had to borrow money to put food on the plate for my family. Now with this meager Tk 700, do I pay back the loan or buy vegetables? How are we, marginalied people, going to survive if the scenario continues like this?" said Kutub Uddin, 45, a mason from Chandni-Ghat area.

Sohodeb Biswas, a shopper, alleged that traders are hiking prices to take advantage of the ongoing situation in the country, and called for intervention from the authorities concerned.

"We are being compelled to either purchase vegetables at the inflated prices, or return home empty handed," said Shamsul Haque, another shopper.

Traders like Sajjadul Hasan and Anwar Hossain cited logistical issues, such as a lack of vehicles, and prevailing market conditions as reasons for the high prices.

Contacted, Md Abdul Haque, additional deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, said the administration will launch market monitoring drives to ensure price stability and prevent unjustified hike.

Bamboo fish traps in high demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Faridpur*

Nearly 50 families at Bokali village in Faridpur Sadar upazila have been earning their livelihood by making "polo", a bamboo-made traditional fishing traps, for years.

Usually, the demand for bamboo-made traps peaks during monsoon.

During a recent visit to Bokali, a village locally known as Pologram, which is located 6 kilometres from Faridpur town, this correspondent saw people from different age groups, including children, were busy making polos with slits on their courtyards.

Of them, some were seen slicing bamboo, some were peeling those while others were engaged in making polos of different sizes.

Crafted with locally sourced bamboo, this trap is an ingenious and sustainable tool used in traditional fishing practice.

Unlike fishing nets which catch fish indiscriminately, the "polo" allows small and juvenile fish to escape its perforations, while leaving only larger, matured fish to be caught inside the trap. As such, it does not adversely affect fish populations in the waterbodies.

One of the elderly residents of the village Sheikh Asgor said, "My father Seikh Lalu was one of the pioneers in the village, who took polo making as profession."

PHOTO: **STAR**

Sheikh Idris makes fishing tools with bamboo strips at his Bokali village home in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

"Earlier, I used to pull rickshaw-van. But I started making polo nearly 25 years ago for a better living as I was struggling to maintain my family with the poor income," he added.

Homamaker Rabeya Khatun said, "I came to this village about 45 years ago and since then I have been witnessing that most of the villagers are involved in polo making."

"Gradually, I learnt the method from my mother-in-law and now I am earning Tk 10,000 to Tk 12,000 by selling polo each month," Rabeya said.

Another polo artisan, Sheikh Habi of the village said, "You will hardly find anyone at the village who is not involved in this job."

Jasim Sheikh, a polo vendor at Faridpur town, said he has been buying polos from Bokali village for the last five years as the quality of the item is very good.

"I buy at least 800 to 1,000 pieces of the traditional fishing tool from the village every month," Jasim said.

Garda Union Parishad Chairman MR Haque said polo making has become a heritage of Bokali village and locals feel proud as people from different areas visit the village to buy polos.

Dreams

FROM PAGE 3

The family's only son, Hridoy, leaves behind his father Ratan Chandra Tarua, mother Archana Rani, and elder sister Mitu Rani.

"My son was studying very hard. I had many dreams about him. After completing his education, he was supposed to get a good job and take care of our family. But that dream ended with one shot. All hope was burned to ashes in the cremation fire," said his father Ratan.

Hridoy's mother, Archana Rani, devastated by the news, demanded justice and capital punishment for her son's killers.

"Why and who killed my son? I want proper justice for this killing."

Friends described Hridoy as a talented student, having achieved GPA-5 in both secondary and higher secondary examinations. He was a third-year student of History at Chittagong University.

His sister, Mitu Rani, recalled Hridoy's last visit home before Pahela Baishakh.

"He asked our parents to trust him and promised to support us with a good job. We had many dreams about my only brother, but he is gone," said Mitu.

How will I raise

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, Sultana, his wife, said, "Mamun called to check on us that afternoon and said he would call back again. I never imagined those would be his last words. How will I raise our son alone?" she asked, recalling the last conversation with her husband.

Fatema Begum, Mamun's mother, is equally grief-stricken. "Why was my innocent son killed? Who will take responsibility of my grandson?" she cried.

"Looking at this little boy breaks my heart. Who will he call father now?"

Why did cops shoot

FROM PAGE 3

An expatriate in South Africa, he rented a house in Shahibagh.

Saad was the only son among three children. His eldest daughter, Taslima Khanam Nazneen, 20, is a second-year honors student in the Pharmacy Department at Savar's Gonoshasthaya University.

His youngest daughter, Afroza Khanam Nusrat, 8, and Saad were both students at Jabale Noor Dakhil Madrasa in Shahibagh.

When entering their village home around 1:00pm yesterday, Saad's father was seen sitting on a chair in the yard. Saad's grandfather, Amjad Hossain Khan, 85, a former president of the upazila Krishak League, sat next to him.

Bahadur recounted the tragic events, saying, "I went to the road without seeing my son on the rooftop. I saw his favourite shoes on the road and rushed to the hospital, where I found him dead. There was a large bullet hole in his left thigh. My son had committed no crime. Why did the police shoot my child, he was only 14?"

Saad's mother, Halima Akhter, fell ill from grief and could not speak. She remained silent and bedridden.

Relatives reported that Saad's body was brought to their village home that day. He was buried in the central cemetery in Dhalla village the following morning.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 29

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

কমার্শিয়াল স্পেস বিক্রয়

ধানমন্ডি ৩নং মিরপুর রোডে কর্নার প্লট ৫টি পার্কিং ও লিফট সুবিধাসহ ৫ম তলায় ব্যবহারাধীন ১৫,৫০০ বর্গফুট কমার্শিয়াল স্পেস বিক্রয় হইবে। শুধু প্রকৃত ক্রেতাগন সকাল ১০টা হইতে বিকাল ৬টার মধ্যে যোগাযোগ করুন।

মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১৫-০১২৬০২, ০১৮১৯-২১৫৯৩৩

Consultancy Opportunities

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites applications from interested **CONSULTANT TO REVIEWING THE EXPATRIATES' WELFARE AND OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT POLICY 2016 AND DRAFTING RECOMMENDATIONS**. The Terms of Reference (ToR) can be downloaded from the ***United Nations Global Market Place (UNGM)*** at **https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/241845**

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Monday, August 19, 2024, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Department of Public Health Engineering
Kishoreganj District, Kishoreganj.
Web-www.dphe.gov.bd

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

Invitation for e-Tender

Memo- 46.03.4800.061.07.040.19-131 Date: 28-07-2024

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3	Project/Program Name	Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4)
4	Tender IDs	**1004289, 1004290, 1004291, 1004292 & 1004293.**
5	**Description of Works :** Construction of 2 storied RCC WASH Block having 2 storied foundation at Cyclone/Flood Shelter including all associated construction, sanitary, plumbing & electrical works at different Upazila of Kishoreganj District under Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4).	
6	This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in website : **www.eprocure.gov.bd**	
7	Tel. No. -02-997761178 ee.kishoreganj@dphe.gov.bd	২৮.০৭.২৪ **(Engr. Mahbubur Rahman)** **Executive Engineer, DPHE,** **Kishoreganj District.**

GD-81

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room -919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

" শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরে উন্নতি"
আমাদের ঢাকা আমাদের ঐতিহ্য

"e-Tender Notice" (Corrigendum-01)

e-tender are invited in e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl	Tender ID, Ref No	Description of items	Start Date & Time	Last Selling Date and Time		Tender Closing Date & Time	
				Previous	Amended	Previous	Amended
01	**Tender ID: 1001645** Ref. No. 46.207.014.09.10.301. 2024, Date: 27.06.2024	**Works:** Improvement and Construction works of Shahjahanpur Jheel and drainage & streets around Shahjahanpur Jheel (Contract Package: DCNUP/W-13/KB	03-July-2024 16:00 BST	31-July-2024 16:00 BST	11-Aug-2024 16:00 BST	01-Aug-2024 12:00 BST	12-Aug-2024 12:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

25.7.2024
(Rajib Khadem)
Project Director, PIU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-2223350461
e-mail: pddcnupdscc24@gmail.com

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/৩৮/২০২৪-২০২৫

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Mymensingh.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.6100.000.07.002.24-3924 Date :25-07-2024

e-Tender Notice: 01/2024-25

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal(http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of

So. No	Package No & Scheme Name	Tender ID	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing/Opening Date & Time	Tendering Method
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	**LGED/W-3C/Mymensingh-3** Road Rehabilitation Works in Mymensingh District Area R-3 A) Rehabilitation of Fulbaria Mymensingh RHD (Dashmail)-Buraka via Mohammed Nagar GC Road at ch. 00-3965m under Fulbaria Upazila, Dist.- Mymensingh. ID No- 361202002 (Salvage Material Cost: BDT 9,03,313.00) B) Rehabilitation of Durer Khal- Kadomtoli Road at ch. 1120-5300m under Fulbaria Upazila, Dist.- Mymensingh. ID No- 361203005 (Salvage Material Cost: BDT 5,22,917.00) C) Rehabilitation of Assim GC- Boradhoba Ghatial RHD (Uthara UP) Road at ch. 00-7000m under Fulbaria Upazila, Dist.- Mymensingh ID No-361202016 (Salvage Material Cost: BDT 19,28,715.00)	1002655	Date-28-Aug - 2024 Time: 13:00	Date:28-Aug - 2024 Time: 14:00	OTM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted.To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-G P system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The e-Tender Security Submitted last Date & Time from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches respectively. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP hellp desk (helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd)also from E-mail: xen.mymensingh @lged.gov.bd or Cell to 02-996664365.

Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

(Mohammad Anayet Kabir)
Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-996664365
xen.mymensingh@lged.gov.bd

GD- 78

Benazir, family amassed illegal assets worth Tk 43.46cr

Says ACC report to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday submitted a preliminary inquiry report to the High Court, saying former IGP Benazir Ahmed, his wife, and two daughters amassed properties worth Tk 43.46 crore beyond known sources of income and had unusual and suspicious bank transactions.

"From records and information received so far, Benazir Ahmed has movable and immovable assets worth Tk 9.25 crore, his wife Jissan Mirza Tk 21.34 crore, their eldest daughter Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir Tk 8.11 crore, and their second daughter Tahseen Raisa Binte Tk 4.76 crore worth of assets," the report said.

The value of land, houses, flats registered, and other assets have been determined by the government.

Apart from the information on the assets obtained in the initial probe, there is a possibility of having more movable and immovable assets in their names at home and abroad, the ACC report said.

Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan placed the preliminary report before the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadoth Hossain during the hearing of a writ petition.

The bench may pass an order on this matter today, Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md Salahuddin Reagan, the HC bench on April 23 directed the ACC to submit a progress report on the inquiry into reported allegations of corruption against Benazir Ahmed.

3 workers missing after boat capsizes

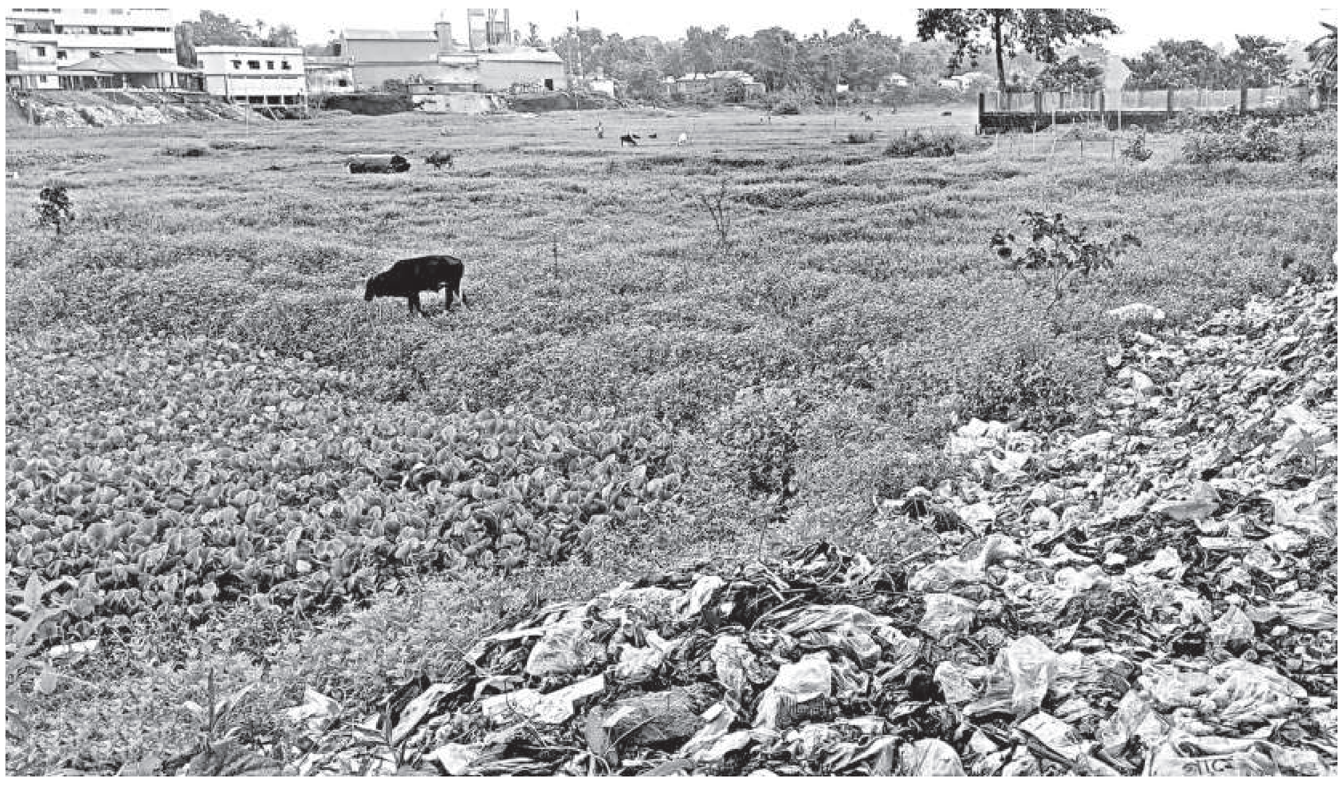
UNB, *Gaibandha*

Three workers -- who went missing in the Teesta river after a boat capsized in Gaibandha's Sundarganj on Saturday afternoon -- were not found as of yesterday morning.

Workers Atwar, Raju and Rashid went missing while dumping cement blocks to prevent river bank erosion on Saturday afternoon.

They remained traceless despite the divers' efforts, said Sundarganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Tariqul Islam.

Eleven other workers, who suffered injuries in the boat capsize incident, were admitted to Gaibandha General Hospital. District Water Development Board Executive Engineer Md Hafizur Haq said at least 30 workers were engaged in dumping blocks to prevent river erosion in the Sreepur area on Saturday afternoon, when the boat capsized.



It's almost impossible to realise this vast field is actually Kharia river. Over the past 20 years, Kharia has become a victim of encroachment and pollution. Due to indifference of the authorities concerned, the river also lost its navigability and remains filled with water hyacinths.

PHOTO: **STAR**

KHARIA RIVER IN MYMENSINGH

No let-up in grabbing, pollution in 20yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

There has been no step taken to save Mymensingh's Kharia river from unabated pollution and encroachment even in 20 years due to indifference of the authorities concerned.

The 25km river is a tributary of Old Brahmaputra, flowing through Phulpur upazila of the district to join Kongsho river in Netrakona, while also connecting to several large local waterbodies including Chitolia Beel, Buiddyar Beel and Kurhar Doba.

"It is frustrating to see the river, once a great source of fish as well as water for irrigation, in such a sorry state. Over the past 20 years, Kharia has become narrow due to illegal grabbing, overgrown with water hyacinths, and filled up with garbage," said ATM Robiul Karim, a local journalist.

Visiting the river recently, this correspondent observed a huge amount of garbage being dumped on the river bank adjacent to Dak Banaglow area near Amuakanda Bazar.

Locals alleged people have been dumping their household garbage, as well as waste from kitchen market on the river bank for past two decades while the municipal authorities turned a blind eye to this menace.

Butchers from Amuakanda Bazar have also been slaughtering animals on the river bank and throwing the animal waste into the river, they also alleged.

Shamu Mia, a butcher at the market, admitted the matter.

As this correspondent inquired more, he came to know that the Phulpur municipality has yet to develop a proper waste management system for its 40,000 residents in the past 23 years since it was established in 2001.

Only a few waste-bins were seen across the municipality area including one adjacent to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex, where medical wastes are being dumped daily and left in the open.

Contacted, Shashadar Sen, mayor of Phulpur municipality, said they are working to contain dumping of wastes on the river bank and into its water.

Regarding allegations of encroachment, the mayor claimed many have taken lease of the river's land from the government.

Dr Md Nazrul Islam, civil surgeon in Mymensingh, said dumping wastes into a river can have serious impact on the environment as well as public health.

Md Habibur Rahman, chairman of Phulpur upazila parishad, said the menace must be stopped immediately to save the river's ecosystem.

Contacted, ABM Ariful Islam, UNO of Phulpur upazila, said several structures from the riverbanks have been removed recently while steps are on to restore the river's natural flow.

Necessary steps would be taken soon against polluters and grabbers, he added.

MORRELGANJ TERMINAL

People suffer as tidal water inundates road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

Even though the situation seems normal most of the time at Morrelganj Ferry Terminal in Bagerhat, during the hours of high tide, the connecting road to the pontoon on its eastern side gets submerged by the rising water of Panguchi river.

As such, passengers and transport workers have been facing difficulties in reaching the ferry to cross the river.

Residents and vehicle drivers have called for immediate steps to elevate the connecting road to alleviate their distress.

"For two-three hours during high tide over the last four days, the connecting road to the terminal's pontoon has been getting inundated, making it difficult for vehicles to board the ferry," said Bhola Das, a pick-up driver.

Kalu Sheikh, a local, said, "Crossing the ferry has become very distressing for us. This needs to be fixed immediately."

According to Abdur Rasid, a local businessman, this is a recurring issue every monsoon but the authorities are yet to address it.

Contacted, Mohammad Farid Uddin, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department in Bagerhat, said elevating the road will not be an effective solution as the water level of the river fluctuates across the year.

"If the connecting road is raised too high, it will create problems for vehicles and pedestrians to board the ferry during low tide. We have to consider both high and low tide scenarios to construct the connecting road and pontoon," he also said.

"However, we will take the necessary steps to alleviate people's sufferings, keeping the technical aspects into consideration," he added.

Our society needs

FROM PAGE 3

Robin, seeking its order on the government to appoint sufficient doctors in prisons.

The HC bench said, "They [doctors] are apparently getting lessons from an ancient period. As a result, they are prescribing antibiotics whenever patients go to them."

The HC directed the DGHS director general to appoint doctors to 20 vacant posts in jails out of 141 within the next one month.

Advocate Tirtha Salil Pal, a lawyer for the DG of the DGHS, told the court that doctors in prisons do not get proper training opportunities. Meanwhile, advocate Shafiqul Islam, who appeared for the inspector general of prisons, said prison doctors face problems in promotion and higher education.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Shariatpur
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.8600.000.07.001.23-1849 Date: 25-07-24

Corrigendum

The Submission and Opening date of Tender Notice No. **63/2023-2024/Tender(OTM)** has been re-scheduled as follows:

SL No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Name of Scheme with Package No.	Old Value	New Value
1	999489	Last Date and Time for Submission Tender Security	29-Jul-2024 16:00	07-Aug-2024 16:00
		Opening Date & Time	30-Jul-2024 12:00	08-Aug-2024 12:00

25-07-24
S. M. Rafeul Islam
Executive Engineer
Tel: 02478815310
E-mail: xen.shariatpur@lged.gov.bd

GD-77

জেলা পরিষদ, কার্যালয়
সিরাজগঞ্জ
www.zpsirajganj.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

স্মারক নং জেপসি/ 202 তারিখ ঃ ২৮/০৭/২৪ খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিনং ০১/২০২৪-২০২৫

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Tender IDNO 1005057, 1005058

This is an online Tender, Where only- Tender will be accpted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP System portal (http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required is required

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' branches according to e-GP tender Notice of these tender up 16.00 PM on 28/07/2024

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk. (helpdesk@ eprocure.gov.bd).

28/7/24
Assistant Engineer
Zila parishad,Sirajgonj
Tel: 0751-62421

GD- 79

"সুস্থ পরিবেশ
স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ"

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়
কক্সবাজার উত্তর বন বিভাগ
http://forestnorth.coxsbazar.gov.bd

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর-০১/(রাজস্ব) অব ২০২৪-২০২৫ তারিখঃ ২৮/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

বনজদ্রব্য বিক্রয়ের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে কক্সবাজার উত্তর বন বিভাগের বিভিন্ন রেঞ্জ, বিট ও চেক ষ্টেশন কর্তৃক জব্দকৃত/ঝড়ে পড়া/থিনিংকৃত/জিম্মায় রক্ষিত/অপ্রধান বিক্রয়যোগ্য বনজদ্রব্য, অংশীদারিত্বের ভিত্তিতে সৃজিত মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ মার্কাকৃত খাঁড়া গাছের লটের বনজদ্রব্য এবং অন্যান্যভাবে আহরিত সকল প্রকার বনজদ্রব্য দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত কাঠ ব্যবসায়ী/সওদাগরের নিকট হতে লটসমূহের নিম্নে বর্ণিত তারিখ সমূহ ও শর্তাধীনে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে সীল্ড টেন্ডার আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। এতদসংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয়াদি অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে অত্র দপ্তর হতে দেখতে ও সংগ্রহ করতে পারবে। সীল্ড টেন্ডারের বনজদ্রব্য ক্রয়ের পূর্বে অব্যশই তা সরেজমিনে দেখে নিতে হবে। দরপত্র দাখিলের পর বনজদ্রব্য না দেখার অজুহাতে কোন প্রকার ওজর আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য বিবেচিত হবে না। পারিপার্শিক অবস্থার প্রেক্ষিতে যে কোন সময় বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা দরপত্রের স্থান, সময় ও তারিখ পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন।

ক্রঃ নং	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র যে সকল স্থানে গ্রহণ করা হবে	বনজদ্রব্যের অবস্থান	মন্তব্য
১	২	৩	৪	৫
১	আগামী ১৪/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ সকাল ৯.০ হতে দুপুর ১.০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় ঐদিন বিকাল ২.৩০ ঘটিকায়	ক) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়। খ) পুলিশ সুপার, কক্সবাজার। গ) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, কক্সবাজার উত্তর বন বিভাগ।	কক্সবাজার উত্তর বন বিভাগাধীন বিভিন্ন রেঞ্জ, বিট ও ষ্টেশনের ডিপো সমূহে।	সীল্ড টেন্ডার জব্দকৃত/ঝড়েপড়া থিনিং হতে প্রাপ্ত অংশীদারিত্বের ভিত্তিতে সৃজিত মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ মার্কাকৃত খাঁড়া গাছের লট এবং অন্যান্যভাবে আহরিত সকল প্রকার বনজদ্রব্য সমূহ।

২৮.০৭.২৪
মোঃ আনোয়ার হোসেন সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
কক্সবাজার উত্তর বন বিভাগ
E-mail: dfocoxsbazarnorth@gmail.com
ফোনঃ ০২৩৩৩৩৪৬৬৫৫

GD- 80

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Keya climbs the ranks on television

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Within just six years of her career, small screen actress Keya Payel has become a household name. To date, she has appeared in over a hundred tele-fictions. Her on-screen chemistry with actors like Apurba, Farhan Ahmed Jovan, and Musfiq Farhan is liked by the audience.

Due to the ongoing violence created during the quota protests, many television and film shootings were halted. Three projects featuring Keya Payel were also postponed. In a conversation with The Daily Star, she shared when she will join the shoots, upcoming ventures, and more.

Due to the ongoing turmoil, shoots were halted. When are you planning to rejoin the shoots?
Three of my projects were disrupted due to the ongoing turmoil in the country. I will join the shoots from July 31, starting with Vicky Zahed's projects and another will be directed by Mohon Ahmed. Both of the shoots will take place outside Dhaka.

In your entire career, you were not seen in more than one television series, why is that?
I was featured in only one television series, ***Joint Family***. Although I got offers for serials, I wanted to focus more on tele-fictions and telefilms only. Working in both serial and one-hour fiction gets tough, thus I prefer to choose one-hour fiction over serials.

You did not appear in OTTs either.
Not that I didn't get offers, however, till now I haven't got a role that has intrigued me. I am waiting for such a story and character – since it really matters how you present yourself on your first outing in a platform. Thus, I am waiting for the perfect opportunity for an OTT debut.

Do you wish to work on the silver screens?
Which actress doesn't? Just a few days ago, I was offered a government-funded film, but the script wasn't up to par. For now, I will keep doing what's going well for me, and look to transition when I have the chance.

You've acted opposite the best that the television industry has to offer. Do you have a favourite co-star?
Funny you should ask, I recently calculated that since I debuted in 2018, I participated in more than 50 tele-fictions with Jovan. I was also in dozens of projects with Apurba *bhai*, Musfiq Farhan, Yash Rohan and Khairul Basar. To be honest, I enjoyed working with all of them, so I don't have a preference!

Do you watch your own tele-fictions?
I do. I try to watch them whenever I have free time. However, I am very critical of my own self, to a fault! I often feel like I can do better, and I try to do that in my projects thereafter.

How do you like to spend your free time?
I love travelling! Whenever I get the opportunity, I pack my bags and go on a trip with the family. Going around the world and meeting new people really opens your eyes to a lot of things, and also tends to give inspiration for new portrayals or characters.

"I try to watch my work whenever I get time. However, I am very critical of my own self, to a fault! I often feel like I can do better, and I try to do that in my projects thereafter."

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Shafin Ahmed's burial scheduled for July 30

Shafin Ahmed's first janaza (funeral prayer) was held at Dar al Noor Islamic Community Mosque in Virginia, on Saturday at 1:00pm (local time).

According to family sources, his body will arrive in Bangladesh today afternoon. His second janaza will be held tomorrow after Zuhr prayers at Gulshan Azad Mosque. He will then be buried at Banani Graveyard.

The musician passed away due to a massive heart attack in a hospital in Virginia, United States, shortly after 6:00am last Thursday (July 25).

Earlier, on July 20, Shafin Ahmed was set to perform at a concert in Virginia, but the event was canceled due to his sudden illness. Later, he was placed on life support and passed away while receiving treatment.

Totini to make web-series debut

Tanjim Saiyara Totini is set to make her web-series debut with the OTT platform Binge.

Confirmed by the actress to Daily Prothom Alo last Friday afternoon, the series is yet to receive a title. However, it will be directed by Sunny Sanwar.

The actress previously ventured into the OTT platform with ***Kolpona***, an episode in the Chorki anthology film ***Ei Muhurte***, which comprises three short films.

The shooting for the series is scheduled to begin on August 5. However, due to ongoing political unrest across the country, this might be postponed.

NEWS

Nationwide crackdown, arrests go on

FROM PAGE 12

18 in Mymensingh, 13 in Savar, 12 in Satkhira, 11 in Bogura, 10 in Kishoreganj, nine each in Cumilla and Natore, eight each in Madaripur and Chandpur, seven in Joypurhat, six each in Feni, Netrokona, and Cox's Bazar, five in Dinajpur, four each in Tangail, Khulna, and Naogaon, three each in Sylhet, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Manikganj, and Barishal, two each in Kushtia, Lalmonirhat and Bhola, one each in Barguna, Magura, and Jhenaidah.

Rab yesterday morning said they have so far arrested 305 people across the country, including 78 in Dhaka, since July 18 in connection with the violence.

MORE ON REMAND

Eight more people, including former Ducsu vice-president Nurul Haque Nur and BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed, were placed on a five-day remand each after in a case filed over the vandalism of the Kazipara Metro Station in the city's Mirpur on July 19.

The other accused are Jamaat Secretary General Miah Golam Parwar, BNP Organising Secretary Qazi Sayedul Alam Babul, its Dhaka North City unit Member Secretary Aminul Haque, Publicity Secretary Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Bagerhat district BNP Convener MA Salam and its activist Mahmudus Salehin.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam passed the order after investigating officer Asaduzzaman Munshi, an inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, produced them before it with a 10-day remand prayer.

In the forwarding report, the IO said the accused planned and committed such offences as per the direction of Nur and others with an intention to topple the government. So, they need to be interrogated to find out vital clues about the incident, it added.

The court granted the accused 5-day remand each after cancelling their bail petitions along with the petitions to cancel the remand prayer on grounds they were implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass them over political rivalry.

Claiming innocence, Nur told the court that he had earlier been tortured mentally and physically while he was on a five-day remand in Setu Bhaban arson attack case.

He told the court that he had a blood clot on his right hand and that he was placed on remand again, his life would be at risk.

BNP leader Tuku told the court that he was also tortured earlier and that if he was to be on remand again, he wanted to receive treatment first.

Jamaat leader Golam Parwar demanded justice from the court, while his lawyer applied to grant him first-class status in jail. The court registered the application.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court yesterday placed three people, including the former president of Islami Chhatra Shibir Rashedul Islam Rashed on a seven-day remand in an Explosives Act case.

The two others are -- Jamaat-e-Islami Treasurer Khandaker Mizanur Rahman and Executive Committee Member Mohammad Abdur Rashid.

On July 27, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime claimed to have arrested them from an office in Dhanmondi along with cocktails and other explosive substances.

Mobile internet back without social media

FROM PAGE 12

Awami League have been blocked, he said.

He asked why the content of the Bangladesh National Party or convicted Tarique Rahman has not been blocked from YouTube and Facebook.

After hearing the explanations of the officials from the social media platforms, the decision on opening social media platforms will be taken, Palak said.

The government has not fully blocked any apps, he said, adding that some important infrastructures were connected to the internet during the shutdown.

Mobile internet was temporarily made unavailable on July 17 and 18 in some areas upon the recommendation of the law enforcement agencies with the technology support of BTRC and the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre, Palak said.

On July 18, due to a fire in the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) caused by a group of miscreants, two data centres became non-operational, and hundreds of kilometres of ISP cables and the fibre optic cable from Dhaka to Chattogram were set on fire, making the internet temporarily unavailable, he added.

However, industry experts said that since most of the country's bandwidth comes from India through Benapole and the second submarine cable from Kuakata via Barishal, even if the first submarine cable's bandwidth is disconnected, at least 75 percent of the bandwidth should be supplied smoothly, keeping the country mostly connected.

Even if hundreds of kilometres of ISP cable were burnt, the internet outages should be limited since ISPs have deployed cables spanning hundreds of thousands of kilometres to provide internet to homes and businesses throughout the country, they said.

People with knowledge of the matter said the outage was ordered by the government.

The Daily Star has visited the data centres in question and found no sign of damage to the building that housed them.

Officials of the data centres also confirmed that there was no fire in the building. However, the DDM opposite the building was torched and that fire partially damaged some overhead cables connected to the data centres.

Around 8:00pm on July 18, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh said the fire might have cut 30-40 percent of the bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

An hour later, the entire Bangladesh was without internet.

The government reopened broadband internet in selected areas on July 23 and restored connections on a trial basis nationwide the next day.

However, users are experiencing slow internet as traffic is going through deep packet inspection (DPI) through the Department of Telecommunications equipment placed previously in the IIG's system, according to people informed with the proceedings.

The DPI works like a security guard checking the contents passing through a checkpoint.

Broadband users are yet to be compensated for the disruption in service.

Criminals to be tried

FROM PAGE 2

Mentioning the formation of an inquiry commission, the MoFA said a number of departmental investigations were being conducted to find the reasons behind the killings and the violence, and whether there were any cases of negligence.

The statement went on to say that there has been no single case of "shoot-on-sight" by security forces deployed in the aftermath of terrorist acts, as well as no firing from helicopters during law enforcement operations.

"There was no ulterior motive behind the inadvertent deployment of a white armoured personnel carrier (APC) that still had the UN insignia visible through the colour coating used to cover it.

"While the APC in question was quickly pulled out of service, the other images of law enforcement transports using UN insignia were false."

MoFA said broadband and mobile internet connectivity have been restored with full functionality by now.

Hasnatul's remand order

FROM PAGE 12

remand order and sent the accused to the Children's Court, which sent him to a juvenile correction centre.

Earlier in the day, the HC asked the authorities to strictly follow the provisions of the Children Act in dealing with Hasnatul.

In response to a writ petition, the bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar and Justice SM Maniruzzaman asked Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed to instruct the authorities, including the Jatrabari Police Station OC, to talk to the parents of Hasnatul in this regard.

Hasnatul's parents can submit an application with an undertaking and surrender his passport to the authorities so that he can be kept in their custody, said the HC judges.

Additional Attorney General Morshed told the court that Hasnatul will not be placed on remand and will be properly dealt with as a minor. The lower court placed him on remand as the documents in support of his being a minor were not produced before that court at that time, he said.

The HC judges said the arresting authority had to assess the age of Hasnatul during his arrest under the law.

The bench asked Additional Attorney General Morshed what he would do if his minor child had been arrested and placed on remand.

Morshed said relevant provisions of the Children Act will be strictly followed in treating Hasnatul and if his parents submit any application, it will be considered in accordance with the law.

The HC bench cited a photo of Hasnatul published on The Daily Star yesterday.

The photo captioned that "Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, a first-year HSC student of Dhaka College, is tied with ropes as cops take him back to jail on a seven-day remand after he was produced before the CMM Court in the capital. Hasnatul was picked up from his Jatrabari home on Wednesday night in connection with a case filed over recent violence."

Yesterday, the HC bench also fixed today for further hearing of the petition filed as a public interest litigation by Supreme Court lawyer Shahdeen Malik challenging the legality of the lower court order that placed Hasnatul on remand.

Petitioner's lawyer Md Monjur Alam told this newspaper that under the Children Act, 2013, no child can be tied with rope, put on handcuffs and placed on remand.

The children cannot be sent to jail and kept with adult prisoners, he said, adding that the accused children have to be sent to juvenile correction centres.

Meanwhile, a law ministry press release yesterday said the Children's Court in Dhaka cancelled the remand of Hasnatul as a child and ordered the authorities to send him to a juvenile correction centre.

On July 27, Hasnatul was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Court of Dhaka, and the court placed him on a seven-day remand as the investigating officer of the case had sought.

Though the accused claimed that he is a child, the court granted the remand prayer as he failed to produce proof of his age.

Yesterday, accused Hasnatul submitted the relevant documents (SSC and birth certificates) in support of his age before the CMM court.

The court suspended his remand and sent the accused to the Children's Court for hearing and passing order determining his age.

After yesterday's hearing, the Children's Court ordered the authorities to send Hasnatul to a juvenile correction centre.

PM to attend

FROM PAGE 12

maritime connectivity among the BIMSTEC member countries. The details of the agreement will be shared once the member states sign the document, said Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of the BIMSTEC, at a recent briefing in Dhaka.

"I believe BIMSTEC has a bright future. All members are committed to make BIMSTEC a success story," he added.

BIMSTEC adapted its charter on May 20 this year, 27 years after the founding of the regional body. It has institutional mechanisms and policies but is lacking practical cooperation.

Indra Mani Pandey said the upcoming summit would add new vigour to regional cooperation within BIMSTEC. It will adopt Bangkok Vision 2030, which would give direction to the organisation, he hoped.

BIMSTEC wants to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development through identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects in the agreed areas of cooperation.

It also wants to accelerate economic growth and social progress through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership, Indra Mani said.

55 police officers

FROM PAGE 2

additional IGP (supernumerary) Krishna Pada Roy also posted in the PHQ.

Among the five additional DIGs, who were transferred to different posts, Sakhawat Hossain, who was attached to the PHQ transferred to the Tourist Police, Akkas Uddin Bhuyan of the Sarda Police Academy transferred to the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) of Dhaka, Asad Ullah Chowdhury of ATU has been transferred to the River Police, Enamul Kabir of the Sylhet Range Office has been transferred to the Armed Police Battalion and Specialized Training Center, Khagrachari, and Mir Modasser Hossain of the Armed Police Battalion and Specialized Training Center, Khagrachari has been transferred to the Highway Police.

Finally, in two other separate circulars, the ministry posted and transferred 48 SP rank officers to different police units in different districts of the country, most of whom had also got their promotions earlier.

A vehicle drives along Highway 36 while flames tear through the area as the Park fire continues to burn near Paynes Creek in unincorporated Tehama County, California. The so-called Park Fire burned more than 350,000 acres as of Saturday evening, making it the seventh-largest ever recorded in California history, the Cal Fire said. PHOTO: AFP

15 killed, 6 hurt in China landslide

AFP, *Shanghai*

A landslide caused by flooding in central China's Hunan province destroyed a guesthouse and killed 15 people yesterday, state media reported.

Officials initially believed that 18 people had been buried by the landslide but rescuers have since found fifteen bodies and six injured survivors, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday night.

The landslide was caused by flash flooding on a mountain, which destroyed the guesthouse, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

More than 300 emergency personnel were sent to the scene, according to Xinhua.

A video published by the state-run Beijing Youth Daily showed a swath of mud and debris cutting through a green hillside and an uprooted tree lying in front of a three-storey building.

An aerial video on Xinhua showed what appeared to be the ruined bottom half of a building at the top of the debris trail, as well as damaged buildings at the foot of the hill.

China has suffered a summer of extreme weather, with flash floods in the north and southwest killing at least 20 people this month.

A highway in southern China collapsed in May after days of rain, killing 48 people.

Extraordinary US election enters the homestretch

AFP, *Washington*

The 100-day sprint to the US election began yesterday, the final act in a campaign transformed by an assassination attempt and the stunning exit of President Joe Biden.

After weeks of infighting and despondency over Biden's candidacy, Democrats have largely consolidated behind Vice President Kamala Harris, radically reshaping a race that was fast becoming Republican nominee Donald Trump's to lose.

Republican strategist Matt Terrill said Harris's uniting of the Democrats had ensured a photo finish on November 5 -- a ballot that will largely be decided by around 100,000 swing voters in a handful of battleground states.

"It comes down to those independent, undecided voters. Inflation, immigration, the economy and crime -- those are the issues they care about," he told BBC News.

While American election campaigns typically last almost two years, the 2024 edition has effectively been reset, making it unofficially the shortest in modern history.

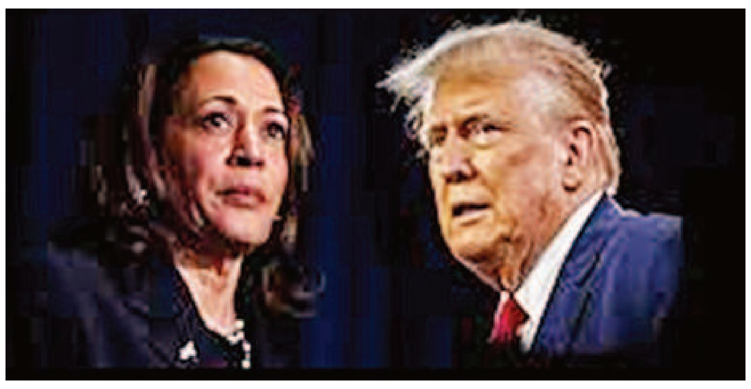
The Democratic convention in mid-August is expected to be a jubilant celebration of the party's new standard-bearer Harris, who is enjoying record fundraising, growing grassroots support and an early boost in polling.

It all looked so different just a month ago.

Dogged by voters' concerns about his age and mental acuity, the 81-year-old Biden was an outside bet at best, trailing his predecessor in the first presidential rematch since Dwight Eisenhower trounced Adlai Stevenson in 1956.

Biden's dismal June 27 debate showing ignited a five-alarm fire within his party.

The flames were fanned by a flawless show of unity behind 78-year-old Trump at the Republican national convention -- an event galvanized by the failed bid, just days earlier, to assassinate the former president at a rally in Pennsylvania.



After an initial show of defiance, Biden bowed to the inevitable and dropped out last weekend.

Harris, a generation younger at 59, threw her hat in the ring -- turning what had been a stale contest between two unpopular, aging, white male candidates into a dynamic and unpredictable showdown.

The former Biden-Harris ticket -- now just the Harris campaign -- held its biggest-ever rally Tuesday in Wisconsin and has raised more than $120 million in recent days, with disenchanted donors returning to the fold.

Trump's previous three-point nationwide lead in polling averages has been practically halved in a week, and the contest has become a margin-of-error tussle in most of the crucial swing states that decide elections.

But Democrats enjoying the sugar high of the last week have been cautioned by party elders to sober up, with Harris still facing an uphill battle to beat the oldest major party nominee in history.

Trump, who has seen his favorability ratings tick upward since the July 13 attempt on his life and the successful Republican convention, will rally this weekend in the traditionally Democratic state of Minnesota.

Harris, meanwhile, heads to Massachusetts for a fundraising event and will send her surrogates -- including some favorites in the contest to be her running mate -- out across battleground states.

America going bankrupt: Musk

AGENCIES

Rising national debt has long been a pressing issue in America, and it has caught the attention of Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

"America is going bankrupt btw," Musk wrote in a recent post on the social media platform X. He was responding to a post by Billy Markus, the creator of Dogecoin.

Markus' post included a screenshot of a headline reading, "Interest Payments on US National Debt Will Shatter $1,140,000,000,000 This Year – Eating 76% of All Income Taxes Collected: Report."

The headline originated from an article on The Daily Hodl, which featured an analysis by economist EJ Antoni. Antoni delved into the latest Monthly Treasury Statement from the Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

He pointed out a striking detail: in June 2024, the US government spent $140.238 billion on interest for Treasury debt securities. For context, the government collected $184.910 billion in individual income taxes that same month.

This means that an amount equivalent to 76 percent of June's individual income tax revenue was used solely for interest payments on the national debt, not including principal repayment.

35 killed in Pak sectarian clashes

AFP, *Peshawar*

A land feud between tribes in northwestern Pakistan has spilled over into days of sectarian fighting with machine guns and mortars, killing 35 people so far, officials said yesterday.

The Sunni Muslim Madagi and Shiite Mali Khel tribes have been fighting since Wednesday, when a gunman opened fire at a council negotiating a decades-long dispute over farmland, local police official Murtaza Hussain said

While no one was wounded in that attack, Hussain said it reignited longstanding religious tensions between the clans who live side-by-side in the Kurram district on Afghanistan border.

"Initially a land dispute, the issue has now escalated into sectarian violence," Hussain told AFP.

Inter-family feuds are common in Pakistan.

However, they can be particularly protracted and violent in the mountainous northwestern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where communities abide by traditional tribal honour codes.

A senior government official from Kurram district, who asked to remain anonymous, also gave a death toll of 35 but said 151 more people had been wounded.

"The conflict, now in its fifth day, has escalated into a Shia-Sunni dispute," he said. "All attempts to resolve the conflict have failed."

A police source, who asked not to be identified, said both sides were using automatic weapons and mortars in fighting focused around the town of Parachinar, which had been blockaded by law enforcement.

Khamenei grants Masoud Pezeshkian presidential powers

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday gave his official endorsement of Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic Republic's ninth president, following snap elections won by the reformist camp's candidate.

In a message read by the director of Khamenei's office, he said: "I endorse the vote (for) the wise, honest, popular and scholarly Mr Pezeshkian, and I am appointing him as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran".

The new reformist president is due to be sworn in before parliament on Tuesday.

The endorsement ceremony was held in the capital Tehran in the presence of senior Iranian officials and foreign diplomats.

It took place as banks and most government offices were ordered shut nationwide on Sunday to tackle an extreme heatwave.

Following the event, acting president Mohammad Mokhber handed over official responsibilities to 69-year-old Pezeshkian.

Later Sunday, Pezeshkian appointed reformist Mohammad Reza Aref, 72, as his first vice president, according to an announcement carried by state TV.

Aref has represented Tehran in parliament and served as first vice president and communications minister under Iran's last reformist president Mohammad Khatami, who held office from 1997 to 2005.

Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and parliament member for the northwestern city of Tabriz since 2008, was Khatami's health minister.

On July 5 the reformist candidate won a runoff race against the ultraconservative Saeed Jalili to replace Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May.

US, Japan deepen ties, take swipe at China

AFP, *Tokyo*

The United States and Japan issued scathing verbal attacks on China and Russia yesterday after high-level discussions on enhancing already close defence collaboration between Tokyo and Washington in an increasingly unstable region.

A joint statement issued after "2+2" talks in Tokyo between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and their Japanese counterparts said China's "foreign policy seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others".

They also reiterated their "strong objections" to China's "unlawful maritime claims, militarization of reclaimed features, and threatening and provocative activities in the South China Sea".

The communique also criticised Russia's "growing and provocative strategic military cooperation" with China, as well as Moscow's procurement of ballistic missiles and other equipment from North Korea "for use against Ukraine". It also expressed alarm at China's "ongoing and rapid expansion of its nuclear weapons arsenal".

Blinken said US alliances were all "defensive in nature".

"They have no ambitions toward anyone else, and never have been or ever will be offensive in nature," he told a news conference.

"But at a time when unfortunately these threats are increasing, our alliances, our partnerships, they're getting deeper, they're getting stronger, they're getting more effective," he said.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa said: "We are at a historic turning point."

"Developments that shake the very foundation of a free and open international order based on the rule of law are continuing."

"We must deepen and develop the US-Japan alliance to safeguard the international order and enhance deterrence," she said.

China claims the South China Sea, through which trillions of dollars of trade passes annually, almost in its entirety, while Tokyo and Beijing are also at loggerheads over disputed Japan-controlled islands in the East China Sea.

The statement also confirmed US plans to establish in Japan a new Joint Force Headquarters, headed by a three-star US commander, for the 54,000 US military personnel stationed there.

It will serve as a counterpart to Japan's planned Joint Operations Command for all its armed forces, making the two militaries more nimble in the case of a crisis over Taiwan or the Korean peninsula.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin meet with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Defense Minister Minoru Kihara at their Foreign and Defense Ministerial (2+2) Meeting at Iikura Guest House in Tokyo, Japan yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Restore normal business conditions

Address the plight of low-income workers, entrepreneurs

A falling tide lowers all ships, so it is natural that the recent disruptions in the country would hit every economic sector, but there are some that have been hit harder than others. These units or groups, comprising low-income workers and entrepreneurs, belong to the lower strata of our economy and, as such, rarely feature in policy decisions even during critical times such as now. According to various reports, the nationwide curfew and internet shutdown, while aimed at restoring order after the unprecedented violence that erupted since July 18, have exacerbated the hardships faced by daily wage earners and small business owners, pushing many to the brink of financial ruin.

A report from our Khulna correspondent highlights the sufferings of low-income workers including hawkers, porters, cobblers, transport and construction workers whose earnings have plummeted. This is not just in one city, but across urban centres in the country. Day labourers, who typically find work at busy intersections, are having to wait for hours with little success. Homeowners are hesitant to resume construction works leading to a slump in employment. Many, as a result, are being forced to borrow to survive. Many are turning to alternative means of livelihood, earning a fraction of their usual daily income. Even the relaxation of curfew hours hasn't helped much, thanks to the climate of fear created by the block raids and mass arrests conducted by security forces which is causing further economic distress.

This dire situation in informal economy is being mirrored in the entrepreneurial sector as well. According to the 2013 economic census by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), there are over 78 lakh entrepreneurs in the cottage, micro, small, and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), a number that must have multiplied by now. The recent disruptions and disturbances have severely impacted production, sales, and marketing activities for most SMEs. Add to that preexisting challenges such as high inflation, rising interest rates, and increased costs for services like gas and electricity. Online-based entrepreneurs and workers have been hit particularly hard, thanks to the internet restrictions, which nearly halted their operations. The e-commerce and f-commerce sectors, including over four lakh businesses, rely heavily on internet to deliver over seven lakh products daily. Against this backdrop, the restoration of mobile internet yesterday, without granting access to key digital mediums like Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp, is unlikely to bring much relief.

All this paints a disturbing picture of the struggles of low-income workers, employees and entrepreneurs who are passing their days in hardship and uncertainty. They were already in trouble before the dual assaults of curfew and internet blackout, owing to the impacts of Covid and other external and internal problems, and the government's failure to handle the violent backlash from quota reform protests has only intensified it. It is, therefore, imperative to urgently restore normal business conditions, particularly by fully reopening internet services. Small businesses and low-income workers and employees are the backbone of our economy. The authorities must remove all barriers to their survival.

Ensure FDI inflow isn't badly hampered

Govt has a lot to do to recover business and investor confidence

Violence centring around the quota reform movement, a five-day total internet blackout, and the ongoing curfew have naturally shaken foreign investor's confidence in Bangladesh, which must be addressed. According to a report in this daily, the country needs to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) equal to 1.66 percent of its GDP annually to become an advanced economy by 2041. But in 2022, Bangladesh's FDI inflow amounted to only 0.75 percent of its GDP. Bangladesh Bank data shows that in 2023, net FDI inflow fell to $3 billion, a decrease of 14 percent from $3.5 billion in 2022. Against this backdrop, the confidence crisis caused by recent events becomes more concerning.

When it comes to attracting investors, a country's reputation as a reliable investment destination is vital. Investors already had a number of issues with Bangladesh in that regard. Problems like corruption, bureaucracy, anti-competitive procurement system, violation of intellectual property rights, and inconsistent policy shifts have all been previously identified as barriers to Bangladesh attracting higher FDI. With several international rights organisations and foreign countries having identified a number of human rights violations during the government's brutal crackdown on protesters recently, the country's image as an investment hub has surely taken a further hit. And this crisis cannot be quantified, as explained by the president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

The modern nature of business is such that all business activities around the world have become tremendously dependent on the use of the internet. The five-day total internet shutdown—along with the fact that internet services across the country are yet to be fully restored—has had a massive impact on all businesses. And although the country is slowly recovering with limited online and physical connectivity, full operations are yet to be revived.

On top of that, foreign investors with a stake in the export sector are anticipating losses and increased expenses due to overtime bills. Some of them will now have to go for costly air shipments to make up for lost time and meet their lead times. And the uncertainty that many businesses and investors faced during the internet outage have made them particularly antsy, with many foreign investors raising questions about the country's political stability.

Even though the government has remained confident about the country's ability to attract FDI despite recent turmoil, we believe there is a lot that can, and should, be done to regain investors' trust. First, the government must urgently restore full internet services, and reinstate normalcy by lowering tensions within society at large. It also needs to take all necessary steps to ensure a positive business environment that is conducive to attracting investment, and that can largely mitigate the losses businesses suffered.

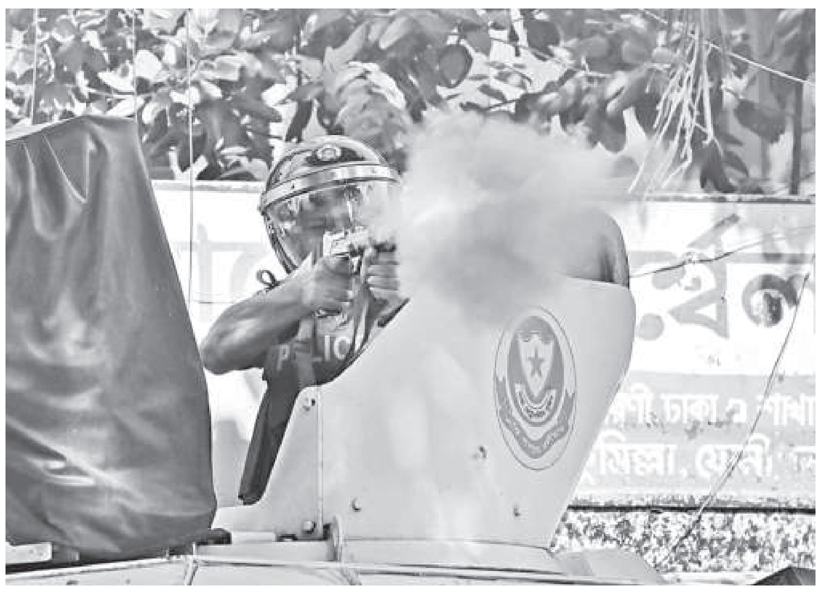
The responsibility lies squarely with the government

Anu Muhammad
is a former professor of economics of Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Over the last few days, we went through an unexpected, uncertain, and cruel experience. It felt as though we were living in very disturbing times—the students and citizens on the one end and the government on the other. The problem that fuelled the frustration among people was avoidable. The government showed us how to take a solvable problem and make it complicated—how to increase people's anger and frustration.

The resistance was increasing on par with the viciousness of the attacks. We saw a multitude of student sections join in later as the attacks increased. First we saw it begin at public universities and public colleges. When these students came under attack, we saw the private universities join in. Then we saw the colleges and even many school students join in. As the attacks became more and more violent, the courage of the protesters continued to increase as well.



FILE PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

A member of police is seen opening fire during the unrest centring the quota reform movement in Dhanmondi, Dhaka on July 19, 2024.

> **This level of bloodshed prompted the government to announce quota reforms, albeit belatedly. If they had acted a week earlier, this bloodshed and financial losses could have been avoided, and lives could have been saved. Our country's informal sector is vast, and everyone in it has been harmed either physically or financially.**

The first action taken to stop the protests was vacating the student residential halls at the universities. Law enforcement members, along with Chhatra League and Jubo League, ran the operation to forcibly remove students from their halls and campuses. There is a good number of students in Bangladesh who live in rented homes near their educational institutions. Chhatra League and Jubo League activists even went to their homes and forced them to leave. Some students that I know, who study in Chattogram, were made to leave like this and when they tried to go back to their homes, the curfew had already started. So they were stranded on the roads with nowhere to go. These kinds of stories are abundant.

I taught at Jahangirnagar University for 40 years. The university campus is filled with lakes and trees. I am used to seeing students roaming around on their beautiful campus surrounded by nature. But on TV, I had to see the same campus streets filled with big police cars and armoured vehicles. I saw law enforcers firing tear shells and sound grenades. They were firing guns on that campus. The students were trying to hide in bushes! The teachers were also trying to save themselves from the attacks. The sound of birds chirping and students' conversations and laughter were replaced with the sounds of gunshots and sound grenades. This was painful for me to see as a teacher.

The closest we have witnessed to this event was 41 years ago. In 1983, at one point, the army cracked down on students, torturing them and forcing them out of the residential halls to sit in the fields. Even at that time, the scale of violence against students was not on the level we saw over the last few days.

The shootings went on in an uncontrolled manner. It was so out of control that innocent civilians who were perhaps pedestrians or shop-keepers, or maybe a woman who had simply gone out to buy medicines, got shot and even died in some cases. As the numbers of those injured and dead increased, even more people joined the protests.

Such indiscriminate violent attacks on students and civilians are unprecedented in Bangladesh's history. We have never seen such a high death toll in any protest in Bangladesh, even during the Pakistan regime, apart from the Liberation War. Conservative estimates suggest the death toll may exceed 200, with thousands injured. Those who survived with injuries are suffering silently; their plight is often overlooked. Simply being alive is not enough—they should be acknowledged and supported.

The way in which the situation deteriorated since July 16 was unimaginable. We saw students getting attacked in multiple ways. First we saw the ruling party's student body attack general students. News reports say the police joined in, then Rab, and then the BGB. And finally, the army and curfew were added to the mix, indicating the seriousness of the situation.

My study has a window where I find solace. While working, I look at the open sky to break the monotony. I had a horrifying experience these last few days, watching helicopters come and go, firing from the sky. I saw smoke emanating from the helicopters with deafening noise. Later, I learnt that they were firing sound grenades, tear gas, and possibly bullets, despite officials denying that. I witnessed these events with my own eyes. I read reports stating the victims ranged from three-year-olds to 70-year-olds.

This level of bloodshed prompted the government to announce quota reforms, albeit belatedly. If they had acted a week earlier, this bloodshed and financial losses could have been avoided, and lives could have been saved. Our country's informal sector is vast, and everyone in it has been harmed either physically or financially. Those who have been injured are burdened with the additional expense of their medical treatment. Their traumatic experiences will haunt them for life. None of this would have happened if the government had shown responsibility and heeded the legitimate demands of the protesters, rather than rigidly sticking to its ways.

Even the quota reforms announced by the government lack transparency. They did not consult the stakeholders and protesters. Decisions were made unilaterally, neglecting those deserving the quotas. The movement aimed not to deny the minority groups their quotas, but to ensure fair and sustainable distribution.

The government's failure to seek sustainable solutions in 2018 and its recent unilateral decision reflect insensitivity and exclusion, causing dissent among various groups. Despite claiming to have agreed to all demands, the government has failed to address the deaths and damages incurred over the past two weeks. It has not taken adequate steps to ensure justice or hold those responsible for the injustice accountable. There is no indication that it will take action in the future. The government's aggressive stance is evident even now with indiscriminate harassment and arrests of the people.

I believe the responsibility lies squarely with the government, which must stop harassing the youth and people in general. It should come out with the list of killed and injured people along with credible investigations to identify the list of responsible groups behind the loss of lives and damage to properties.

In fact, steps towards democratic transition and establishing people's authority should be brought to discussion. We don't want to live in a long-term state of civil unrest in Bangladesh, which is already showing dangerous signs. Indeed, democratic transformation in the real spirit of the Liberation War is the only viable path forward.

FIRST BUDGET OF MODI GOVT 3.0

Political exigencies and beyond

Pallab Bhattacharya
is a special correspondent for The Daily Star. He writes from New Delhi, India.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

India's annual budget is always as much an economic statement as it is political. And the first fully fledged annual budget of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third successive term clearly reflected the changed political realities after the recent national elections saw the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) posting a below-par performance, missing the majority mark in the Lok Sabha and being forced to depend on the support of its allies for survival.

When Modi retained almost all the members of his second cabinet with the same portfolios in his third tenure, many analysts were tempted to wonder if he would be a changed man in his third term without a clear majority. But the July 23 budget proposal indicates change has begun to set in, taking a cue from the recent national election results.

Statistics don't always reveal the full reality. But they don't hide the reality either. The budget clearly reflects three major political realities that Modi-led BJP has come to terms with post-parliamentary elections. First, it lacks a majority on its own after having enjoyed the same for a decade since 2014. Secondly, as a logical consequence of the first, Modi is critically dependent on the support of his major allies, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) ruling Andhra Pradesh having 16 lawmakers and Janata Dal (United) governing Bihar with a dozen MPs. Thirdly, the budget has acknowledged what Modi and BJP are loath to accept in public: that unemployment, an issue forcefully brought up during the electioneering, is among the crucial factors responsible for pulling down the saffron party's numbers.

There is little doubt the FY2024-25 budget has kept in mind the reality of changed numbers in the 18th Lok Sabha. It is, therefore, no surprise that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman loosened the purse strings for TDP and JDU with a surfeit of development schemes for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. She announced funds for early completion of a key irrigation project, industrial development of Andhra Pradesh, infrastructure like water, power, railways and roads, and additional allocation towards capital investment for economic growth of the state and grants for backward regions. Bihar got support for capital investments in the development of road connectivity projects in the state at a cost of 26,000 crore rupees. Expressway over the Ganges River, a new 2,400MW power plant, new airports, medical colleges and sports infrastructure in the state are among the other promises made in the budget, reflecting BJP's political exigency. By keeping the two parties in good humour, Modi has underlined his intent for ensuring political and macroeconomic stability.

Implicit in the budgetary promise to pump in $24 billion to be spent in the next five years to create jobs is that the problem of joblessness has been staring at the economy. India's official unemployment rate in urban areas is 6.7 percent, but the Centre For Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) pegs it at 8.4 percent. The government's economic survey, presented in parliament a day before the budget, says the Indian economy needs to generate an average of nearly 78.5 lakh jobs annually until 2030 in the non-farm sector to cater to the rising workforce. The budget has sought to engineer a fine balance between supporting job creation and skilling, envisaging $32 billion for rural development this year alone and promoting agriculture, along with continued focus on infrastructure spending without sacrificing fiscal prudence.

Sitharaman announced three schemes for "employment linked incentive" as part of the prime minister's package. These will be based on enrolment in the provident fund with focus on recognition of first-time employees and support to employees and employers. The other budgetary measures aimed at boosting employment include incentives for companies to train staff as well as cheaper loans for higher education. There is also a substantial amount of welfare to be spent on women-led development and the agriculture sector covering a large part of the electorate. The government has ample resources to increase spending without jeopardising its fiscal deficit plans due to a significant windfall of $25.3 billion from the Reserve Bank of India and a surge in tax revenues powered by the economy's expected growth of over seven percent this fiscal year.

The budget is also providing for the MSME sector with the help of a credit guarantee scheme to help the manufacturing sector obtain loans to finance their purchases of machinery and equipment without collateral or a third-party guarantee. In doing this, the government is apparently mindful of a perception, right or wrong, that it is pro-big corporate houses. It is not coincidental that the economic survey points out that the corporate sector has not done its bit to help job creation despite the union government cutting taxes in September 2019 to facilitate capital formation. According to the survey, "... Between FY20 and FY23, the profit before taxes of the Indian corporate sector nearly quadrupled... hiring and compensation growth hardly kept up with it."

The opposition Congress has dubbed the budget as a "kursi bachao" exercise, an unstated reference to the budget pandering to the wish lists of TDP and JDU. But there is another important messaging in the Modi government's outreach to its two regional allies: that of signalling to other powerful regional parties which are outside the BJP-led alliance that they, too, can have a share in the federal government's much bigger power pie.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
01711623906

thedailystar.net
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The prolonged internet shutdown sets a dangerous precedent

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MAHIYA TABASSUM

The recent nationwide internet blackout in Bangladesh, beginning on July 18 and lasting over 150 hours, represents a grave threat to democracy and human rights that demands urgent attention. This unprecedented act of digital repression not only violated the fundamental rights of 170 million Bangladeshis but also set a dangerous precedent for authoritarian control in the digital age.

The shutdown occurred against a backdrop of mounting student protests, though the government initially attempted to obfuscate its role in the blackout. Officials, including ICT Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak, first attributed the outage to security concerns, then to an arson attack on the cables in Mohakhali at nearby data centres by miscreants. Palak even suggested that broadband internet would be restored within a day. However, this explanation, or rather excuse, quickly crumbled under scrutiny. The truth, as confirmed by international observers like Cloudflare and Telenor, was that it was a deliberate, government-ordered shutdown.

Cloudflare, one of the world's largest cloud service companies, used global internet traffic monitoring tools to confirm that the blackout was indeed government-ordered. Telenor, the parent company of Grameenphone, corroborated this assessment, stating that local authorities had mandated the shutdown of 3G and 4G networks. The extent of the blackout is particularly troubling given Bangladesh's multiple internet connectivity options. The country has access to submarine cables through Bangladesh Submarine Cable Limited, land fibre connections through India, IIG VSAT connectivity for limited data links, and 3G/4G mobile networks. Put simply, the diverse infrastructure makes it implausible that a single localised issue could cause such widespread disruption, further supporting the assertion that this was a calculated move by authorities.

VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

This calculated move to sever digital communications coincided with student protests, revealing the shutdown's true intent. By denying citizens access to social media platforms, messaging apps, and news websites, the government effectively silenced the nation and prevented the outside world from witnessing what was happening inside Bangladesh.

As internet access slowly returned after more than 150 hours, it came with draconian restrictions. Reportedly, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) issued guidelines to International Internet Gateways (IIGs) that included mandatory deep packet inspection by the Department of Telecommunications, blocking of Facebook and related services, disabling caches, and limiting access to specific areas and institutions. This calculated move to sever digital communications coincided with student protests, revealing the shutdown's true intent. By denying citizens access to social media platforms, messaging apps, and news websites, the government effectively silenced the nation and prevented the outside world from witnessing what was happening inside Bangladesh.

When governments impose internet shutdowns and restrictions, particularly during protests, they hinder the flow of vital information to citizens. This includes preventing people from contacting emergency services like fire departments and healthcare providers. Moreover, these shutdowns impede international and local media outlets, as well as human rights organisations, from documenting potential human rights violations. Such violations may include killings or excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies. By cutting off communication channels, authorities effectively create an information blackout that compromises public safety and accountability.

Interestingly, amid the nationwide blackout, reports emerged that Augmedix, a US-based healthcare multinational corporation, maintained active internet access. This selective availability raises questions about the government's priorities and potential preferential treatment of certain entities.

The shutdown, however, is part of a disturbing global trend. In 2022, there were over 180 internet shutdowns across 35 countries worldwide. Governments increasingly deploy this tactic to cover up grave human rights violations, including state violence against peaceful protesters, electoral interference, extrajudicial killings of political dissidents, and arbitrary arrests and detentions.

The UN Human Rights Council, via establishing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), has unequivocally stated that internet shutdowns have "indiscriminate and disproportionate impacts on human rights." In today's interconnected world, internet access is essential for the realisation of numerous fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and access to information, the right to education, the right to health, the right to work, and freedom of assembly and association. By imposing this blackout, the Bangladesh government has effectively violated these rights for its entire population, contravening its obligations under international human rights law.

The shutdown's impact extends beyond civil liberties. In an increasingly digital economy, such disruptions can have severe economic consequences. Businesses relying on online transactions, e-commerce platforms, and digital communication tools suffer significant losses. The global nonprofit organisation NetBlocks estimates that the 150-hour shutdown could have cost Bangladesh's economy over USD 500 million, further burdening a nation already grappling with economic challenges.

Moreover, the blackout jeopardised public safety and health. During times of crisis, access to timely information can be a matter of life and death. Recounting my personal experience, doctors were not available to see outdoor patients at Birdem Hospital due to the ongoing nationwide curfew. However, online consultation and public health information also became inaccessible due to the internet shutdown. By cutting off internet access, the government potentially hindered emergency services, disrupted healthcare communications, and prevented citizens from accessing crucial public health information.

We and the world must respond accordingly to this flagrant violation of digital rights. The United Nations should launch an investigation into the shutdown and its human rights implications. International and development partners should insist on respect for digital rights and internet freedom. Tech companies and telecom providers operating in Bangladesh should publicly disclose any requests for government orders to shut down services. Civil society organisations should document the impact of the shutdown on human rights, the economy, and public services to build a case for accountability.

And lastly, the Bangladesh government must provide a full, transparent explanation for the shutdown, and implement legal safeguards to prevent future arbitrary internet restrictions.

The fight for internet freedom is synonymous with the struggle for human rights and democracy.

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP 2024

Bangladesh's semifinal defeat warrants some self-reflection

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MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

The Bangladesh women's cricket team made its debut in 2007 and gained One Day International (ODI) status in 2011. Their most impressive achievement came in 2018 when they won the Women's Asia Cup and remain the only team to have lifted the trophy other than India. On Friday, Bangladesh faced India in the semifinal of this year's Asia Cup looking to recreate some of that same magic but failed by a large margin. This does not however come as a surprise, since their only wins in their last 13 games came against Thailand and Malaysia in this Asia Cup.

While Bangladesh seemed to be going through a rough patch, they had established themselves as a regularly competitive side before this current phase. The semifinal match against India was an opportunity for them to carry the momentum from their previous two wins and reinforce the fact that they are still a side to be taken seriously. They failed to capitalise on their existing strengths and the manner in which they lost the match may warrant some self-reflection.

While Bangladesh seems to be going through a rough patch, they had established themselves as a regularly competitive side before this current phase. The semifinal match against India was an opportunity for them to carry the momentum from their previous two wins and reinforce the fact that they are still a side to be taken seriously. They failed to capitalise on their existing strengths and the manner in which they lost the match may warrant some self-reflection. The team will want to turn things around so that they can regain their self-confidence and emerge as a resilient team capable of going through difficult phases and overcoming them.

Bangladesh started the tournament by losing to the hosts, Sri Lanka. They were able to score only 111-8 in 20 overs which was not nearly a competitive score on the Dambulla ground and Sri Lanka cruised to a victory by seven wickets with 17 deliveries to spare. After that however, Bangladesh turned things around and ended their 10-match losing streak in T20Is (five of which came as recently as in April and May 2024 against India) against Thailand. It was a combined effort from the bowlers and the top order which led to a convincing victory for Bangladesh. They restricted Thailand to a total of 96/9 which Bangladesh chased down by scoring 100/3 in 17.3 overs. Bangladesh benefited from the leg spinner Rabeya Khan's 4-wicket haul and a half-century from the left-hand batting opener Murshida Khatun.

The Bangladesh women's cricket team played to their strengths in the match against Malaysia where they displayed their most impressive performance in the tournament, securing a spot in the semifinal. In their biggest victory in the 2024 Women's Asia Cup, the Bangladeshi batters exhibited their capabilities in making the most of a batting-friendly ground. Batting first, they posted their second highest T20I total of 191-2. Murshida Khatun and Nigar Sultana combined their firepower to score half-centuries with a high strike rate. This was particularly notable because Sultana has been criticised in the past for not increasing the run rate. But in this match, she remained not out with an impressive strike rate of above 167. In the second innings, a cohesive team performance saw six Bangladeshi bowlers chipping in to restrict Malaysia to 77/8 and completing a 114-run victory. Nahida Akter stood out as the star performer who took two wickets at an economy rate of 3.25. The two wickets brought Akter's tally of T20I wickets to 99. She would have looked to complete the historic achievement of the first woman to get 100 wickets in T20Is in the semifinal but is still yet to do so due to the crushing defeat that saw India winning the match with all 10 wickets to spare.

The Bangladesh women's cricket team failed to capitalise on their existing strengths against India in the Asia Cup semifinal match. PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Since the Bangladesh team was not in its best form before the tournament, the fact they had qualified for the semifinals should have come as a welcome validation of their competitive abilities. However, it must be mentioned that there seems to exist a significant gap in the quality of cricket played by the top four teams—India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh—versus the rest of the teams. While India established their dominance in the game with a consistency that's awe-inspiring, Bangladesh should have backed themselves with their own strengths. They failed to make the most of their right-arm spinners (Rabeya Khan, Shorna Akter and Rumana Ahmed), as one of the only teams in the world to regularly play three such bowlers who are known to be some of the most attacking wicket takers globally. If they were to be a match for India, all players would have had to come together to amplify their strengths. Instead, the performance we saw in the semifinal conveyed a complete absence of conviction that the team considered themselves worthy of a spot in the final.

Batting first, Bangladesh managed to post a total of only 80/8 in 20 overs. Renuka Singh—whose form had come in question ahead of the tournament and had been left out in two of the three T20Is in the series against South Africa—took three wickets in three overs, leaving the Bangladesh batting lineup in shambles. Bangladesh's opener Dilara Akter was a player, who many would have hoped would give the Indian bowlers a run for their money. She scored a six off Renuka but succumbed to a fielder off deep square in the very next delivery. Some of the other batters' shot selections were also questionable. Only two Bangladeshi batters got to double digits which is a disappointing display of the team's batting abilities in a knock-out game. One of those two batters was the captain Nigar Sultana who scored 32 off 51 deliveries and is bound to once again raise questions about her scoring rate. Though she needed to build a partnership when Bangladesh fell to 21-3, 19 dot balls in the overs between six and nine simply did not seem justified. At that point, one wonders what is the objective with which the batters are playing, since to beat India a much fiercer brand of cricket needed to be played.

Ultimately, it seemed as though the memories of the previous crushing defeats to India earlier in the year still gnawed in the Bangladeshi players' minds and that they had already lost half the battle before they appeared on the field. In 2018, when Bangladesh lifted the Asia Cup, they did so after beating India twice—once in the group stages and again in the final. It is only likely that the team would have changed since then but the Bangladeshi fans will hope that the team can rebuild and position themselves once again as the top Asian team. After all, the most commendable teams in the world are not only those who remain at the top consistently but also the teams who climb up from the depths of challenges. Bangladesh will hope to chart a similar story for themselves.

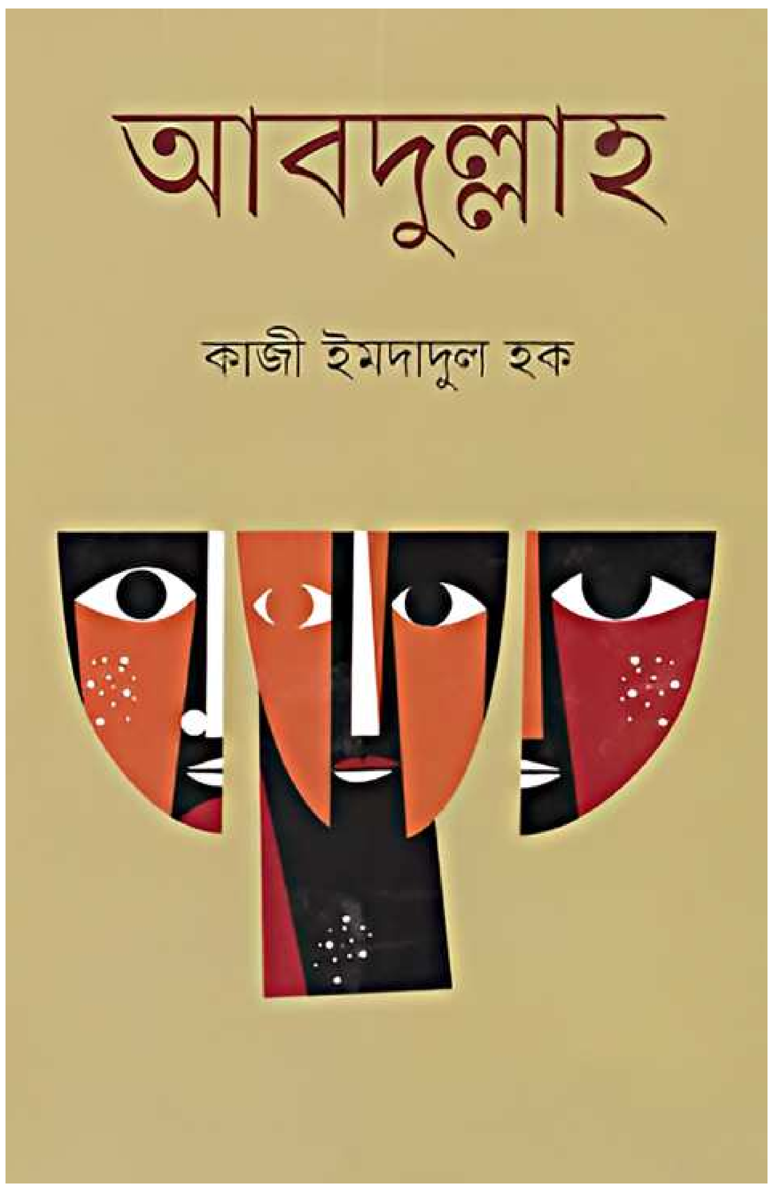
A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER in the intellectual movement of Bengali Muslims

90 years after Anwarul Quadir's Amader Dukkho

PRIYAM PRITIM PAUL

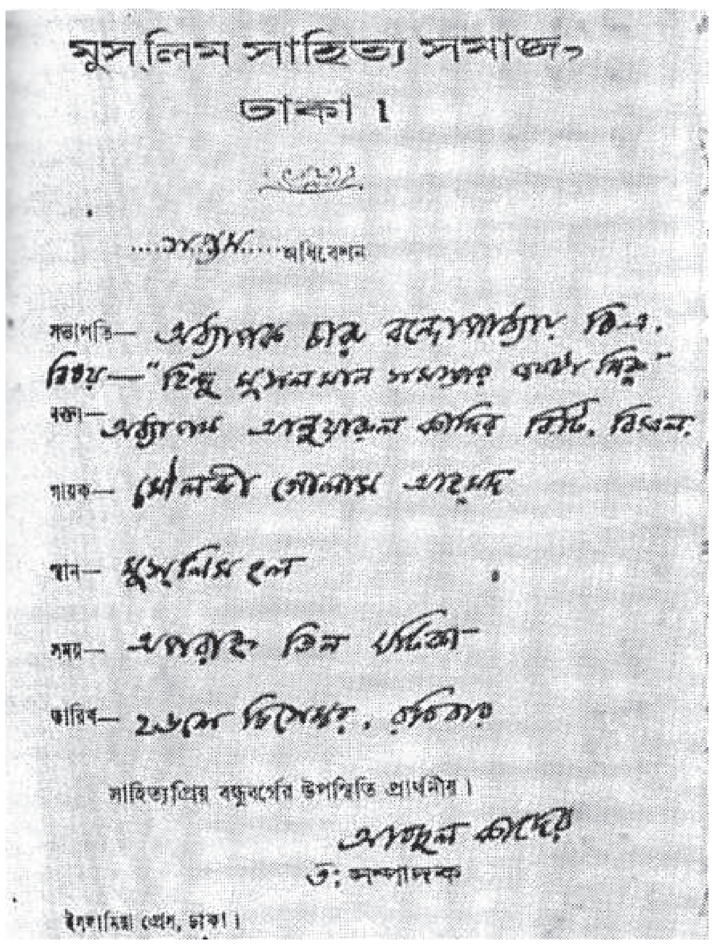
Nazrul was inspired by the new association's activities and lauded Anwarul Quadir as a leading thinker within the group. With a hint of sarcasm, he called both himself and Quadir "Kafir" or "infidels" to underscore their challenge to traditional views.

Anwarul Quadir (1887-1948) was a key literary figure whose work significantly influenced the intellectual movement of Bengali Muslims in late colonial Bengal. He is best known for completing the novel *Abdullah* after the death of its original author, Kazi Imdadul Huq (1882-1926). *Abdullah* is recognized as a pioneering work in Bengali literature by Bengali Muslim writers, addressing several contentious social issues. Additionally, Quadir published his only essay collection, *Amader Dukkho*, in 1934, which compiled his writings from various periodicals. Now 90 years old, this seminal book addressed pressing issues of its time that remain relevant today.



Cover of the novel *Abdullah*, published by Bangla Academy

Born in 1887 in Port Blair, Andaman Islands, as his father was posted there as a headmaster of a government school, Anwarul Quadir held the family title of Kazi, and their family originally hailed from the village of Paygram Kasba in Khulna. He completed his entrance exam at Jessore Zilla School and earned his BA from Presidency College. Quadir pursued a career in teaching and obtained his MA in English Literature in 1928. He also served as an assistant to Mr. Steplan, who was specially assigned to the proposed Dhaka University. Quadir passed away from cancer in 1948 at Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta. He was awarded the title of *Khan Sahib* for his lifelong service in education. Anisuzzaman noted that Quadir was an ideal figure among his students and colleagues, with his significant contributions to the formation and operation of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj* being highly valued.



মুসলিম সাহিত্য সমাজ,
ঢাকা।

....সপ্তম....অধিবেশন

সভাপতি— অধ্যাপক চারু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বি-এ.
বিষয়— "হিন্দু মুসলমান সমস্যার একটি দিক"
বক্তা— অধ্যাপক আনোয়ারুল কাদির বি.টি. বি.এল.
গায়ক— মৌলবী গোলাম আহমদ
স্থান— মুসলিম হল
সময়— অপরাহ্ন তিন ঘটিকা
তারিখ— ২৬শে ডিসেম্বর, রবিবার

সাহিত্যপ্রিয় বন্ধুবর্গের উপস্থিতি প্রার্থনীয়।

আব্দুল কাদির
যুঃ সম্পাদক

ইসলামিয়া প্রেস, ঢাকা।

An invitation card for a lecture on Hindu-Muslim issues by Anwarul Quadir, organized by the Muslim Sahitya Samaj. The event was scheduled for December 26, 1926, but was postponed due to the killing of Hindu revivalist movement leader Swami Sraddhananda by a Muslim named Abdul Rashid. Courtesy: Purba, 2024.

Quadir argued that both communal Hindus and Muslims had failed to adopt Tagore's ideals of compassion and love, resulting in a lack of empathy and leaving the nation's problems unresolved.

Anwarul Quadir was the senior-most author among the seven key writers of the *Muslim Sahitya Samaj*, which is better known as *Shikha Gosthi*, with their publication *Shikha*, the leading progressive writers' association of Bengali Muslims in Dacca at the time. This association played a crucial role in awakening the newly educated minds among Bengali Muslims, injecting a fresh literary and intellectual spirit into the stagnant society of East Bengal's main city.

Mustafa Nur-Ul Islam described Dhaka during the emergence of the *Shikha Gosthi* and the free intellect movement, popularly known as the *Buddhir Mukti Andolan*:

> "At the top is the Nawab family of Dacca, an impregnable fortress of conservatism. Dacca, in that period, was far removed from the modernity of free liberal thought. A university was just being established on the outskirts of Ramna Green and the Dacca Inter area, and Jagannath College was located near Sadarghat in the main town. In this limited and often hostile environment, a small group of individuals championed the cause of 'free intellect,' founded institutions, and published periodicals. Remarkably, most of these young reformers were from outside Dacca and lacked significant local support or patronage."

Historians note that after C.R. Das's death in 1925, communal tensions intensified in Bengal, with Dhaka frequently witnessing Hindu-Muslim riots. Amid this volatile atmosphere, the group introduced a new vision in Dhaka. As the most senior writer in the group, Anwarul Quadir believed it was not just the responsibility of political leaders but also of writers and thinkers to guide the nation in the right direction.

Although poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was not directly involved with the Dhaka-based literary association, he was invited to its inaugural conference in 1927 due to his prominence among young Muslim intellectuals in Bengal. He traveled from Kolkata to open the conference and expressed his enthusiasm with these words:

> "Today, I am thrilled to make a joyous announcement at this conference. For the first time in a long while, I enjoyed a peaceful night's sleep. I see that a new movement among Muslims has begun here, and I intend to spread this message far and wide. Furthermore, I once thought I was the only heretic, but now I am convinced that virtuous individuals like Maulavi Anwarul Quadir are the true dissenters. My circle of supporters has expanded; beyond this solace, I seek nothing more."

Nazrul was inspired by the new association's activities and lauded Anwarul Quadir as a leading thinker within the group. With a hint of sarcasm, he called both himself and Quadir *"Kafir"* or "infidels" to underscore their challenge to traditional views.

As noted earlier, a significant contribution of Anwarul Quadir was completing the novel *Abdullah*. He wrote chapters 31 to 41 based on the original draft, and the complete version was published in 1932. Kazi Abdul Wadud remarked on their differing styles:

> "Kazi Imdadul Haque is primarily a painter, whereas Anwarul Quadir is more of a psychologist, a difference reflected in their writing styles. Notably, Quadir's contributions shine in two chapters: one depicting Saleha's death and the other describing Mir Sahib's final days. While Imdadul Haque portrays Saleha as nearly lifeless, overly constrained by her father's rigid principles, Quadir introduces a touch of compassion to her character and adds a hint of novelty and affection to Abdullah's otherwise mundane life."

Wadud notes that Anwarul Quadir brought a more dynamic and humanistic dimension to Saleha, the lead female character, who was largely passive in Kazi Imdadul Haque's original portrayal.

Anwarul Quadir's another major contribution is *Amader Dukkho*, an essay collection. Originally published in Calcutta, the prose work was reprinted twice, first in 1990 and again in 2010.

The title *Amader Dukkho* (Our Sorrows) underscores the urgent issues Anwarul Quadir critically examined during his time. This period was marked by intense and unresolved Hindu-Muslim conflicts, which eventually led to the Partition of Bengal. Quadir noted that leaders of these competing groups adopted narrow, self-serving views driven by religious biases, failing to unite for the nation's benefit. The government officials were more concerned with their own positions and perks, with their salaries rising while the common people's suffering worsened.

He presented a critical analysis of the socio-economic and political climate, which was increasingly polarized between Hindus and Muslims. This growing distrust approached a state of near-separation, with each side accusing the other of grievances. Quadir found Hindu accusations of Muslims destroying temples and desecrating idols to be largely exaggerated, just as he saw Muslim fears that Hindus would eliminate them after achieving independence as overstated.

Quadir argued that both Hindus and Muslims faced significant poverty and criticized inherent issues within each community. He found the Hindu caste system incompatible with modern democratic values and noted that Muslims were often more conservative and resistant to change, sometimes practicing their religion in a way that seemed bigoted and misaligned with Islam's core principles. Instead of focusing on religious differences, Quadir emphasized shared problems like severe poverty, food shortages, and inadequate clothing. He questioned whether the country's leaders would understand these issues or continue to follow antagonistic policies.

Anwarul Quadir's lecture, titled *"Bangli Musalmaner Samajik Galad"* ("The Social Faults of Bengali Muslims"), appeared in the first issue of *Shikha* and was later included in his book *Amader Dukkho*. In this lecture, Quadir explored the challenges and potential of Bengali Muslims. He emphasized, "Without the liberation of the mind, religion cannot be taught. Intelligence is essential for understanding and following religious principles. The true essence of *Dharma* has been lost due to a lack of intelligence, leading to a dominance of orthodoxy in our practice."

In the essay collection, Quadir also critiqued the thinking of influential educational and social leaders, such as the respected chemist and educationist Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944). Ray remarked that the narrowness of the Hindu caste system had driven lower-caste people to seek refuge in the "kindheartedness of Islam," resulting in over 50 percent of Bengal's population becoming Muslim, which he perceived as a misfortune for India. Quadir questioned how a slight majority of Bengal seeking refuge in the "kindheartedness of Islam" led to the wreckage of the entire country. He believed Ray might have been trying to provoke Hindus into rejecting the caste system. However, Quadir doubted that divisions wouldn't have developed within Hinduism if people hadn't embraced Islam. He argued that the rise of Buddhism and many other sub-sects of Hinduism indicated that oppressed people would have embraced any other sect or religion, even if Islam had not arrived in this land.

আমাদের দুঃখ
আনোয়ারুল কাদির

Cover of the book *Amader Dukkha* (1990)

Quadir questioned how this shift towards Islam could be blamed for the country's problems, arguing that Ray might have been trying to provoke Hindus into reform but ultimately failed to address the deeper issues. He suggested that divisions within Hinduism would have arisen even without Islam's influence, as evidenced by the rise of Buddhism and various Hindu sects among oppressed people.

He dismissed Ray's conclusion as narrow-minded, arguing that such sectarian blame emerges under subjugation and reflects a form of subservience. He emphasized that if even a respected social leader like P.C. Ray, known for his liberal ideas and acceptance among Muslims, held such views, it would alienate Muslims and lead them to seek a fictitious identity elsewhere, neglecting their place in their own land. He suggested that overcoming such narrow-mindedness requires insight and a fresh perspective, avoiding stereotypical thinking in a colonized state.

Quadir did not accept that communal issues in India began with the colonial period but pointed to historical examples, such as the exile of 500 Brahmins during Harshabardhan's reign for causing unrest. He believed that widespread communal issues arose from rulers seeking personal benefits, with religion frequently manipulated for these purposes. He criticized the hypocrisy of showcasing religion, which obscured sincere and humble adherence to its practices.

During the final phase of colonial Bengal, the Hindu-Muslim feud intensified as economic opportunities dwindled. Zamindari became less profitable, agriculture stagnated, and competition between the two major religions centered on the limited number of government jobs. These rivalries extended beyond daily economic and social activities and even impacted Bengali literature, where communal biases influenced the portrayal of characters in religious terms. Quadir criticized this environment, claiming it was impossible to produce "honest literature" under such conditions, and expressed hope that literary figures would develop a more harmonious approach in their work.

Quadir emphasized Rabindranath Tagore's view on the Hindu-Muslim issue, noting Tagore's concern that the nation's identity had become mired in religious divisions, obstructing the path to unity. Quadir argued that both communal Hindus and Muslims had failed to adopt Tagore's ideals of compassion and love, resulting in a lack of empathy and leaving the nation's problems unresolved.

Tagore's predictions about the fallout from Hindu-Muslim rivalry are echoed in the account of scientist Muhammad Qudrat-i-Khuda (1900-1977). During a trip to Darjeeling in the late 1920s, the young Qudrat-i-Khuda met Tagore by chance. In their conversation about socio-political issues, Tagore voiced his concern that ongoing Hindu-Muslim conflicts would thwart any efforts at unity, ultimately leading to the creation of separate states for Hindus and Muslims.

Remarkably, Tagore appeared to anticipate the partition of Bengal as early as the late 1920s, noting the increasing tensions between the major communities. Quadir found parallels between Tagore's observations and his own insights. Furthermore, Tagore, after reading the novel *Abdullah*, expressed his pleasure, mentioning that it deepened his understanding of the inner lives of Muslims in Bengal and shed light on various social issues.

Although Quadir's discussions were framed within the context of undivided Bengal, the issues he highlighted have continued and frequently intensified into serious conflicts even after the formation of three separate states. The sorrow expressed in *Amader Dukkho* remains relevant in a subcontinent still grappling with communal divisions.

Priyam Pritim Paul *is a Researcher and Journalist at The Daily Star.*

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
The Hundred
Manchester vs Trent
Live from 8:00 pm

Sri Lanka break India's dominance

Sri Lanka batters Harshitha Samarawickrama and Kavisha Dilhari celebrate after the latter hit the winning runs in an eight-wicket thrashing of India in the final of the Women's Asia Cup final in Dambulla yesterday. The hosts won their maiden Asia Cup title which means that they and Bangladesh are the only two nations to have lifted the trophy other than seven-time winners India. After restricting reigning champions India to 165 for six, Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu and Samarawickrama smashed half-centuries, and the duo put together an 87-run stand for the second wicket to help the Lankans complete a comprehensive run chase with eight balls to spare. Samarawickrama, who struck six fours and two sixes for a 51-ball 69, was adjudged the player of the match, while Athapaththu who took her tournament tally to 304 runs with a 43-ball 61 - laced with two sixes and nine fours – was declared the player of the tournament. PHOTO: ICC

OLYMPICS CORNER

Paris 'sorry' over opening ceremony controversy

AFP, *Paris*

Organisers of the Paris Olympics said Sunday they were "really sorry" for any offence caused by their daring and quirky opening ceremony.

Some Catholic groups and French bishops have condemned what they saw as "scenes of derision and mockery of Christianity" in the parade on Friday.

"If people have taken any offence, we are of course really, really sorry," Paris 2024 spokeswoman Anne Descamps told reporters on Sunday.

Saudi hails first female Olympic swimmer

REUTERS, *Paris*

Saudi dignitaries on Sunday hailed the performance of Mashael Alayed, the first female swimmer from the kingdom to compete in an Olympics.

The 17-year-old is the only female swimmer in the delegation and smashed her personal best to come sixth of seven in her 200 metres freestyle heat.

Girls were banned from participating in sport at public schools until 2017 and women not allowed into sports stadiums until the following year in the Islamic state.

Princess Reema bint Bandar bint Sultan, an influential member of the Saudi Olympic committee and the kingdom's ambassador to Washington, wrote on X "Proud to cheer on this young woman! Breaking boundaries! Mashael Alayed."

Marchand fires up PARIS POOL

AFP, *Paris*

French hero Leon Marchand threw down the gauntlet with a storming 400m medley swim Sunday as Mollie O'Callaghan outgunned Ariarne Titmus to top the women's 200m freestyle heats.

Marchand is the Olympic hosts' big hope after last year demolishing Michael Phelps' 15-year-old world record in a phenomenal 4min 2.50sec.

The 22-year-old, trained by Phelps' old coach Bob Bowman, had not dipped under 4:10 this year as a number of his rivals did, piling on the pressure.

He rose to the occasion on day two at a packed La Defense Arena to touch in 4:08.30 as a raucous crowd went wild, more than a second clear of Britain's Max Lichfield and two seconds ahead of Japanese veteran Daiya Seto.

In an upset, American defending champion Chase Kalisz failed to reach the final, ending his bid to make the podium for a third time after also winning silver at Rio 2016.

"It was almost like a football stadium but in a pool. Everyone was chanting my name, it was crazy," said Marchand, who is gunning to end a 12-year French gold medal drought in the pool.

"I think I was prepared. I was able to stay in my performance. I had a very strong 250m and then I relaxed a little.

"If I can free myself as much as possible from my body, from my mind, it will be great. I think it'll be fun," he added of Sunday's evening final.

At the 2021 Olympics, France took home just one swimming medal, Florent Manaudou's silver from the 50m free. They haven't won gold since London in 2012, when they collected four.

Marchand will also swim the 200m medley and 200m butterfly.

Defending 200m champion Titmus was back in the pool a day after taking out the 400m title ahead of Summer McIntosh and Katie Ledecky.

She showed few signs of tiredness, easing into the semi-finals third fastest behind pace-setting teammate O'Callaghan (1:55.79).

Titmus shattered O'Callaghan's world record last month at the Australian trials to set a new best of 1:52.23.

O'Callaghan also went under her previous world record in coming second, making the pair overwhelming favourites for gold on Monday.

"Definitely hard to back up after last night, but I think I tried to stay as calm as I could last night and try and forget about what happened this morning really," said Titmus.

"On to another day, 400's done now, so 200's the focus."

'ICC understands that everything is all right'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon yesterday said that his presence at the International Cricket Council (ICC) Annual Conference satisfied the governing body's concerns regarding the unrest in the country and assured them that the forthcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh could go ahead as planned.

Cricket website Cricbuzz had earlier reported that the ICC were monitoring the situation in Bangladesh following unrest in the country.

However, Papon, who returned to Dhaka on Saturday after attending the ICC conference in Colombo, said there was no formal discussion on the matter and claimed that the ICC officials are no longer concerned about Bangladesh hosting the tournament, which is set to run on October 3-20.

"When I went there, the situation in the country was dire. There was no way to communicate outside Bangladesh. They [ICC] were concerned with the news they were getting," Papon said in a press conference yesterday.

"After seeing me, they understood that everything is all right. After that there was no discussion about this in the ICC meeting," he added.

The BCB president also informed that the next ICC board meeting will take place in Bangladesh, where the ICC election could also take place.

HP need six wickets to win against Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

The four-day match between Bangladesh Cricket Board High Performance Unit and Pakistan Shaheens is set up for an exciting finish with the HP side needing six wickets and the Pakistanis requiring 160 runs on the final day to win the match at the Marrara Oval in Darwin yesterday.

The Pakistan Shaheens reached 136-4 at stumps on Day three, chasing 296, with Haseebullah Khan and Tayyab Tahir batting on 44 and four respectively.

BCB HP, who had resumed the day's play on 84-3, managed to reach 216 in their second innings before running out of wickets.

Overnight batters skipper Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Aich Mollah struck 65 and 58 respectively for HP while Pakistan Shaheens pacer Mohammad Ali claimed 6-63.

Pakistan Shaheens started their reply strongly, courtesy of skipper Sahibzada Farhan hitting a 70-ball 68 during a 96-run opening stand with Hasebullah.

Joy stopped Sahibzada's onslaught, sending him back in the 22nd over before HP gained a stronger foothold with pacer Rejaur Rahman Raja, who bagged three wickets in the first innings, getting two crucial wickets in successive overs.

Hasan Murad then got HP their fourth scalp before stumps were called.

Previously, the HP Unit had posted 258 in their first innings and bowled out Pakistan Shaheens for 179 to earn a 79-run lead.

McBrine shines as Ireland beat Zimbabwe

AFP, *Belfast*

Andy McBrine starred with both bat and ball as Ireland beat Zimbabwe by four wickets in a one-off Test in Belfast on Sunday after recovering from a dramatic top-order collapse.

Set just 158 to win in the shadow of Stormont Castle, Ireland had slumped to 33-5 at the close of Saturday's third day, with Zimbabwe left-arm quick Richard Ngarava doing the bulk of the damage in a sensational burst of 4-12 in four overs.

But in the first Test to be played in Northern Ireland, the home side lost just one more wicket on Sunday.

> **Ireland's four-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the one-off Test in Belfast was their first home win in the format.**

Lorcan Tucker (56) and McBrine, who completed a fine all-round match to be 55 not out, turned the tide after coming together when Ireland had collapsed to 21-5.

They added 96 for the sixth wicket before Tucker chopped on from Blessing Muzarabani with Ireland still 41 runs short of victory.

Mark Adair, however, who was born in nearby Holywood, settled quickly making 24 not out and hitting the winning boundary as Ireland finished on 158-6 to triumph with more than a day to spare.

Off-spinner McBrine was named player of the match after the 31-year-old took a combined 7-75 across Zimbabwe's two innings.

"McBrine is the guy you want to put in your cricket bag and take everywhere. Exceptionally skilful and deserved the award today," said Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie.

Victory gave Ireland, who lost their opening seven Tests, a first home win in the format and back-to-back successes after they had beaten Afghanistan for their Test first win in March.

"We did believe last night," said Balbirnie.

"We had our two best batters out (there). That partnership was special. It was fitting for Mark, hometown boy, to get us over the line."

Stormont became the second Test venue in Ireland after Malahide and the 123rd in the history of Test cricket.

"Probably didn't think growing up that there'd be a Test here," said McBrine, who comes from the Northern Ireland village of Donemana.

"We tried to be as positive as we can."

McBrine said he had been "working hard behind the scenes" on his bowling before paying tribute to Ireland's quicks.

"It was not an easy wicket to bowl on but the way they rotated allowed me to take wickets as well."

Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine was left thinking of what might have been had they been able to continue on Saturday night when Ireland were on the ropes at 33-5.

"We'd have liked five, six more overs last night," he said. "Our games against have Ireland have always been competitive."

England pacer Mark Wood claimed five wickets in four overs -- three in a single over -- to skittle out West Indies for 175 in their second innings, making things easier for the batters as England had only 82 runs to chase down on the third day of the final Test in Edgbaston yesterday. England skipper Ben Stokes, who promoted himself to open the innings, then butchered the Windies bowling attack to lead England to a crushing 10-wicket win before tea and complete a 3-0 series whitewash with more than two days to spare. Stokes smashed an unbeaten 28-ball 57, getting to his fifty off just 24 balls -- fastest by any England batter in the format.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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Nationwide crackdown, arrests go on

552 more held taking total number of arrestees to 8,914 in 11 days

STAR REPORT

At least 552 more people were arrested in the capital and elsewhere in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday as the nationwide crackdown against protesters and opposition parties continues.

They were arrested in cases filed over the recent violence across the country.

Some 8,914 people, including many BNP and Jamaat leaders, have been arrested in 594 cases in 46 districts, including Dhaka, over the last 11 days since July 18.

Of them, 6,150 people were held outside the capital.

So far, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested 2,764 people in 229 cases filed with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson, said DMP sources.

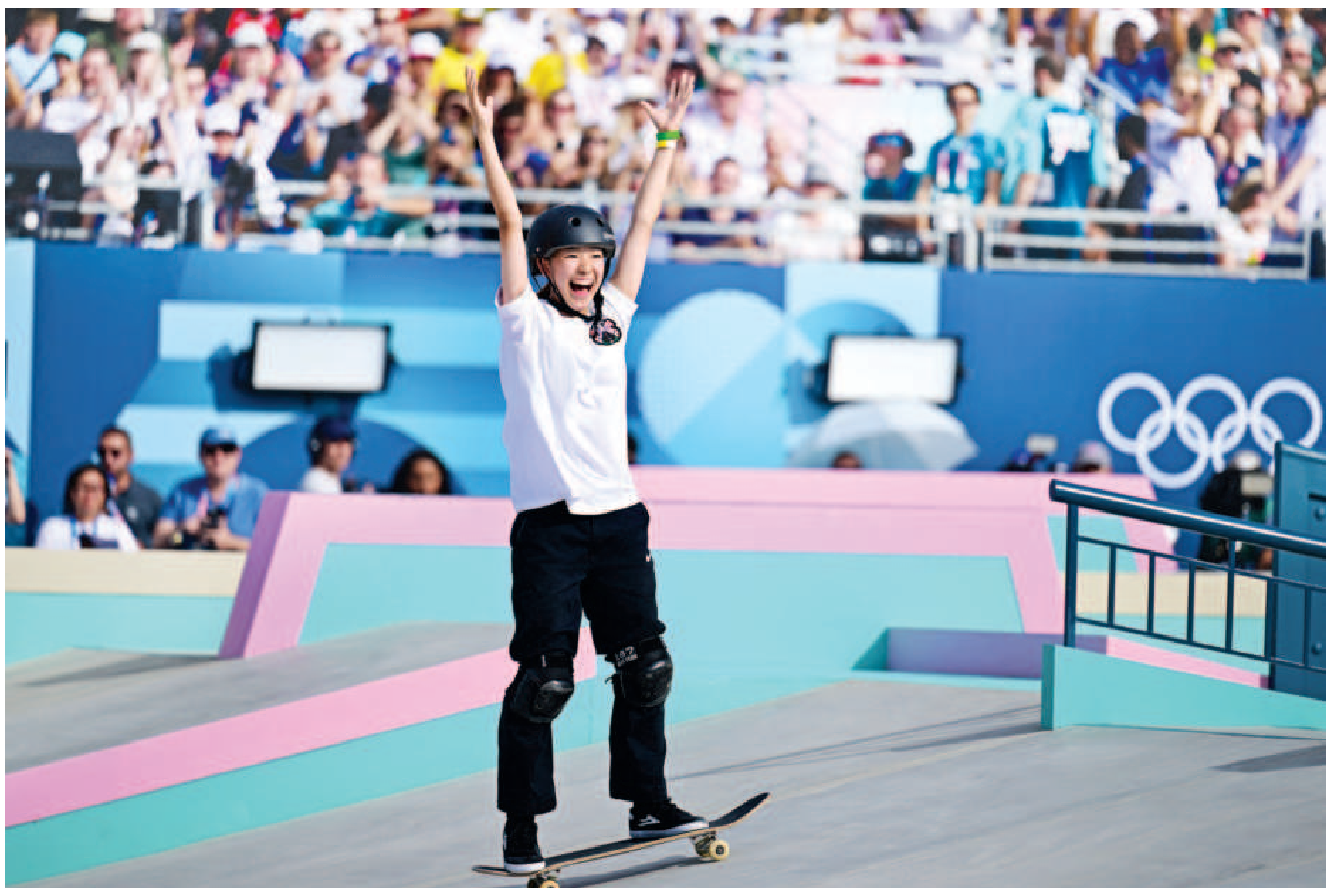
Of them, 228 were arrested yesterday in 22 fresh cases, it added.

According to court documents, 95 people, including several BNP and Jamaat leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka yesterday.

Between 6:00am Saturday and 6:00pm yesterday, police arrested 309 people in 34 districts.

Of them, 50 were arrested in Chattogram, 26 in Rangpur, 25 in Narayanganj, 24 in Pabna, 20 in Rajshahi,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Japan's Coco Yoshizawa celebrates winning the women's street skateboarding final during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at La Concorde in Paris yesterday. The 14-year-old led a trio of teens on the podium in front of a sellout crowd at the La Concorde venue. Her compatriot Liz Akama took silver, while Brazil's Rayssa Leal claimed bronze. PHOTO: REUTERS

Stars turn out in droves as Biles dazzles

AGENCIES

Tom Cruise, Lady Gaga, John Legend, Ariana Grande, and Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour were among the celebrities packed into Bercy Arena on Sunday to witness the return of Simone Biles to the Olympic gymnastics stage for the qualifying round.

Biles, the most decorated gymnast in history, is back for her third Games after withdrawing from most of her events at the Tokyo Games in 2021 with mental health issues.

"It's awesome," Cruise told Reuters in the stands at the Arena.

"Great stories, great athletes. It's incredible what they do."

Legend and wife Chrissy Teigen said there was nowhere they would rather be.

"This was on our bucket list. We wanted to make sure we came to this event," he told Reuters.

"They represent the best

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Hasnatul's remand order scrapped

HC says govt can consider keeping him in parents' custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said the government can consider keeping Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, 17, a first-year HSC student of Dhaka College, who was placed on a seven-day remand, in his parents' custody.

A Dhaka court on Saturday placed him on remand in a case filed with Jatrabari Police Station over clashes and vandalism.

The same court yesterday scrapped the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Mobile internet back without social media

Users get 5GB data for three days as compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile internet, used by about 14 crore people, resumed yesterday after more than ten days but popular social media platforms Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube would be unavailable.

As compensation, subscribers would be given a 5GB data pack for three days, as per the decision taken at a meeting yesterday at the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission headquarters with the mobile operators.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for ICT and telecom, presided over the meeting, where officials of different government agencies were present.

Asked when Facebook and YouTube will be back, Palak said: "Letters have been sent to the social media companies Facebook, YouTube and TikTok and they have been asked to respond to person on July 31."

In the last month, the government asked the platforms to take down fake news, propaganda, and rumours, he said at a press briefing after the meeting.

"But the number of pieces of content they have taken down and the number of platforms they have blocked are very meagre -- this is not acceptable to us. We have asked them if they want to use cyberspace in accordance with the laws and constitution of Bangladesh, as well as their community standards."

As many as 50 pages that support the Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Wider ME war fear grows after Golan strike

Tel Aviv vows to 'hit the enemy hard' after rocket from Lebanon kills 12 in the Israeli-occupied territory

AGENCIES

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant yesterday vowed to "hit the enemy hard" after rocket fire from Lebanon killed 12 young people in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights and again raised fears that the war in Gaza will spread.

Iran warned Israel any new military "adventures" in Lebanon could lead to "unforeseen consequences". Western powers, including France and Germany, condemned the attack and appealed for calm.

The European Union called for an independent probe into what happened.

Israel's army called it "the deadliest attack on Israeli civilians" since the October 7 attack that began the war in Gaza and triggered regular exchanges of fire across the Lebanese border.

- Hezbollah movement denies involvement
- Iran warns Israel against Lebanon 'adventures'
- Israeli military hits targets "deep inside Lebanese territory'
- 66 more killed in Gaza

Israel blamed Lebanon's Hezbollah movement for firing a Falaq-1 Iranian rocket but the Iran-backed group -- which has regularly targeted Israeli military positions -- said it had "no connection" to the incident.

It said, however, that it had fired one such rocket on Saturday toward an Israeli military target in the Golan.

The rocket fire in Majdal Shams, whose population are Arabic-speaking Druze, prompted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to return early from the United States. Upon arrival he went immediately into a security cabinet meeting, his office said.

He said "Hezbollah will pay a heavy price" for the attack, "a price it has not paid before."

The Israeli foreign ministry said Hezbollah had "crossed all red lines".

Israel's military said it had hit Hezbollah targets "both deep inside Lebanese territory and in southern Lebanon".

An Israeli drone fired two missiles at Taraiyya village in eastern Lebanon destroying a hanger and a home without causing casualties, a Lebanese security source told AFP.

Hezbollah has said its cross-border fire is an act of support for Palestinian Islamists from Hamas who have been fighting Israel's military in Gaza since October 7.

PM to attend BIMSTEC summit in Thailand

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to visit Thailand to participate in the BIMSTEC summit on September 4, diplomatic sources said.

Bangladesh will be the next chair of the BIMSTEC -- the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation -- comprised of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The official and ministerial meetings of the group will take place from September 1-3. The summit will be attended by heads of the member states, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) remains largely inactive, India is more interested in regional cooperation through BIMSTEC, officials said.

Besides, the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka is also working to sign at least four agreements including maritime transport cooperation during the summit, according to foreign ministry sources.

The maritime transport agreement would include every aspect of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

4 of a family found dead in B'baria home

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Brahmanbaria

Police recovered the bodies of all four members of a family from their house in Nabinagar upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Sohag Mia, 33, his wife Jannat Akhter, 25, and their daughters Faria Akhter, 4, and Fahima Akhter, 2.

All four were found hanging inside the home, said Nabinagar Circle Additional Superintendent of Police Md Sirajul Islam.

"Police recovered the bodies from their house in Bijoypara area around 10:30am after being informed by locals. The exact cause of their deaths could not be ascertained immediately."

Describing the deaths as mysterious, he said police are trying to find the reason behind the incident.

The bodies were sent to Brahmanbaria General Hospital mortuary for autopsy, he added.

Congestion on Airport Road in the capital's Kakoli yesterday morning during the break in curfew. In the absence of metro services, the elevated expressway, and trains, some of the roads in the city are seeing additional load of traffic. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Concentrated fruit juice may cause diabetes in boys

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Drinking sugary beverages and concentrated fruit juices in childhood and adolescence may raise the risk of diabetes in boys, a new study has found.

The study of about 500 children in Massachusetts, United States, found that regular consumption of sugary drinks and concentrated fruit juices in childhood is tied to a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes among boys compared to girls.

These findings, presented at a recent American Heart Association conference, bolster evidence of a link between consumption of beverages with added sugar and the long-term risk of Type 2 diabetes in young people.

Healthcare professionals "should caution young patients and their parents about sugary drinks and fruit juices when discussing healthy eating habits", Soren Harnois-Leblanc, lead author of the study, said.

Two out of three children and adolescents in America consume at least one sugary drink like soda, lemonade or an energy drink every day.

Studies show that overconsuming sugary drinks can not only lead to weight gain and tooth decay but also raise the risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 diabetes.

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Govt set to ban Jamaat-Shibir

14-party combine makes unanimous recommendation; gazette within two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday unanimously recommended that the government ban Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir for their alleged involvement in anti-state activities.

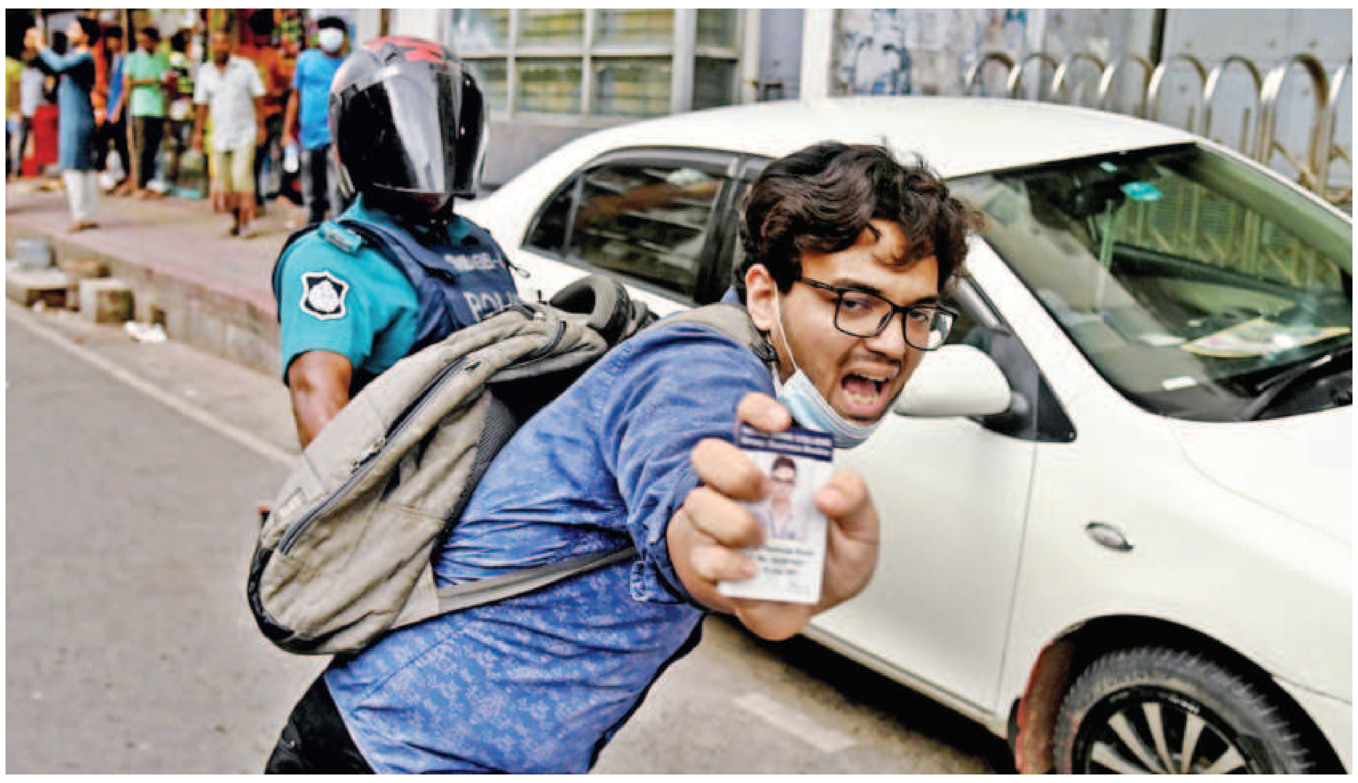
The alliance made the recommendation at a meeting at the Gono Bhaban, presided over by AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina, also the prime minister, assured that her government will act on the recommendation and issue a gazette notification in this regard within two days, said sources.

"For the sake of national interests, the 14-party members unanimously agreed to ban politics of Jamaat-Shibir to eliminate the anti-state element," Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader told reporters after the meeting, which started at 5:00pm and ended around 8.

"Jamaat-Shibir have recently committed unprecedented acts of terrorism, including killing police

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A boy screams and shows his ID card to prove he is a student while being dragged away by police during a demonstration in front of Independent University in the capital's Dhanmondi-2 yesterday afternoon. The otherwise peaceful gathering was obstructed by law enforcers and several were detained from there. PHOTO: STAR

Don't mock the nation

Says HC about DB's handling of 6 protest organisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday expressed its displeasure at detective branch taking six coordinators of quota protests to its office and showing the media that they are having food there.

"Don't mock the nation," said the HC.

"Who told you to do this? Why did they do it? Whoever is taken there [DB office] is made to sit at the dining table," the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon said during a hearing on a petition.

Supreme Court lawyers Aynunnahar Siddiqua and Manzur-Al-Matin yesterday filed the petition seeking orders to have the six protesters released immediately and to stop the use of bullets against protesters.

> **"Who told you to do this? Why did they do it? Whoever is taken there [DB office] is made to sit at the dining table."**
>
> HC bench

The bench set today for further hearing and passing orders on the petition.

Quota reform protest organisers Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud were reportedly picked up on July 19.

Nahid was found on July 20 at Purbachal and Asif was found near Niketon on July 24.

Nahid and Asif, along with protest coordinator Abu Baker Majumder, were taken again from a city hospital on July 26.

Protest organisers Hasnat Abdullah

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Nationwide mourning today

Decides the cabinet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has declared today a nationwide mourning in remembrance of those killed in the recent violence centring the movement for reform in government job quotas.

People were urged to wear black badges to mourn the deaths.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Protesters take to streets again

Face obstruction from law enforcers; 80 detained; demo organisers reject call for nationwide mourning

STAR REPORT

Quota reform protesters yesterday staged demonstrations across the country, including in Dhaka and Chattogram cities, but law enforcers dispersed them at many places and detained at least 80.

Ruling party men also obstructed them from holding demonstrations in some places.

Students from different universities and colleges held the demonstrations to protest the "detention of six coordinators of the quota reform protest by the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police and forcing them to issue a statement on ending protests".

In Chattogram, police detained at least 10

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4
6 ORGANISERS STILL IN DB CUSTODY -- PAGE 2

End mass arrests, arbitrary detention

Amnesty urges Bangladesh govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International yesterday urged Bangladesh to end mass arrests and arbitrary detention of student leaders and protesters.

In a statement, Smriti Singh, regional director for South Asia at Amnesty International, made the call responding to reports of the arrest and detention of student leaders, protest participants, and members of opposition parties following the quota-reform protests, with over 9,000 arrests over the weekend in Bangladesh.

"The mass arrest and arbitrary detention of student

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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6 protest organisers still in DB custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six organisers of the quota reform protest were still in the custody of Detective Branch yesterday.

Their family members were allowed to meet the organisers around 2:00pm inside the DB office.

Detectives picked up the six -- Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, Abu Baker Majumder, Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam, and Nusrat Tabassum -- between Friday and Sunday. The DB kept them in its custody for what it claimed is "to ensure their security".

After the family members' meeting with the organisers, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (DB) of DMP, said the organisers would be freed soon.

"We are talking to them, their family members. We think that they will soon return to their families," he told reporters in front of the DB office on Minto Road, responding to a query on how long the organisers would be kept in custody.

Asked about the allegation of forcing the organisers to withdraw their protest programme, Harun termed the allegation "a rumour".

"I'm humbly requesting [you] not to spread rumours. The DB is a place of trust where no one was forcibly

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

Students disperse as sound grenades were lobbed at them by cops at the Cheragi Pahar Mor in the port city. The protesters had gathered there to press for their nine-point demand yesterday afternoon. *Right top*, police stationed near the capital's National Press Club to avert protesters, who had a pre-scheduled programme there yesterday afternoon. *Right bottom*, university teachers gathered at the Aparajeyo Bangla in DU, during the Anti-Repression Teachers Rally, where they called for an immediate end to the harassment and mass arrests of students. PHOTOS: **STAR**

Don't mock the nation

FROM PAGE 1

and Sarjis Alam were picked up on July 27 and Nusrat Tabassum on July 28.

In photos and footage provided by the DB on Sunday, they were seen having food inside a room at the DB office. The DB also distributed a video clip in which Nahid was seen calling off their protest programme.

During yesterday's hearing on the petition, lawyers ZI Khan Panna, Sara Hossain, Aneek R Haque and Manzur-Al-Matin placed arguments before the bench supporting the petition.

Additional attorneys general SM Munir Mohammad Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury and Sk Md Morshed opposed it.

The bench also heard arguments from senior lawyer Md Azahar Ullah Bhuiyan.

ZI Khan Panna told the court that what was taking place in the name of the spirit of the Liberation War cannot be acceptable at all.

He said the students cannot stay in the dorms and homes, their mobile phones are being seized and checked. They cannot go to their academic institutions safely and there is curfew at night. In which country in the world are these happening?

At that, Additional Attorney General SM Munir told ZI Khan Panna that he should make such arguments in the political arena.

Sara Hossain then told the HC that six protest coordinators have been kept detained in violation of the law and the constitution.

There is no provision in the law, the constitution, and the Appellate Division's guidelines that permit the law enforcers to detain any person in the name of providing safety, she said.

She urged the court to either order the authorities concerned to immediately release the six or produce them before a court.

Aneek R Haque told the HC bench that use of bullets against the students must be stopped.

"Those, who have been shot dead in the movement, are also the assets of the state. We don't want any deaths. There are many ways to control the students' movement," he argued.

Manzur-Al-Matin argued that the home minister has said 147 people died in the clashes and according to a Prothom Alo report more than 200 people have been killed.

The government has to take the responsibility, he said.

Foreign media, including Al Jazeera, has published reports on the firing on students.

According to Al Jazeera's footage, law enforcers have fired as close as 20 yards away from the protesters, he said, adding that firing on demonstrators from helicopters cannot be allowed.

The six coordinators were made to make a statement from the DB office, he said, adding that Nahid was beaten up.

Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam, presiding judge of the bench, said there were some political issues that should not be brought before the court.

The court also asked the lawyers not to make any arguments for which the court can be made controversial.

Additional Attorney General Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury said the petition was not acceptable as it urged HC directives to prohibit law enforcers from firing on demonstrations.

"Can the petitioners ensure that BTV Bhaban, Setu Bhaban, Metro rail stations, and hundreds of vehicles and establishments would not be vandalised and torched and the prisoners in jails will not escape?"

Mehedi argued the law enforcers have taken the six coordinators into custody to ensure their security and that they have not been detained or arrested.

But the petitioners said the six have been detained by the DB, he said, arguing that the petition had not been properly prepared.

The court then asked the petitioners to reword.

Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed also said the six were not detained or arrested.

The HC then asked if law enforcers could keep the six confined for days without detaining them.

Additional Attorney General Morshed said the family members of the six have not claimed they were detained or arrested and have not filed the petition.

Govt set to ban Jamaat-Shibir

FROM PAGE 1

officers and hanging [their] bodies. It is essential to root out this anti-national force."

In 2018, the Election Commission scrapped the registration of Jamaat as a political party,rendering it ineligible to contest elections.

Founded by the controversial Islamist scholar Abul Ala Moududi in 1941, Jamaat had been banned twice before, in 1959 and 1964 in Pakistan, for its communal role.

In 1971, the party had taken a stance against the nation's independence and massacred pro-Liberation activists.

At the beginning of yesterday's meeting, Hasina branded BNP-Chhatra Dal and Jamaat-Shibir as militants, saying they are out to stop the country's development journey, reports UNB.

"The incidents occurring now are not political; rather, they are the acts of militants bent on destroying Bangladesh."

She also dismissed the notion that the recent unrest was related to the quota reform movement and attributed it instead to malicious intent.

"Their ill motives were visible; the quota reform was not an issue at all."

According to sources, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu; Tariqat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari; Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua; and Jatiya Party (Manju) General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam spoke for banning Jamaat.

Accepting the recommendation by the 14-party leaders, Hasina said her government will take measures to ban Jamaat-Shibir within two days, said sources.

According to meeting sources, some members of the 14-party combine said the government should not lift the ongoing curfew until the situation is normal again, and suggested the armed forces remain deployed for at least another month, even if the curfew is lifted.

Earlier on July 20, the government, on the alliance's recommendation, imposed the nationwide curfew and deployed armed forces to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and properties following the unrest centring the quota reform movement.

JP General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam yesterday urged the government to reopen educational institutions in phases, adding that the ongoing HSC examinations should be completed as soon as possible, meeting sources said.

Meanwhile, Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu said the ruling party and the government high-ups should be careful while making public statements.

They mentioned Obaidul Quader's statement on Sunday that there was "a conspiracy to occupy the Gono Bhaban in a manner similar to the events in Sri Lanka, had the curfew not been imposed".

They opined that such remarks may erode people's confidence in the government. The prime minister endorsed their opinion.

Quader, who was at the meeting, claimed he did not say it in that manner and the media misquoted him.

Inu then said, "Sometimes a bishop, a knight, and even the queen has to be sacrificed to protect the king."

Referring to a photo of the six detained protest organisers eating at the DB office, Menon said such activities by a government official carries a wrong message to the people, and that a political crisis should be dealt with by the politicians.

People do not trust political solutions given by bureaucrats, and the statement made by the protesters from the DB office is nothing but a mockery, meeting sources quoted him as saying.

To this, the PM said she will take care of Additional Commissioner (DB) of DMP Harun Or Rashid, who is also at the helm of the Detective Branch.

Earlier at the meeting, Hasina said her government will not spare anyone involved in the mayhem centring the quota reform movement.

She asked the home minister to nab all those responsible for the vandalism.

She also directed him not to consider any criminal as a "protester".

Hasina asked the law minister to ensure that none of those arrested over vandalism can escape through "loopholes in the law".

Protesters take to streets again

FROM PAGE 1

students after breaking up a protest by some 100 students in Jamal Khan area yesterday afternoon.

Witnesses said university and college students gathered at Cheragi intersection around 3:00pm to hold a rally. A large number of police, BGB, APBn, and army personnel were deployed in the area.

Tension rose when 100-150 leaders and activists of the Jubo League and Chhatra League, led by Chattogram City Corporation ward-21 Councillor Saibal Das Sumon, reached the area and verbally abused the protesters.

At one stage, the Jubo League and Chhatra League men beat up two students and handed them over to police, who got them on to a prison van.

As some students attempted to free the detainees, police used truncheons.

Protesters then gathered near the Kadam Mubarak mosque and chanted slogans.

Around 4:00pm, police fired stun grenades and teargas canisters at them. Three cops and a journalist, videographer Abu Jabed of News 24 TV, were injured in the incident.

Another group of protesters threw brick chunks at police near Andarkilla Shahi Jame Masjid around 5:00pm, prompting law enforcers to fire rubber bullets and teargas at them.

Mostafizur Rahman, deputy commissioner (south) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said police took action as all gatherings and protests are banned during the pause in curfew.

In the capital, law enforcers yesterday detained at least 70 people from different areas.

Abdul Kader, a coordinator of the quota reform protest, on Sunday night announced on social media that they would stage demonstrations in eight locations in the capital -- Science Lab, Gate-8 of North South University, Jatiya Press Club, BNS Centre in Uttara, Mirpur-10, ECB Chattar in Mirpur, Rampura, and Mohakhali.

Witnesses said several hundred protesters gathered near the ECB Chattar around noon. Police chased them around 1:00pm when they started chanting slogans.

Law enforcers detained at least 18 demonstrators there.

Police detained at least 10 protesters from Mirpur-10 intersection, 10 from in front of Star Kabab in Dhanmondi, two from Purana Paltan, six from Badda, and 10 from Uttara.

Seeking anonymity, two security staffers of a private university in Bashundhara Residential Area said, "Students were standing in front of gates 1, 2 and 5 of the university since 10:00am. Police detained at least 15 of them and got them on to three police vans until 1:30pm."

Students at Jahangirnagar University held a protest demanding unconditional release of the coordinators of the quota reform protest and the other detainees.

Several JU teachers expressed solidarity with the protesters.

In Rajshahi, several hundred students of Rajshahi University blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway from 12:20pm to 1:00pm protesting the detention of the six coordinators of the quota reform movement.

They chanted slogans demanding justice for the deaths of the fellow students and those responsible for the deaths be held accountable.

At Barishal University, Chhatra League activists allegedly attacked protesters near the university's administrative building around 2:00pm, leaving at least 15 students injured.

Sujoy Subho, one of the injured, said some 40-50 Chhatra League men, armed with sticks, attacked students when they were discussing their next course of action.

Students of Government Brojomohun (BM) College held a protest in Barisal city's Nathullabad Central Bus Terminal area.

In Noakhali, students blocked the Dhaka-Noakhali highway in front of Noakhali Zilla School from 2:00pm for three hours.

In Thakurgaon, over 200 students took out a procession with black flags demanding justice for the recent killings of students.

In Mymensingh, police broke up a demonstration by students in the city's Firoz-Jahangir Chattar in the afternoon.

In Cumilla, pro-Awami League men, armed with sticks and iron rods, obstructed around 60 Comilla University students from moving towards the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

The students later staged demonstrations in front of the university around 3:00pm.

In Sylhet, a group of students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology staged a protest at the main entrance to the university at 3:00pm. They later took out a procession.

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi, a cultural platform, could not hold a protest rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon as the area was cordoned off by law enforcers.

FRESH PROGRAMME

Some coordinators of the quota reform protest yesterday rejected the government's call for nationwide mourning today for those killed in the recent violence.

They urged the students of all educational institutions and the general people to cover their face with red clothes and upload their photos online today instead.

The coordinators made the call in a press release, signed by Mahin Sarker, a coordinator of the Anti-discriminatory Student Movement. Copies of the release were sent to the media around 9:30pm.

"We would like to tell the government that no movement in the history of Bengal could be suppressed by firing at students. Immediately accept our nine-point demand and bring stability to the country," said the statement.

Their demands include an apology from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and resignations of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhoury, Law Minister Anisul Huq, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, and State Minister for Post, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

As per the Saturday's decision by the government, the ongoing curfew in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Narsingdi will be relaxed from 7:00am to 6:00pm today.

Nationwide mourning today

FROM PAGE 1

All places of worship including mosques, temples, and churches were also asked to hold special prayers for the deceased.

Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain confirmed the development at a press conference after a cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan placed a report saying that a total of 150 people were killed in the recent violence. Earlier, he said the death toll was 147.

According to The Daily Star database, at least 163 lives have been lost in the violence since July 16.

However, the death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists could be much higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

According to the Prothom Alo, at least 210 people died in the violence as of Sunday.

End mass arrests, arbitrary detention

FROM PAGE 1

protesters is a witch- hunt by the authorities to silence anyone who dares to challenge the government and is a tool to further perpetuate a climate of fear. Reports suggest that these arrests are entirely politically motivated, in retaliation for the exercise of human rights. It is essential that the Bangladeshi authorities respect people's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly," reads the statement.

"The authorities must ensure that any arrests comply with due process safeguards and are fully in accordance with international human rights law and standards, including but not limited to the right to a free and fair trial, the right to be informed of the reasons for arrest and the place of detention, and the right to be brought promptly before a judge, and to have access both to legal counsel and to their family.

"The authorities should ensure that peaceful activists are not prosecuted on trumped-up charges as punishment for participating in protests. Peaceful protest is not a crime, and this witch-hunt must end," said the rights body.

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It's a flagrant deception

Says TIB on making protesters read statement in DB custody

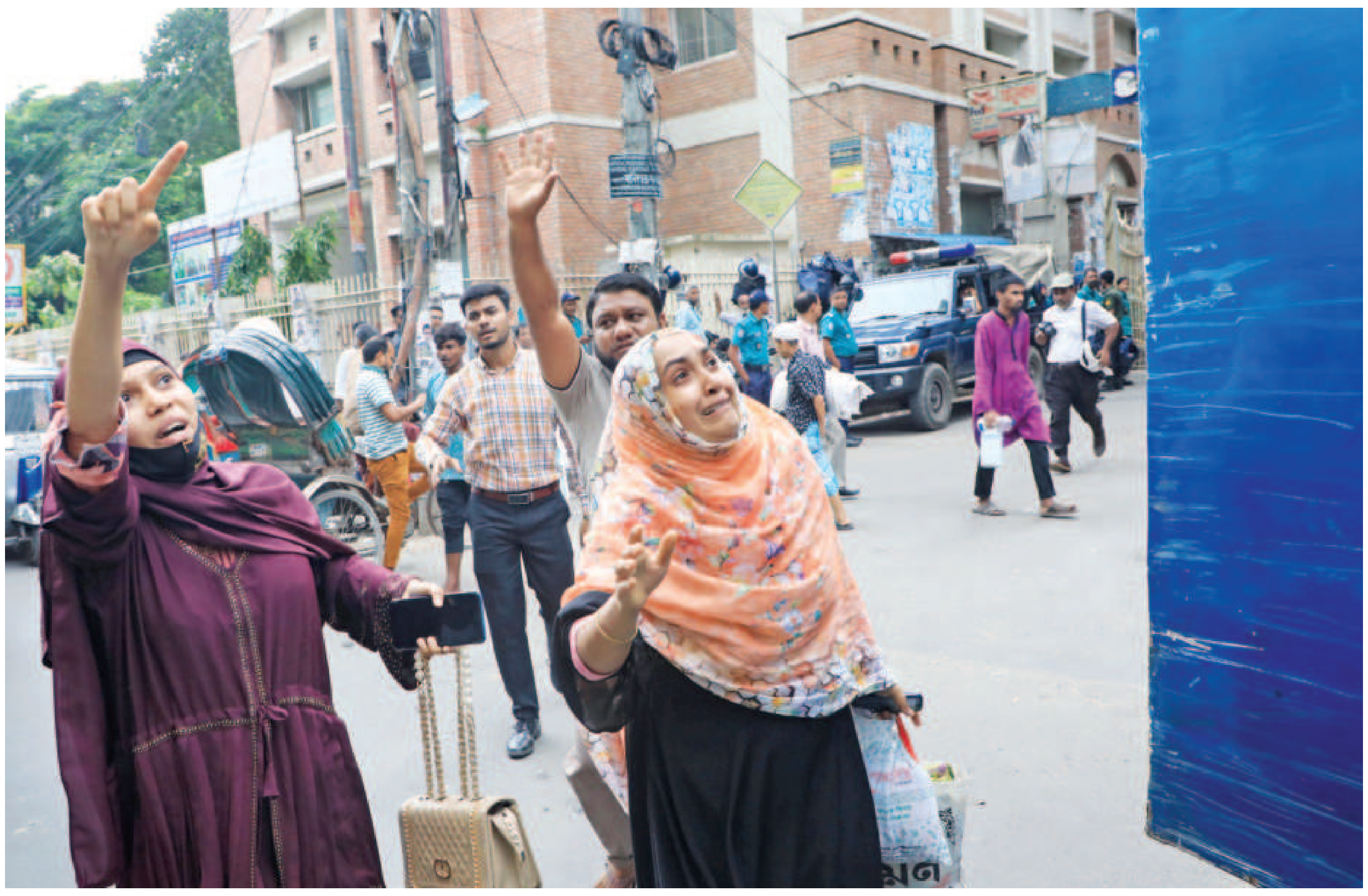
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detaining quota reform protest coordinators as a "weapon to suppress" the movement and making them read a statement withdrawing their programme on video is "flagrant deception and unconstitutional", said Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday.

In a statement, the anti-graft watchdog condemned the act, terming it "hypocrisy and illegal".

"To justify human rights violations -- large-scale killings, detentions, and unjust actions -- carried out by law enforcement agencies and to suppress the movement, the government, ruling party, state-run institutions, and Detective Branch (DB) have employed false narratives that are "self-destructive, anti-people, and cruel

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



A woman finally spots her husband inside a prison van while another breaks down in tears at the sight of her loved one. Yesterday, families thronged the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Dhaka to catch a glimpse of their relatives, who were arrested in cases filed over the recent violence.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Who picked up Nahid first time?

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Key organiser of the quota reform protest, Nahid Islam, a Dhaka University student, was allegedly picked up by law enforcers early on July 20, although law enforcers deny their involvement.

However, video footage obtained by The Daily Star shows that a vehicle of Rapid Action Battalion-3, one SUV, a microbus, and two motorcycles were present near the Sabujbagh residence from where Nahid was picked.

Nahid was found battered and unconscious in Purbachal over 24 hours later. He claimed he was physically tortured until he lost consciousness.

After regaining consciousness under a bridge, Nahid managed to reach home by auto-rickshaw and was subsequently hospitalised.

But he was picked up again while undergoing treatment at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital on July 26. This time, the Detective Branch (DB) claimed to have taken him and other coordinators of the quota reform movement into custody for "their safety".

Before Nahid was picked up by the DB again, he told this newspaper that plainclothes men, numbering 25-30, detained him after 2:00am the night he was picked up for the first time.

They broke into his friend's house, dragged him out, and took him inside a microbus, he said.

Before they blindfolded him, he spotted a Rab vehicle, he said, which is consistent with the eye witness accounts and the video this newspaper saw.

WHAT WE SAW

The Daily Star reviewed footage from various CCTV cameras near the building where Nahid was picked up from his friend's residence.

The footage confirms that at least one Rab-3 vehicle was present at the scene between 1:51am and 2:12am on July 20.

Around 1:51am, two motorcycles, an SUV, a microbus, and a Rab van stopped in front of a camera near Nandipara Govt Primary School in Sabujbagh.

Nahid's friend's house, where he slept that night, was only 100-150 metres away from this location.

These vehicles came from the Nandipara intersection side and returned from the same side after around 20 minutes.

During this period, Nahid was picked up, according to witnesses and Nahid himself.

Notably, the nationwide curfew had already begun by then, and only ambulances and a few trucks were moving around the area, aside from the vehicles that arrived with the Rab-3 vehicle.

CCTV footage showed that both motorcycles had pillions and most of the car seats were occupied. The first microbus was closer to the house.

The SUV and the Rab-3 van waited for 10 minutes. Four to five men were seen waiting and talking on the phone behind the SUV.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Don't harass innocents'

NHRC urges authorities to arrest saboteurs based on reliable information

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Bangladesh yesterday urged the authorities concerned to identify and try the saboteurs based on reliable and specific information in connection with the recent violence.

It also urged them not to make mass arrests and respect the human rights of the citizens.

Kamal Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the commission, said, "A number of lives were lost and national properties was destroyed in the violence, which is very unfortunate and a violation of human rights. No innocent person should be harassed while identifying and arresting the criminals."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

More than just NUMBERS

A 17-year-old boy shot dead in Rampura. A 16-year-old boy died from bullet wounds in Jatrabari. A 32-year-old furniture shop employee fatally shot in Chattogram. At least 163 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters during the recent unrest. But these victims are not just statistics; they are children, husbands, and friends. In this report, we try to know the story of three such names among these tragic numbers.

'Ma don't worry, I'll be home in two minutes'

Samudra's mother recalls his last words after the 17-year-old died of bullet injuries

MASHFIQ MIZAN

On every Friday, Mostofa Zaman Samudra, a 17-year-old SSC graduate, goes to Juma prayers with his father, Tajul Kal.

They did the same on July 19.

After prayers, Tajul returned to their rented apartment in Rampura, Samudra did not. He told his father that he would meet his friends, promising him he'd return shortly.

But he did not.

Hours later, Samudra's lifeless, bullet-ridden body was brought home on a rickshaw-van after police and BGB opened fire at protesters in Rampura.

Samudra was supposed to get admitted to Siddheswari College just a day later; instead, his body returned to his village in Munshiganj, wrapped in a white shroud for burial.

A MOTHER'S WORST FEAR REALISED

As Samudra did not return home, his mother, Masuda Jaman, grew anxious. She immediately called him. "Ma don't worry, I'll be home in two minutes," he reassured her.

However, as minutes turned into hours and repeated calls went unanswered, her fears intensified.

By that time, horrors engulfed Rampura, Banasree, and Badda as bullets

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

I couldn't save my boy, three bullets had pierced his body

Says father of slain 16-year-old Akash

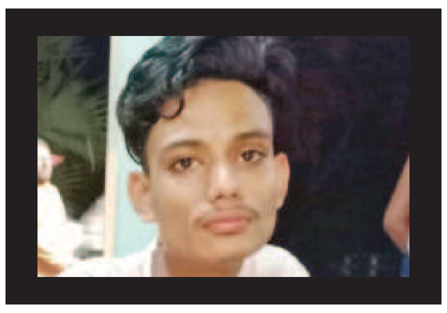
ANWARUL HAIDER, *Noakhali*

"We were going for breakfast when my son got shot. He died without even having something to eat."

Akram Hossain could not hold back his tears as he recounted the tragic incident on July 21, when his eldest son, Arafat Rahman Akash, 16, was fatally shot on Chittagong Road in Dhaka's Jatrabari area.

"Around 11:00am, after the curfew was relaxed, Akash and I went out to have breakfast near our home in Masjid Goli (alley). Suddenly there were shots fired, and people scattered and ran to wherever they could take shelter.

Akash was a few yards behind me, so I looked back to see if he was alright, and saw him lying on the ground," said Akram, a fruit vendor from Wasekpur village under Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila.



"At first, I thought he was scared and had laid down to take cover. As I got closer, I found him in a pool of blood. He was murmuring, 'Father, save me... save me'. But I couldn't save my boy. Three bullets had pierced his body."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Faruk's family stares at a bleak future

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Mohammad Faruk, 32, an employee at a furniture shop in Shulakbahar, Chattogram, was fatally shot as Jubo League and Chhatra League clashed with quota reform protesters on July 16.

He was returning to work from lunch in the Muradpur area.

Faruk's family, comprising his wife Sima Akhter, their eight-year-old son Fahim, and five-year-old daughter Fahima, now faces an uncertain future.

Faruk's father, Abdul Dulal, a van driver, said, "Faruk was crossing the road after having lunch at a hotel in Muradpur when he was shot around 3:00pm on July 16. He did not belong to any party or participate in the movement. Still, my son had to die," Abdul Dulal told The Daily Star.

Faruk, the second of four brothers and two sisters, was a pillar of support for his family.

He consistently sent money for his mother's medical treatment while managing his family's expenses. Despite their roots in Noakhali's Begumganj area, Faruk and his family had been living in Lalkhan Bazar, Chattogram, since his marriage to Sima Akhter 17 years ago.

Sima Akhter recounted their 17-year marriage and Faruk's eight years of work at the furniture store. "Faruk was always worried about the education of our children," she said.

On July 28, Abdul Dulal, accompanied by Sima and the children, visited the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

CENTRAL POLICE HOSPITAL

At least 259 cops took treatment there

DIPAN NANDY

For over a week, three-year-old Namira and one-year-old Nadira have had their smiles wiped off their faces.

Their father Syed Masudur Rahman, a traffic police sergeant, was their only playmate at home.

After returning home from work, he would spend some quality time with them before dinner.

But now, he lies on a hospital bed after a mob attacked him with iron rods and pipes.

On July 18, Masud, a sergeant of the Wari Traffic Division under Dhaka Metropolitan Police, left his Aftabnagar home for his duty.

But even before he could make it, he was attacked right near his house.

"I was beaten indiscriminately with sticks. I tried to enter a bank for shelter but I failed. Then, I was attacked again," he told The Daily Star at the Central Police Hospital in the capital's Rajarbagh recently.

With injuries to his head, face, hands, and legs, Masud contacted his seniors after he was finally able to take shelter inside the bank.

"But they couldn't reach the spot. Then my wife came there and begged the attackers to let me go. They made me apologise too. Finally, I was let go."

Masud said his right hand had been broken. He had to get eight stitches on one finger and 10 on his head.

"I could tell from the nature of the attack on me and other policemen that the attackers weren't students. Instead, students tried to stop them."

PHOTO: STAR

An injured traffic police at Central Police Hospital in the capital's Rajarbagh.

At least 47 other cops are currently being treated at the hospital, with one of them in the Intensive Care Unit.

Speaking to this correspondent, many of them, like Masud, said the attacks were not carried out by students.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

My conscience

FROM PAGE 5

that we have to probe each and every death through independent inquiries. Those responsible must be brought to justice. There can be no extrajudicial killings. This has to be solved politically and through discussion with all the stakeholders."

Regarding the violence, he said the damages to properties can be restored but "can we ever get back the lives that have been lost?"

"Each life is worth more than crores. They're priceless."

He also called upon the authorities to refrain from arresting students.

"I also have a message for students... this is your country, you have to build it... it is your responsibility... Do not lose hope. Better days will come," he said.

Urging patience, he asked students to stay on the path of truth and keep raising their voices against injustice.

Don't harass

FROM PAGE 3

"Law enforcement agencies are conducting drives to arrest saboteurs and miscreants to ensure public safety. In this case, various media outlets have published information about mass arrests. Many are terrified by it," he added.

The commission believes that collective efforts by all will ensure public safety and restore normalcy as soon as possible.

At least 259 cops

FROM PAGE 3

The same day he was attacked, Constable Aminul Islam of Khilgaon Police Station was on duty near Bangladesh Television Centre in Rampura.

"Soon after my duty started at 10:00am, chases and counter-chases took place with agitators for around three hours. Suddenly, we were surrounded from three sides. When I tried to move towards Hatirjheel, I bumped into another policeman and fell to the ground. That's when attackers began beating me up.

"Some pedestrians rescued me and brought me to the hospital."

Aminul had to get 60 stitches on his head alone. His left arm was broken.

In Uttara, Md Mohiuddin, assistant sub-inspector of Uttara West Police Station, was attacked the same day.

"I was going towards Abdullahpur on a motorcycle and was stopped by a group of attackers in front of the Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital. They attacked me with rods and machetes."

I entered the kitchen of a house to save myself, but they broke down the door and attacked me again. They beat me for around 25 minutes."

He said a group of people then tried to take him to the Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital but the attackers vandalised the ambulance he was in.

"They even beat the nurses inside the hospital. I could not get any treatment for almost five hours. My wife came to the hospital and they also beat her... Around 1:00am, I was able to get on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to head to the police hospital, but I was attacked once again at Mohakhali."

Constable Motaleb was attacked in Jatrabari.

"I was not in full uniform. But the moment the attackers in the area realised I was a policeman, they struck me on my head... I lost consciousness and don't remember anything after that."

Sheikh Md Rezaul Hayder, deputy inspector general and director of Central Police Hospital, said, "We've tried to provide treatment to all the injured policemen to the best of our abilities. We've already operated on around 30 critically injured patients.

"These treatments would cost up to Tk 2 crore, but we're providing them for free. A total of 259 police officials have been admitted to the hospital and three of them died."

Faruk's family

FROM PAGE 3

Prime Minister's office. They received Tk 50,000 in cash and a check for Tk 10 lakh. "I will not get my son back now. I am more worried about the future of my grandchildren," said Abdul Dulal. "This money may be of temporary benefit, but I don't know what the future will be like. Allah knows best."

Who picked up Nahid first time?

FROM PAGE 3

They opened the trunk twice, at 1:54am and 2:00am.

On the first occasion, one man placed his helmet in the trunk and later retrieved tools, including a large cutter.

Around 2:02am, the SUV moved towards the residence Nahid was in, followed by the Rab van.

Multiple eyewitnesses had told The Daily Star that the plainclothes men broke the locks of the building gates to detain Nahid.

A night guard from a nearby building reported that four to five of the total 25-30 plainclothes men jumped over the boundary wall to pass through the main gate.

He said they broke the lock of the main gate with an iron rod first. "Then they brought a cutter from a car and cut two locks of a collapsible gate," he said.

The CCTV footage also showed all three cars and the two bikes leaving the area at 2:12 am. Throughout the entire period, none of the eight uniformed Rab officials, including the driver, were seen getting out of their car.

Only people in plainclothes, which came in the other vehicles alongside the Rab one, moved around.

The Daily Star identified the SUV's registration number as Dhaka Metro Gha 144385.

However, attempts to verify the registration number with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority were unsuccessful as their server did not respond until filing of this report yesterday night.

Despite repeated attempts, Lt Col Kazi Zobayer Alam Shovon, Rab-3 commanding officer, did not pick up the call.

Lt Col Munim Ferdous, director, legal and media wing of Rab, said there was no involvement of Rab in picking up Nahid on July 20.

"Those were the early hours of curfew, and we had over 300 patrolling cars across the country. It might be a misunderstanding," he said.

Supreme Court advocate Shahdeen Malik said according to legal and constitutional provisions, law enforcement agencies must produce an arrested individual before the court within 24 hours.

He said since Nahid was not presented to the court within this timeframe, the actions of the law enforcers were illegal and beyond the law.

"It's an abduction case [picking up of Nahid] ... but as there is no accountability, no police station or magistrate will accept such a case against law enforcers," the eminent jurist added.

Ma don't worry, I'll be home

FROM PAGE 3

flew. On the scene, this reporter witnessed helicopters hovering low, firing teargas canisters and sound grenades, while police and BGB troops unleashed live rounds on the crowd.

Consequently, at least 13 bodies were counted in the nearby hospitals. One of them was Samudra's, lying in a pool of blood on the floor of Delta Hospital in Rampura.

When this newspaper saw Samudra's lifeless body, his phone continued to ring, displaying the name "Ma".

His mother was still calling. Eventually, a friend of Samudra answered and informed her, "Aunty, Samudra has been shot. He's at Delta Hospital. Please come quickly."

He couldn't tell the mother that her son had already died.

Tajul and Masuda rushed to the hospital amid the chaos on streets.

Upon arrival, they were told their son had died.

Masuda could not accept this. "The doctors said he was alive when brought in but died shortly after. But my Samudra's body was still warm. I felt his heart was still beating," she recounted tearfully.

In a desperate bid to find some trace of life, they took his body to Better Life Hospital. There, the doctors confirmed the inevitable.

A bullet had pierced his hand and lodged into his rib, causing severe blood loss and, ultimately, his death, confirmed the doctors.

Now the family is struggling to cope with the loss.

"Yes, he was shot. But I won't say who shot him. We don't know who did that. We don't want justice. My son is dead. I will not get him back. What's the point of asking for justice?" Masuda asked, breaking down in tears.

When our local correspondent visited Samudra's village in Munshiganj, he saw the obvious -- a family in shock.

His parents were sitting outside, surrounded by a few relatives.

They all spoke highly of Samudra. They said even at a young age, Samudra cared deeply for his friends and family.

He used to come to Munishganj every weekend and was the centre of attention among the local children. He also helped arrange sporting events in both Munshiganj and Rampura.

(Our Munshiganj correspondent Tanjil Hasan contributed to this report)

It's a flagrant

FROM PAGE 3

theatrics," which people have no reason to trust," said TIB.

According to media, in the capital alone, over 200 cases have been filed indiscriminately against over 2,13,000 people in connection with violence in the movement, it said, adding that mass arrests are going on by law enforcement agencies.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said it is unethical and an abhorrent crime to force the coordinators of the movement to read out a statement in a video message to give up protests while under detention, following "abductions" in the DB headquarters under the ridiculous pretext of "providing safety."

"From what we have seen in the media, there are sufficient grounds to be concerned that the coordinators were under duress after abduction and torture under detention," he added. Moreover, there is no legal basis for "abduction or detention for safety", he added.

"Abducting and detaining students for their role in a fully non-political and peaceful movement for genuine rights is a clear violation of Article 33 of the constitution. Similarly, coercing the coordinators to call off protests by reading out a statement is a violation of Article 35(4) of the constitution," he said.

I couldn't save

FROM PAGE 3

"As I screamed, some people rushed in and took us to two private hospitals nearby, but neither admitted my son for treatment. Then my nephew Pavel managed an ambulance to take us to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. By the time we reached the hospital, Akash had bled to death. My son asked me to save him, but I could not..."

Akram broke down as he recounted the events to this correspondent over phone. Akram, 45, his wife Laili Begum, 35, and their daughter Fahima Sultana Ankhi, a 10th grader, are struggling to cope with their loss.

Akash, the eldest of three siblings, had joined his father in selling fruits in Dhaka after failing his Secondary School Certificate test exams last year. His younger brother Adnan, 5, is a first grader at a local madrasa.

"The headteacher of Akash's school demanded Tk 10,000 to fill up his registration form for the SSC examination, but I could not manage the money. So, Akash left his studies and moved to Dhaka around six months ago to help me sell fruits," Akram said.

Since the boy's death, his mother has been in an unstable condition, fainting frequently and unable to eat or drink.

"My son was innocent. He would never leave the house without asking me. He did not even chat with others in the area. My husband is a poor man. We live in someone else's house; we don't have our own home," Laili said.

Akash's sister Fahima added, "My brother could not even appear in the SSC exam. There is no reason for him to join the anti-quota movement. I want justice for my brother's death."

Echoing her, Akram demanded, "I want those who shot my innocent son to be identified, brought to justice, and punished."

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 30

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

IFIC
IFIC Bank PLC
IFIC Tower, 61 Purana Paltan, GPO Box: 2229, Dhaka 1000. www.ificbank.com.bd

নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি'র মালিকানাধীন তফসিল বর্ণিত সম্পত্তি বিক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত মোতাবেক উপযুক্ত ক্রেতাসাধারণের নিকট হইতে সিলমোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

নিলামের শর্তাবলি

১। উদ্ধৃত দরের শতকরা ২% এর সমপরিমাণ অর্থ আর্নেস্ট মানি হিসাবে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা-এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সহিত জমা দিতে হইবে।
২। দরপত্র আগামী ১১ আগস্ট, ২০২৪ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে সুরমা টাওয়ার, (লেভেল-১), ১৩ মনি সিংহ রোড, ৫৯/২ (পুরানো), পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা ১০০০ এ রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাক্সে জমা দিতে হইবে। ঐদিন সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্রসমূহ দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) খোলা হইবে।
৩। কোনো কারণ ব্যতিরেকে যেকোনো/সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা ব্যাংক সংরক্ষণ করে।
৪। সফল দরপত্র দাতাকে স্ট্যাম্প ডিউটি, রেজিস্ট্রেশন খরচ, ভূমিকরসহ অন্যান্য যাবতীয় খরচ বহন করিতে হইবে।
৫। দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে নিলামে অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তিগণ বিস্তারিত তথ্য অবগত হইবার জন্য নিম্ন প্রদত্ত মোবাইল নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করিতে পারিবেন।

Schedule of the Property-1

All that piece & parcel of land containing by admeasurements measuring more or less 02 Acres 52.00 decimals of land situated at District- Meherpur, Police Station- Meherpur Sadar, J.L. No.- 65, 58, Mouza- Basantapur, Khatian Numbers C.S – 121, SA-250, RS-250/779, 412, Dag Numbers- CS & SA- 36, 40, 41, RS- 166, 168,165 with Boundary Walls, Factory Sheds, Offices & Building & structures constructed thereon along with all others rights, interest, easements and benefits attached thereto standing in the name of IFIC Bank PLC, Principal Branch, Dhaka.

যোগাযোগ : ১. মোহাম্মদ কামরুল হাসান, সার্ভিস এন্ড এস্টেট ডিভিশন (মোবা : ০১৭০৮ ৫২০৮৬০)
২. মোঃ সুজন রহমান, সার্ভিস এন্ড এস্টেট ডিভিশন (মোবা : ০১৭১১ ৬৭৯৫২৮)

হেড অব সার্ভিস এন্ড এস্টেট ডিভিশিন
আইএফআইসি ব্যাংক পিএলসি

☎ 16255

PUBALI BANK PLC.
REGISTERED OFFICE
26 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

Disclosure relating to un-audited Second Quarter (Q2) Financial Statements

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank PLC. in its 1442nd Meeting held on Monday, 29 July 2024 at 3.00 PM in the Board Room of the Bank's Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka has approved **the un-audited Second Quarter (Q2) Financial Statements of the Bank** as on **June 30, 2024** and disclosed the following key financial indicators of the Bank:

Particulars	As on 30 June 2024		As on 30 June 2023	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Operating Profit	11,350,983,344	11,512,116,113	6,828,919,888	6,934,628,124
Net Profit/(Loss) after Taxation	4,191,808,769	4,315,527,337	2,713,786,918	2,782,752,111
Net Asset Value (NAV)	50,306,464,359	51,231,701,551	43,218,355,402	43,947,470,588
NAV Per Share	43.49	44.29	42.03	42.74
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	3.62	3.73	*2.35	*2.41
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	17.00	17.15	(1.36)	(2.28)

*Restated

The details of **the un-audited Second Quarter (Q2) Financial Statements** ended on **June 30, 2024** is also available in the website of the Bank at **www.pubalibangla.com**.

Dated: 29 July 2024
Dhaka, Bangladesh

By order of the Board
sd/-
Md. Anisur Rahman
Company Secretary

PRAGATI LIFE INSURANCE LTD.
TRUST US FOR LIFE
Head Office: Pragati Insurance Bhaban, 20-21, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

INVITATION FOR TENDER

The Company is going to Construct a 14-Storey Building with 2 Basements on its own land in Gulshan. In this regard, Contractors and Suppliers are urgently required for the following Works & Supplies :

(a) Hiring a qualified Civil Contractor for Boring, Drilling and Casting of Cast-in-Situ "Shore Pile" with part Construction Materials.
(b) Hiring a qualified Civil, Electrical, Sanitary & Plumbing Sub-Contractor.
(c) To Supply High Strength Deformed Rod of 500 MPa & 550 MPa manufactured from imported pure 'IRON BILLETS'.
(d) To Supply Ordinary Portland Cement, Portland Composite Cement and White Cement Manufactured by Multinational Companies and with Class-1 imported CLINKERS.
(e) To Supply Ready Mix. Concrete (RMC) of Designed Strength of 3000 PSI, 3500 PSI, 4000 PSI and 4500 PSI with high densile Black Stone Chips from Indian or Middle East Origine, 100% Coarse Sand (FM ≥ 2.2) and permissible quantity of Greasing material and Water Proofing Reagent (When needed).

- **Schedule Collection :** On any Office Day within working hour up to 8th August, 2024.
- **Closing :** Bid will be closed on 22th August, 2024 at 3:00 PM.
- **The Qualifications and Experience :** Prescribed for each Work and Supply [(a) - (e)] are set out in the Tender Schedule which can be purchased @ Tk. 2,000/- (Two thousand) only for [(a) & (b)]
- **Contract Person :** Engr. Amal Sarker, PM (SEVP). Mobile : 01322-878448 , E-mail : amal.sarker@pragatilife.com

The Authority has right to accept or reject any or all of tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Invitation for Bids - for Purchase of US-origin soybeans

for any country/port within SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area)

Monetization agents Cantera Partners, Omaha, Nebraska, USA and RPXI Consulting, Delhi, New York, USA, on behalf of U.S. non-profit organizations, request bids for the purchase of **40,000 metric tons** (+/- 15%) of whole U.S. Yellow Soybeans, with usual USDA No. 2 specifications. The soybeans will be sold (monetized) under USDA Food For progress program.

The loading/shipment period from U.S. export port(s) is estimated in OCT 2024. Commodities will be sold at CFR Free Out terms to Buyer's selected seaport(s) capable of servicing min. "Handymax" vessels.

For full tender with specifications and details, and standard Purchase Agreement that the winning bidder(s) would be expected to finalize and sign as Buyer(s), please consult Cantera Partners website at www.canterapartners.com/soybeans/SAFTA/

Cantera/RPXI will consider/accept bids for a minimum bidding tonnage of 5,000 metric tons and/or for any tonnage (and combinations) between 5,000 metric tons and 40,000 metric tons.

Questions about the bidding process, terms or purchase may be referred by email to Mr. Ben Kalhorn to bid@canterapartners.com or to Mr. Matt Krzyston at krzyston@rpxi.com

Interested parties need to submit their bids by Tuesday, 6th August 2024, by close of business, US Central Time.

No decision on reopening edu institutes

Says minister; teachers to continue movement over pension scheme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury yesterday said the current situation is not conducive to reopening educational institutions. He said this during a meeting with university teachers at the education ministry regarding pension issues, reports UNB.

When asked if there had been any discussion in the cabinet yesterday about reopening primary schools, he said, "I will not comment on this now. Discussions that take place in the cabinet are not meant to be discussed outside."

Meanwhile, Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA), told this correspondent, "In the meeting, the participants came to an in-principle decision that teachers would be excluded from the Prottoy scheme."

The summary of the discussion would be sent to the higher authorities, to make further decisions, he added.

"Until we see a final notification, our movement will continue."

Prof Abdur Rahim, joint secretary general of the FBUTA, said, "We had a positive discussion with almost all stakeholders concerning our demands. The respective authorities did not deny the rationality of our demands."

Chief of the standing committee of the education ministry, Nurul Islam Nahid, along with the finance ministry secretary and pension scheme authorities, also attended the meeting.

A mother gives her son a hug before the police put him up in a prison van and take him to jail. Such scenes have become frequent on the Chattogram's 6th Metropolitan Magistrate Court premises, as 532 people, including over 126 students, have so far been arrested in the port city over the past week in violence cases. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

VIOLENCE CASES IN PORT CITY

Over 126 students arrested in a week

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, *Ctg*

On Sunday, Rezaul Karim Kusum Chowdhury was waiting at Chattogram's 6th Metropolitan Magistrate Court for a bail petition hearing for his nephew Talha Mahmood Chowdhury, who was arrested in a violence case over the quota reform protests.

Talha, a final-year student at East Delta University, was arrested from the Agrabad area in the port city on July 17 and was handed over to Khulshi Police Station on July 18, where he was shown arrested.

However, the court rejected his bail petition.

On the court premises, Rezaul, a freedom fighter, told The Daily Star, "Police picked Talha up without verifying his identity and sent him to court. We told them that he is not involved with any political parties or violence but they did not pay heed."

"We filed two petitions for his bail but the court rejected them. Talha has already been taken for remand," he said.

Many other students and their guardians were also seen on the court premises.

Over 126 students from different educational institutions, including Chittagong University, were arrested in the past week till Sunday, according to the court's GRO sections and prison sources.

Police officials said they are arresting the anarchists who were directly involved with the subversive activities.

So far, Chattogram Metropolitan Police has arrested 532 people, including leaders and activists of BNP and Jamaat, in connection with 20 cases filed over violence and subversive activities.

Ramjan Sheikh, a first-year CU student, was arrested on July 18 in a murder case filed by police with Panchlaish Police Station.

At the court premises, his father Mostafa Sheikh, a mason by profession, said his son is innocent and not involved with any kind of politics.

"We could not trace him until police sent him to the court on July 20," he added.

In front of the court's lockup, Ramjan said, "I took part in the protests in Muradpur on July 16. On July 18, a group of BCL men came to my house in Forest Research Institute area and took me to Parkview Hospital, where injured BCL men are undergoing treatment. Later, I was handed over to police."

"A local BCL man named Arif took me from my house," he added.

However, The Daily Star could not verify Ramjan's information independently.

Meanwhile, Lutfur Rahman, a student of Finance and Banking at CU, was arrested from his residence on July 17, said Prof Hasmat Ali of the department.

"On information, six teachers, including me, went to Panchlaish Police Station. Police showed him arrested in a violence case. The duty officer told us they found some photos and videos related to the protests on his cell phone," said Prof Hasmat.

Contacted, Mokhleshur Rahman, deputy commissioner of CMP's North Zone, said, " After looking at videos and CCTV footage, we are arresting those involved in clashes on July 16 and July 18."

Meanwhile, a BCL man filed another case accusing 50 persons and 30 to 35 unnamed persons with Panchlaish Police Station.

With this, a total of 20 cases have been filed in the port city, accusing over 200 named and 30,000 unnamed people.

Arif Hossen, AC of Panchlaish Zone, said, "Seven cases were lodged with Panchlaish Police Station, five of which were lodged by BCL men and their family members, while two were lodged by police."

'My conscience brought me here today'

Says Sohel Taj after failing to meet six quota leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for home Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj was not allowed to meet the six coordinators of the quota reform protests when he went to visit them in the DB custody yesterday.

He visited the DB office in the capital's Minto Road around 5:00pm and stayed there for around one and a half hours.

Talking to the media afterwards, he said he asked DB chief Harun Or Rashid why these coordinators were brought here, whether they were arrested, and when they would be released.

However, Harun did not give a satisfactory answer, he said.

Sohel Taj said he had three questions for the DB chief.

"My first question was: are they arrested or taken into safe custody? The second question was: if they have been arrested, I have nothing to say. But if they have been taken into safe custody, I want to meet them," he said.

And his third question was: when will they be released from safe custody?

The DB chief replied that they will be released once he gets order from the high-ups.

Explaining his reason for coming to the DB office, Sohel Taj said there was unrest in the country centring the quota protests. Over a hundred people, including children, students and general people, have been killed, he said.

"My conscience brought me here."

"I believe there is a need for resolution. To achieve

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Tying Faiyaz with ropes was a mistake

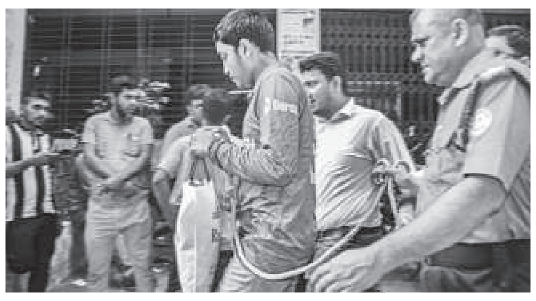
Govt tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday told the High Court that taking Dhaka College student Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz on remand and tying him with ropes was a mistake and that it will take steps so that such mistakes are not repeated.

His (Faiyaz) remand has already been cancelled and he was sent to the Child Development Centre, Additional Attorney General SM Munir told the HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar and Justice SM Maniruzzaman during the hearing of a writ petition.

Supreme Court lawyer Shahdeen Malik filed the petition with the HC on Sunday, challenging the legality of taking a 17-year-old boy on a seven-day remand in a case lodged with Jatrabari Police Station on charges of "clashes and vandalism".



Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, a first-year HSC student of Dhaka College, is tied up with ropes as cops take him on a seven-day remand after he was produced before the CMM Court in the capital. Faiyaz was picked up from his Jatrabari home on Wednesday night in connection with a case filed over recent violence. PHOTO: **STAR**

Yesterday, the HC bench rejected the petition, considering that it was not presented before it as the matter has become infructuous (ineffective) after Faiyaz's remand has been cancelled.

Shahdeen Malik and Md Monjur Alam moved the petition while Additional Attorney General and Acting Attorney General SM Munir and Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed, who represented the state, opposed it.

On July 27, Faiyaz was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Dhaka, and the court placed him on a seven-day remand as the investigating officer of the case had sought.

Though the accused claimed that he is a child, the court granted the remand prayer as he failed to produce proof of his age.

On Sunday, accused Faiyaz submitted the relevant documents (SSC and birth certificates) in support of his age before the CMM court.

The court suspended his remand and sent Faiyaz to the Children's Court for hearing and passing order determining his age.

540 dorm rooms, 25 offices of 9 univs damaged: UGC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 540 rooms and 25 offices of the dormitories of nine public universities were either vandalised or damaged during the recent spell of unrest that ensued during the quota reform protests.

University Grants Commission's statistics show that universities will need at least Tk 28.80 crore to repair the damages.

UGC officials compiled the data until Sunday, collecting information from the public universities which also shows that the vice chancellor's office and residence at Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University and VC's residence at Jahangirnagar University were vanadalised.

Dhaka University VC Prof ASM Maksud Kamal said around 300 rooms of different halls were vandalised.

The university authorities will repair the halls after getting financial allocation from UGC, he added.

"We complied the data as these damaged rooms and offices will need to be repaired. We will send a proposal to the government so that universities get funds for repair work," said UGC Secretary Ferdous Zaman.

According to UGC, 300 rooms from 13 halls in DU were vandalised, some were even set on fire. The university faced damages amounting to Tk 4.93 crore.

Similarly, offices in 10 halls of Rajshahi University were vandalised, with the university suffering damages totalling Tk 4.04 crore.

A total of 226 rooms across 10 halls of Jahangirnagar University were vandalised. The university has suffered damages amounting to Tk 1.5 crore.

Meanwhile, Rangpur University suffered damages worth Tk 3.19 crore.

KHULNA SHIPYARD LIMITED
BANGLADESH NAVY, KHULNA
CORRIGENDUM

Ref. Tender No: BABE (F)-632/NAVCOM/2024-2025 Dated 11 July 2024

Hereby, this is to notify that Khulna Shipyard Ltd has decided to change clause no: 02 at Ref. tender for various type of Navigation and Communication Items due to unavoidable Country's situation which will be following:

FOR.
2. DUE FOR OPENING ON: 31 July 2024

Read.
2. DUE FOR OPENING ON: 12 August 2024 & for that schedule last selling date 11 August 2024.

All other terms and conditions will be remain unchanged.

DGM (Purchase)

GD-88

Bagerhat grapples with dilapidated roads

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

A significant portion of the Bagerhat municipality's 78.30-kilometre road network is in a dilapidated state and making transportation an ordeal for its 1.5 lakh residents.

Lack of repairs and maintenance for over a decade led to the present situation, affecting peoples' daily commute and business activities, said locals.

Visiting different areas across Bagerhat town, this correspondent found that most of the major thoroughfares, including the ones connecting between Noor Mosque and LGED Intersection, Rahat Intersection and Chanmari Bridge, as well as the road leading to Government Women's College, are in a deplorable condition.

Even the road along the central bus terminal, and those in residential areas like Kharadwar, Basabat, and Sahapara, are barely passable.

"We have to ply the roads through numerous potholes daily, amid discomfort to both passengers and ourselves, while bearing risk of frequent accidents," said Ajit Das, an easy-bike driver.

Zakir Sheikh, a local businessman, said, "Commuting daily through these dilapidated roads to workplace is a challenging task, even for pedestrians."

Badol Das, a bus driver, said their vehicles often sustain damages due to the poor condition of the roads, especially the one connecting the central bus terminal.

Residents, commuters, and transport workers urged the authorities concerned to repair and renovate the roads urgently to mitigate their sufferings.

Contacted, Mohammad Khaled Hossain, deputy commissioner of Bagerhat, acknowledged the issue.

"Work to repair 11 roads in the town has begun, while plans are on to initiate work on 11 more roads. Hopefully the situation will improve once the renovation works are completed," he said.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
AZIMPUR PWD DIVISION, NEWMARKET, DHAKA.
Phone No: 02-223360276
e-mail: ee_ajmpr@pwd.gov.bd.

INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM)

Memo No-25.36.2600.142.07.009.24-160 Dated: 14.04.1431 Bang. / 29.07.2024Eng.

e-tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Executive Engineer, Azimpur PWD Division. Newmarket, Dhaka.

Tender ID No.	Brief Description	Tender Documents Publication Date & Time.	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Documents Closing/Opening Date & Time
1003226	Construction of Multi storied residential flat for Government Officers in Azimpur Govt. Colony Zone-A, Dhaka. (Package no. W-10/A-2: Remaining works for Construction of 1 no. 1800 sft. 20 storied building & utility buildings i.e. facing bricks, shower enclosure, granite, kitchen cabinet, kitchen hood, aluminum louver, WPC door shutter, MS gas pipeline related internal electric works & other finishing works). FY: 2023-24	30-Jul-2024 13:00	28-Aug-2024 11:00	28-Aug-2024 13:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mohammad Moniruzzaman)
Executive Engineer,
Azimpur PWD Division
Newmarket, Dhaka.

GD-84

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Chattogram PWD Division-1, Chattogram.

Invitation for Tender

Memo No. 25.36.1500.111.1307(42)/2 Date. 28/07/2024

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Housing and Public Works
2	Agency	Public Works Department (PWD)
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Engineer, Chattogram. PWD Division-1.
4	Procuring Entity District	Chattogram.
5	Invitation for	Procurement of Non-Consulting Service.
6	Invitation Ref No	PWD/ Ctg Div-1/2024-25/ Outsourcing-01
7	Date	28/07/2024
Key Information		
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
9	Tender Package Name	Supply of Drivers (Category- 02) for Executive Engineer of PWD Division-1 as well as for Sub –Divisional Engineer, PWD Sub-Division-1 & for Sub-Divisional Engineer, PWD Patiya Sub-Division, on Outsourcing Basis for FY2024-2025..
10	Tender Publication Date	28/07/2024
11	Tender Last Selling Date	11/08/2024 on time 4:00 PM.
12	Tender Closing Date and Time	12/08/2024 on time 12:00 PM.
13	Tender Opening Date and Time	Tender will be opened on 12/08/2024 at1 12:30 PM. in the office of the Executive Engineer, Chattogram PWD Division-1. Chattogram. Intending Tenderers or their authorized representatives may remain present during opening of tender.
14	Name & Address of the office(s)	
	a) Selling Tender Documents (Principle)	Office of the Executive Engineer, Chattogram PWD Division-1. Chattogram.
	b) Selling Tender Documents (Others)	All working PWD Division under Chattogram P.W.D Zone.
	c) Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD Chattogram Circle-1 Chattogram. Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division- 1, Chattogram
	d) Opening Tender Document	Office of the Executive Engineer, PWD Division-1, Chattogram.

29.07.24
(Mohammed Farhan Shahriar)
Assistant Engineer (Staff Officer)
Chattogram P.W.D. Division-1
Rahmatgonj Chattogram.

28.07.24
(Md. Kamrul Islam Khan)
Executive Engineer,
Chattogram P.W.D. Division-1
Rahmatgonj Chattogram.

GD- 86

71 for BABITA

Bangla's sensational diva

PHOTOS: **SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL**

> **Everything I have received in my artistic life is an achievement. However, the love of the people is the greatest achievement of an artist's life.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Today marks the 71st birthday of veteran actress Babita.Recently, she was diagnosed with COVID-19. She returned home after four days of treatment at a private hospital in the capital.

Babita began her journey in cinema 50 years ago. From romantic to social films, the actress is known for her mesmerising performance throughout her career. She has countless fans both at home and abroad.

The Daily Star caught up with her to learn about her health updates, her birthday plans, and more.

"Suddenly, I contracted the virus, however, I returned home after the tests came back negative. I am still feeling weak, and doctors also suggested to take plenty of rest," shared the actress.

As we spoke, she sighed that she was supposed to spend her birthday with her son in Canada. "I was so careful, yet, I got infected with COVID. Sadly, despite confirming my tickets I couldn't visit my son."

Babita elaborated that she doesn't have any plans for her birthday. "As soon as I return to normal health, I will fly to Canada. I wish to spend time with my son. Today, I am missing him a lot."

Babita is grateful to everyone who wished her on her birthday. "So many people reached out to me, and I am grateful to them. People still love me today, and this makes me feel that life is extremely beautiful."

When asked about her achievements during her entire career, the once sensational actress said, "Everything I have received in my artistic life is an achievement. However, the love of the people is the greatest achievement of an artist's life. People's love is the biggest achievement of an artist's life. There can be no greater reward than this."

Recalling a memory from a year ago, Babita said, "Last year, a significant event happened in my life. As I visited my son during my birthday, I went to Dallas from Canada. The mayor there honoured me with a lifetime achievement award. I will always remember the event."

When asked about her once favourite place, BFDC, the ***Asani Sanket*** actress said, "I haven't been to BFDC in a long time. I don't feel like going. As far as I know, the floors from our time are being demolished. There will be a multi-story building there."

She further said, "We have countless joyful memories surrounding BFDC. There are memories of shooting many movies there."

Badshah becomes first Asian rapper to hit 1b views

Indian rapper Badshah's popular rendition of ***Kala Chashma***, featuring Katrina Kaif and Siddharth Malhotra from ***Baar Baar Dekho*** (2016) has surpassed 1 billion views on YouTube.

This is the first time an Indian rapper has reached such a milestone.

The original song was composed by Prem Hardeep and Kam Dhillon, while Badshah composed the remixed version. The film's song features the voices of Amar Arshi, Badshah, and Neha Kakkar.

Kala Chashma became an international sensation almost a year after its release when it got popular for dancing reels on TikTok.

Marzuk Russell reports fake Facebook profiles to police

Lyricist and actor Marzuk Russell has reported numerous fake Facebook accounts to the Detective Branch (DB) of Police. These impostor accounts, which post provocative statuses against government officials, have caused significant embarrassment for him, according to the actor.

On Sunday, Marzuk visited the DB office on the capital's Minto Road to seek redress.

Marzuk revealed there are over 50 fake accounts using his name and photo, some with more followers than his real account. He expressed deep embarrassment and noted the confusion these accounts cause among his family and fans.

He urged his followers to stay away from the fake profiles and has previously gone live to warn them.

NEWS

Another dies

FROM PAGE 12

However, the overall death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

Meanwhile, a government report presented to Cabinet yesterday by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan put the death toll at 150.

Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain informed journalists of the development at a press conference after the cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the afternoon.

On Sunday, the home minister said at least 147 people died during the recent violence.

Djokovic

FROM PAGE 12

Nadal admitted Djokovic was the "clear favourite" ahead of their first clash in more than two years, with the Spaniard a shadow of the player who reigned for the best part of two decades at Roland Garros.

While 14 of Nadal's 22 Grand Slams have come in Paris, the 38-year-old has been plagued by injuries in recent years and he has slumped to 161st in the world.

More than 10,000 arrested

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block raids anymore, they will no longer provide data on arrests and cases.

Yesterday's arrests across the country include two in Thakurgaon, eight in Madaripur, three in Dinajpur, 24 in Rangpur, seven in Feni, 69 in Gazipur, one in Sylhet, five in Tangail, 18 in Rajshahi, 19 in Bogura, three in Gaibandha, one in Barguna, 33 in Narsingdi, 51 in Narayanganj, six in Joypurhat, three in Khulna, 11 in Pabna, 20 in Kushtia, five in Mymensingh, 18 in Kishoreganj, five Netrokona, four in Satkhira, six in Naogoan, six in Cumilla, four in Natore, two in Panchagarh, 23 in Chattogram, one in Chandpur, two in Chuadanga, two in Manikganj, three in Savar, one in Bhola, one in Nilphamari, four in Brahmanbaria, two in Noakhali, three in Munshiganj, two in Laxmipur, seven in Sirajganj and one in Barishal.

Besides, Rab yesterday said they have so far arrested 334 people across the country, including 83 in Dhaka, since July 18 over the recent violence.

MORE ON REMAND

Two Dhaka courts yesterday placed nine more people, including a former Brac University teacher, a quota movement coordinator, and several BNP leaders, on remand in two cases filed over the recent violence.

Asif Mahtab, a former teacher of Brac University, and Arif Sohel, one of the coordinators of the quota reform movement and a student of Jahangirnagar University, were placed on a six-day remand each in a case filed over the attack on Setu Bhaban in the city on July 18.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam passed the order after investigating officer Abu Sayeed Miah, an inspector of the Detective Branch of Police, produced them before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

Asif Mahtab was picked up from his Dhaka residence around 1:00am on Saturday, while Arif Sohel was picked up from his home near the JU around 4:00am on Sunday, according to family members.

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson's special assistant Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas and six others were placed on a four-day remand each in a case filed over vandalism at the Bangladesh Television (BTV) Bhaban in Rampura on July 18.

The six others are BNP's Dhaka North City unit President Saiful Alam Nirob, Dhaka South City unit President Rafiqul Alam Majnu, former BNP lawmaker M Rashiduzzaman Millat, Senior Joint Convenor of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal of Ward No-19 unit Mohiuddin Hridoy, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Chairman Syed Ehsanul Huda, and BNP leader Md Tariqul Islam.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rashidul Alam passed the remand order after case investigating officer Mohammad Yasin Shikder, also a DB inspector, produced them before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

Earlier in the day, all the accused were shown arrested in the case.

They were produced before the court upon completion of their five-day remand in a case filed over the attack on Setu Bhaban on July 18.

74 eminent citizens

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restoration of the overall educational environment.

Additionally, they asked the government to declare a period of national mourning to honour and respect those killed and seriously injured.

The citizens demanded the immediate disclosure of the actual number, names, and identities of the deceased, injured, and affected individuals. The government must provide adequate compensation to the families of the deceased, take full responsibility for the medical treatment of the injured, and ensure the rehabilitation of those who have lost their eyes and limbs, they said.

The eminent citizens strongly condemned the arbitrary arrests and detention of students and citizens based on fabricated charges and urged the government to cease these repressive activities, dismantle torture cells, and restore a conducive educational environment by addressing the students' demands.

Unlawful arrests, detentions, and harassment by police and Rab must cease immediately, the statement read.

Furthermore, they called for the lifting of the curfew and the withdrawal of all equipment used for repression and intimidation.

They also emphasised the need to ensure the free flow of information by ending the control over the internet and stopping the harassment of dissenters.

The statement also urged the people to rise above party and play an active and responsible role in this critical situation.

The statement was signed by prominent human rights activists Sultana Kamal, Dr Hameeda Hossain, Khushi Kabir, Rasheda K Choudhury, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Dr Meghna Guhathakurta; economists, Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, Professor Anu Muhammad, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya; lawyers and constitutional experts Advocate ZI Khan Panna, Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Professor Dr Asif Nazrul, Dr Shahdeen Malik; women's rights activist Shirin Huq, and 59 others.

I'll never again tell anyone

FROM PAGE 12

happens when a blow places more pressure on the bones than they can withstand.

In Mehedi's case, at least one bullet pierced through inches under his right knee.

A student of journalism at Stamford University Bangladesh, he was hit near Better Life Hospital in Rampura area around 4:00pm when he was standing on a footpath during violence centring on quota protests, according to family sources.

First, he was treated in a private hospital in the area, from where he was later taken to Holy Family.

His detailed medical records could not be obtained as four policemen stood guard around his bed yesterday noon. But five medical professionals of the hospital familiar with his condition said he was now out of danger, but under heavy medication to fight infections.

Utpal Barua, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, confirmed that police personnel were guarding Mehedi in shifts round the clock.

"He is under arrest in two cases, including one filed over the attack on BTV centre," the OC told The Daily Star last night.

Police will take him to the police station or produce him before the court upon his discharge, hospital sources said, citing conversations among police officials that they overheard.

Mehedi's father Jamal Uddin cannot believe this.

An office assistant at a private company for 23 years, Jamal said he sacrificed way too much to support his son's education. For many years, his colleagues also offered financial assistance.

Over a year ago, Mehedi opened a shoe store in Malibagh with a friend to support his family as well as his education, said Jamal, who cannot even visit the hospital to see his son out of fear that he might get arrested and lose his job.

Now Jamal blames himself for ever sending his son to school in the first place.

"I will never again tell anyone to send their children to schools. Because when they grow up, students learn to protest. If my son were a rickshaw-puller, he would not have joined the quota protests. Then he would not have been in this predicament today. Is it not?" he said, and started sobbing.

Stop arrest, abduction of students

FROM PAGE 12

systematic repression at educational institutions by pro-government student bodies and the anarchy in the state and at educational institutions over the past five decades since independence, said Prof Ferdous.

"We support every demand of the students," he said.

Referring to pre-liberation era history, Prof Abdul Hasib Chowdhury, former president of Buet Teachers' Association, said in February 1969, Prof Shamsuzzoha embraced martyrdom while protecting students and now they have gathered here as his successors.

"Our students, who are fighting for their rights and against inequality, are the successors of freedom fighters," he said.

Prof Kamrul Hassan Mamun, of Dhaka University's physics department, said a professor from the University of California, after watching foreign media, expressed concern over the situation in Bangladesh. "But where are the teachers of our country? Why so a few teachers are here?

Nasir Uddin Ahmed, associate professor of Jagannath University's English department, criticised police for filing cases against students and urged the authorities to stop such practices. He also demanded reopening of universities so that students can return to studies.

Dhaka University teacher Rushad Faridi, BRAC University teacher Saimum Reza Talukder, Khulna University Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury, and Jahangirnagar University Prof Masud Imran, among others, spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University authorities yesterday urged law enforcement agencies and other concerned to ensure no innocent student is harassed over the recent violence.

The university administration has instructed students to report to the Proctor's Office if they face any harassment, said a press release.

Students will be provided with necessary assistance in such cases, it added.

Noted citizens

FROM PAGE 12

Moreover, in cases filed by police, general students and public have been made responsible for the violence. This has raised questions in the minds of ordinary citizens about the entire investigation process. There is a demand to unveil the truth behind these incidents. Though newspapers reported at least 209 deaths in the violence, the official count is 147," the release reads.

Attempts have been made to control the students involved in the protests through various violent means, including torture, shootings, and mass arrests. There have been allegations of gross violations of the constitution, customary law, and human rights, it adds.

Therefore, uncovering the causes of these incidents, fair investigation and trial have become a necessity, it said.

The commission members are former justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court Md Abdul Matin, lawyer Sultana Kamal, senior lawyer ZI Khan Panna, senior journalist Abu Sayeed Khan, Prof Gitiara Nasrin, senior journalist Ashraf Kaiser, lawyer Anik R Haque, Prof Tanzimuddin Khan, and writer and researcher Maha Mirza.

Lawyer Tobarak Hossain, lawyer Sara Hossain, lawyer and teacher Shahdeen Malik, writer and educationist Prof Salimullah Khan, teacher Kazi Mahfuzul Haque Supan, lawyer Rashna Imam, lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, and teacher Saimum Reza Talukder will serve as advisors to the commission.

The commission has urged people to send all information about various violent acts -- torture, killings, shootings, threats, cases, and human rights violations -- related to the students' protest since July 1 to it soon.

Any kind of information, including audio, video, photographs, and text can be sent, said the press release signed by Prof Tanzimuddin Khan and Maha Mirza, member secretaries of the commission.

French fibre optic cables hit by 'sabotage'

AFP, *Paris*

Fibre-optic cables in several parts of France have been "sabotaged", police said yesterday, three days after the rail system was hit by attacks that halted trains across the country.

Friday's disruption on the rail network came as Paris celebrated the opening of the Olympic Games, and wrecked the travel plans of hundreds of thousands of people.

Police said the cables of several telecoms operators had been sabotaged in six areas of France overnight from Sunday into yesterday but Paris was not affected.

AFP confirmed with major carriers including Free and SFR that they had been affected, although no major disruptions had yet been reported.

"It's vandalism," said Nicolas Chatin, spokesman for SFR, one of France's four biggest operators.

Palestinians gather to collect water amid shortages in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Aid worker Tamer Al-Burai said water in Deir was becoming more difficult to get as more and more displaced people arrived, both from Khan Younis to the south and Bureij to the north.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Lanka President Ranil fails to get backing of largest party

REUTERS, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe yesterday failed to secure the backing of the biggest political party in parliament for his re-election bid, posing a major challenge to his prospects in the Sept.21vote.

Nearly 17 million of Sri Lanka's 22 million population is eligible to cast its ballots in the vote that is crucial to determine the future of reforms in the South Asian island nation weathering its worst financial crisis in decades.

Of the multiple candidates, Wickremesinghe, who took over the top job in July 2022 as the economy crumbled under a severe financial crisis triggered by a record shortfall of foreign exchange reserves, is seen as the most market- and reform-friendly option.

But with just one seat in parliament, he needs the support of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), which holds a parliamentary majority and counts former President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his brother as key members, to be a stronger contender.

"The politburo decided by a significant majority that Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna will present a candidate under the SLPP party symbol," SLPP General Secretary Salaga Kariyawasam told reporters after the party's politburo meeting.

VENEZUELA POLLS

Nicolas Maduro declared winner

Opposition, regional neighbours reject result citing fraud

AFP, *Caracas*

Nicolas Maduro was declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election Sunday but the opposition and key regional neighbours immediately rejected the official results.

The opposition coalition itself claimed victory, after an election campaign tainted by claims of political intimidation and fears of fraud, and following predictions by pollsters that Maduro would lose but was unlikely to concede after more than a decade in power.

He won re-election with 51.2 percent of votes, while opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia received 44.2 percent, according to the electoral council (CNE), which in its majority is loyal to the president.

Maduro, 61, addressed celebrating supporters at the presidential palace minutes after the announcement.

"I can say, before the people of Venezuela and the world, I am Nicolas Maduro Moros, the re-elected president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," Maduro said.

"There will be peace, stability and justice. Peace and respect for the law." But the opposition coalition insisted it had garnered 70 percent of the vote, rejecting the figures from the CNE.

"We want to say to all of Venezuela and the world that Venezuela has a new president-elect and it is (candidate) Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia," opposition leader Maria Corina Machado told journalists, calling the official result "another fraud." Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves also denounced the official result as "fraudulent," while Chile's president described it as "hard to believe."

With 80 percent of the votes tallied, according to the CNE, Colombian Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo yesterday called for a total count and "independent audit" of ballots.

Quad decries dangerous South China Sea actions

Pledges to bolster maritime security in the region; Beijing says the bloc "artificially creating tension"

REUTERS, *Tokyo*

Foreign ministers from Australia, India, Japan and the United States said yesterday they were seriously concerned about intimidating and dangerous manoeuvres in the South China Sea and pledged to bolster maritime security in the region.

The joint statement came after talks between the so-called 'Quad' countries in Tokyo, attended by Australia's Penny Wong, India's Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Japan's Yoko Kamikawa and Antony Blinken from the US.

In security talks between the US and Japan on Sunday, the two allies labelled China the "greatest strategic challenge" facing the region.

"We are seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion," the ministers said in the statement, which did not directly mention China.

They also expressed serious concern about the militarisation of disputed features and coercive and intimidating manoeuvres in the South China Sea, including dangerous use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels.

Asked about the statement at a regular news briefing yesterday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the Quad was "artificially creating tension, inciting confrontation and containing the development of other countries".

Chinese vessels have repeatedly clashed with Philippine ships seeking to resupply its troops on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in recent months, although the two countries in July reached a provisional agreement that aims to ease tensions.

The Quad group said they were working on a series of initiatives to maintain "the free and open maritime order" including helping partners improve domain awareness via satellite data, training and capacity building. They also announced a plan to set up a new maritime legal dialogue.

"We are charting a course for a more secure and open Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean region by bolstering maritime security," Blinken said in remarks to reporters after the meeting.

"In practical terms what does this mean? It means strengthening the capacity of partners across the region to know what's happening in their own waters," he added.

He said the US would continue to work with its partners to ensure freedom of navigation and the unimpeded flow of lawful maritime commerce.

The US announced plans on Sunday for a major revamp of its military command in Japan. It was among several measures announced by the allies to address what they said was an "evolving security environment", noting various threats from China including its muscular maritime activities.

"Uncertainty surrounding the international order as well as the international situation has been increasing with Russia continuing its aggression in Ukraine, attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and the launch of ballistic missiles by North Korea," Japan's Kamikawa said after the talks.

The Quad ministers also pledged to advance cooperation in cybersecurity to protect supply chains and critical infrastructure, including undersea cables.

After leaving Tokyo, Blinken and Austin will hold security talks with another Asian ally, the Philippines, as the Biden administration seeks to counter an increasingly bold China.

Biden unveils US top court reform plans

AFP, *Washington*

US President Joe Biden yesterday announced plans for urgent reforms to the conservative-dominated Supreme Court, in a bold but long-shot move as he seeks to make a mark in his last six months in power.

The 81-year-old Democrat is calling for a constitutional amendment to reverse the Supreme Court's recent ruling backing Donald Trump's claims of presidential immunity, according to the White House.

The Democrat is also calling for term limits for Supreme Court justices, who currently serve for life, following shock rulings such as the repeal of the nationwide right to abortion.

Biden, who was due to further unveil the plans in a speech in Austin, Texas later yesterday, will also seek an enforceable ethics code after a string of scandals. He had confirmed he would seek the reforms during an Oval Office address last week outlining his priorities after deciding to drop out of the 2024 election, though the plans have almost no hope of getting through a deeply divided Congress.

"This nation was founded on a simple yet profound principle: No one is above the law. Not the president of the United States. Not a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. No one," Biden said in an opinion piece published yesterday.

"What is happening now is not normal, and it undermines the public's confidence in the court's decisions, including those impacting personal freedoms. We now stand in a breach."

SOUTHERN RUSSIA

2 dead, 100 hurt after train, truck collide

REUTERS, *Moscow*

At least two people were killed and up to 100 people injured yesterday when a passenger train carrying 800 people collided with a Kamaz truck, derailing eight carriages, Russian media outlets reported.

Some of the carriages lay twisted and battered beside the railway track, they said.

The train had been travelling from Kazan in Tatarstan to Adler on the Black Sea when it derailed in the southern Volgograd region near the Kotelnikovo station about 1,200 km (750 miles) south of Moscow, the emergencies ministry said.

Protesters kill soldier, injure 16 others: Pak army

REUTERS, *Quetta*

Pakistan's army said protesters taking part in a march in the southwestern city of Gwadar attacked security forces deployed to guard them yesterday, killing one soldier and injuring 16 others.

A nationalist ethnic Baloch movement has been demonstrating for the last two days in the port city, blocking a highway to press their demands for the release of members of their movement they allege were detained by security forces.

The army said protesters assaulted military personnel who had been deployed to guard them, killing a soldier. "The unprovoked assaults by the violent protesters have resulted in injuries to sixteen soldiers, including an officer."

There was no immediate reaction from the Baloch movement's officials. Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, where Gwadar is located, borders Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran seizes oil tanker in Gulf

Arrests nine crew

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have seized a Togo-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf and arrested its nine-person crew over alleged fuel smuggling, the military force said yesterday on its Sepahnews website.

"On Friday morning, an oil tanker named Pearl G, carrying the flag of the African country of Togo... was seized by judicial order," said the Guards' statement.

The vessel is "owned by an Iraqi resident of Dubai, United Arab Emirates", and it was carrying 700,000 litres of fuel, the statement added.

The Guards' naval forces captured it near the Arash oil field, a disputed rig between Iran and Kuwait "while loading smuggled fuel from Iranian barges", it said.

"This oil tanker along with its nine crew members who are of Indian nationality have been transferred to Imam Khomeini harbour and are under surveillance."

6 protest organisers still in DB custody

FROM PAGE 2

taken into, tortured or forced to issue statements," Harun said, adding that the six organisers withdrew their protest as all their demands have already been met.

On Sunday night, Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers, along with five other coordinators, made the announcement via video message, which was distributed to media outlets from the DB office.

He was seen reading a statement, minutes after a photo posted by Harun on Facebook that showed them having food with Harun in a room apparently at the DB office.

Yesterday, two Supreme Court lawyers filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking orders for the immediate release of the six. During the hearing on the petition, the HC expressed displeasure over the photo of the six organisers eating at the DB office and said, "Don't mock the nation."

"We waited for eleven hours at the DB office as we were told that Nahid and others will be released. But at midnight, DB officers said they will make decision about them [organisers] as per the court [High Court] order tomorrow [today] as a writ petition in this regard was pending," a guardian of an organiser told The Daily Star around 12:15am today, wishing anonymity.

"If we had been informed of the matter earlier, then we wouldn't have waited for this long time here. It is harassment."

This newspaper could not get DB's comments regarding the matter.

সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

Bangladesh Election Commission
Election Commission Secretariat
Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)
Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Memo No. 17.14.0000.240.07.171.2024-2333 Date: 29 July, 2024

Package Title	Purchase and Upgradation of Network Equipment for Data Centre and Personalization Centre
Invitation Number	17.14.0000.240.07.171.2024/1916
Issued on	13 June, 2024
Tender Package No.	GD-41.1

Addendum-02 of Invitation for Tenders (IFT)

SL No. of IFT	Existing Invitation for Tenders (IFT)	Amendments (Contents to be read as) Invitation for Tenders (IFT)
15. Tender Last Selling Date and Time	30 July, 2024 Time: 05:00pm	18 August, 2024 Time: 3:00pm
16. Tender Closing Date and Time	31 July, 2024 Time: 11:00am	19 August, 2024 Time: 11:00am
17. Tender Opening Date and Time	31 July, 2024 Time: 11:30am	19 August, 2024 Time: 11:30am

Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem
Brigadier General
Project Director
IDEA Project (2nd Phase)
Election Commission Secretariat

GD-85

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Follow SC guidelines for arrests, remand

Due process being ignored during ongoing nationwide crackdown

Amid nationwide crackdowns in response to the recent violence centring the quota reform movement, we are alarmed by the reckless disregard for Supreme Court guidelines on arrests and remands. Reports published over the last few days paint a disturbing picture of how arrestees have been treated. Between July 18 and 28, some 8,914 people, including students and BNP and Jamaat men, have been arrested in 46 districts. In Dhaka alone, 2,764 people have been arrested in 229 cases. But as claimed by relatives and lawyers, many of the suspects were picked up by plain-clothed officers who did not identify themselves, and in many cases, the accused were not produced before court within the stipulated 24-hour period. Families of many students were left in the dark as their children were picked up and only learnt of their whereabouts when they were produced before the court days later. Many on remand were also allegedly subjected to inhumane torture.

All these instances are blatant violations of the guidelines issued by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 2016. According to the guidelines, law enforcement officials are obligated to identify themselves before arresting an individual and inform the next of kin within 12 hours. Moreover, arrests cannot be made in plainclothes, and the arrested must be allowed to contact their relatives and seek legal counsel.

It is worrying how due process is being flouted by the law enforcement personnel. Former Ducsu Vice-President Nurul Haque Nur's wife Maria Nur told Samakal that those who picked him up from their home in the early hours of July 19 did not identify themselves, and produced him before a court after 39 hours of detention. During that time, he was physically tortured to the point where he was unable to walk by himself, as he told the court. BNP leaders Aminul Haque and Sultan Salauddin Tuku also complained of being tortured in remand.

The detention of the six quota reform coordinators by the Detective Branch (DB) of DMP is another case in point. They were all picked up between Friday and Sunday—"for the sake of their security," according to the DB—in a manner that legal experts called "unconstitutional"; two of them were even undergoing treatment at the time. Then there is the case of a minor—17-year-old student Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz—who was taken to court tied with ropes and placed on a seven-day remand, which was later cancelled. We can also talk about how police falsified facts in the First Information Report (FIR) on slain university student Abu Sayed, which completely contradicts widely circulated video footages, in an apparent bid to absolve themselves of responsibility.

These are just some of the more prominent cases highlighted by the media. We understand that the law enforcement authorities are operating with a sense of urgency to restore order in these volatile times—when six days of violence took at least 163 lives across the country, not to mention the damage caused to key public infrastructures. But this is also precisely why they must operate strictly within the bounds of the law, with utmost accountability for their actions, as restoring order may not be possible without restoring confidence about their integrity. In any case, violating law and citizens' rights in the name of law enforcement is totally unacceptable.

The Supreme Court guidelines were issued to prevent police excesses and ensure accountability. There is no scope for even an iota of oversight or violation in their activities. We, therefore, urge the law enforcement authorities to look into this matter urgently and ensure that anyone accused or arrested in connection with the recent violence is treated as per court guidelines and constitutional obligations.

NBR must answer for repeated failure

It has made a mockery of the revenue target set every year

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has, quite predictably, failed to meet its revenue target for the 12th consecutive year, prompting experts to call for the existing tax collection framework to be overhauled. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the tax authorities collected overall receipts of Tk 382,562—falling short of its revised target by Tk 27,438 crore. The government had initially aimed to collect taxes of Tk 430,000 crore in FY24 but ultimately brought down the target by Tk 20,000 crore.

As per provisional data, despite failing to reach the revised target, the NBR registered a 15 percent growth in collections in FY24 compared to a growth of 10 percent in FY23. Although this last part can be interpreted as the tax authorities making some progress, experts suggest that the entire tax administration remains in desperate need of reforms. The tax to GDP ratio in Bangladesh is among the lowest in the world, reaching an estimated 7.38 percent in FY23. The ratio has been limping along for years despite repeated calls for it to be increased. There have been plenty of instances of late where low revenue collection has hamstrung government responses in the face of emerging economic difficulties. Any desired progress in this regard has been stifled by corruption and inefficiencies in the tax administration. Recent revelations about Matiur Rahman, former president of the NBR's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, who came under the scanner for allegedly amassing crores of taka via corruption, is a case in point.

This trend cannot be reversed without good governance and accountability. If the government really wants to enhance its revenue collection capacity, it should also ensure full automation of the NBR's services. Additionally, tax evasion—particularly by vested interest groups closely connected with the ruling establishment—must be stopped, while misguided attempts such as trying to boost revenue by allowing "whitening" black money should be abandoned.

The government has to address the lack of efficiency in the tax administration to increase its flexibility to intervene during critical times such as now. Otherwise, the country will continue to face crippling economic problems and limitations going forward. At the same time, it has to do a better job of setting realistic tax collection goals, and plan its expenses accordingly. As experts have pointed out, over the past 10 to 15 years, the government has been setting overambitious revenue collection targets that are completely detached from the ground realities. Repeated failure to meet the revenue collection target has spoiled the credibility of our fiscal framework, which the government needs to earn back through proper policy response.

Was it really for their security?

ON THE SHORES (IN)JUSTICE

Dr CR Abrar
is an academic with an interest in human rights issues.

C R ABRAR

On Friday, plainclothes policemen forcibly took three key coordinators of the Students' Movement against Discrimination—Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumdar—from a hospital in Dhaka city. Nahid and Asif were receiving treatment for injuries sustained after being picked up allegedly by law enforcers several days ago. Family sources have reported that that the trio was dragged to the vehicles and subsequently taken to an unknown destination. The plea of hospital authorities against apprehending two under-treatment patients fell on deaf years. Cell phones of all three detainees and of a sibling of theirs were seized. On that evening, the student activists were scheduled to brief the media about the ongoing movement.

COLLAGE: **STAR**

In response to the burgeoning criticism of the detention of the three activists, the Home Minister claimed that they were picked up "to find out who were threatening them". Further explaining the situation, the head of the detective branch (DB) said, "They (the coordinators) spoke on social media about feeling insecure... We think it's our responsibility as law enforcers to provide safety and security to those who say they're feeling insecure." He also said that the state would solicit clarification about telephone communication of the detainees with others.

> **Did the activists explicitly state in their social media posts that they felt unsafe in the medical facility they were lodged in? If not, what made the authorities assume they would opt for state protection (in an unknown premise, possibly the DB office) over the security of their homes with their loved ones, or that of a hospital to recover from their bodily and mental wounds?**

Two more protest organisers, Sarjis Alam and Hasnat Abdullah, were also taken to custody by the authorities in Dhaka on Saturday. The additional deputy commissioner of the DB of police said the move was to "to ensure their security and to get information about recent incidents."

The claims of the senior state functionaries tasked with law enforcement that the students were detained principally "for their safety" raises some important questions.

Firstly, at least two among those detained are on record claiming that they were subjected to involuntary disappearance and torture only days ago. In their posts, they made amply clear about the source of their insecurity. Have the police and other law enforcement agencies had any discussion with the activists about who inflicted such unlawful detention and torture on them? If so, people have a right to know what actions the authorities have taken to bring the perpetrators to account.

Secondly, did the activists explicitly state in their social media posts that they felt unsafe in the medical facility they were lodged in? If not, what made the authorities assume they would opt for state protection (in an unknown premise, possibly the DB office) over the security of their homes with their loved ones, or that of a hospital to recover from their bodily and mental wounds?

Thirdly, were those detained informed about the reason within three hours of detention, as per the Supreme Court guidelines? Was not the failure of the authorities to produce them before the nearby magistrate's court within 24 hours a violation of the law? Were the individuals acting on behalf of the state not obliged to produce their identity documents?

Fourthly, if indeed the intention was as benign as to grant the activists safety and security, why then would the activists be hauled to the vehicles against their wishes? And why were their next of kin not informed of the place they were being taken to? What precluded the DB authority to grant the group of university teachers a brief meeting with those being "provided protection" when the former went to the Minto Road office of the DB on Saturday?

And finally, Article 37 of the Constitution grants every Bangladeshi "the right to assemble and to participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms...." Under Article 43, citizens also enjoy the right to privacy of correspondence and other means of communication. Does the current political leadership, particularly those responsible for law enforcement, not believe that those engaged in the quota reform movement enjoy the rights under granted under those articles? If so, why would they need to explain whom they have been in touch with to organise these events? Why do they have to explain the contents of such communication?

Under the law, abduction is a criminal offence, and no one can arbitrarily be picked up and detained. "If they (the police) want to arrest anyone, they have to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court," Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua was quoted saying in a report published in this paper. In this case, it is clear that there was a serious breach of the apex court's directives.

In addition to undermining the constitutionally guaranteed right to free expression and assembly, the state actions against the organisers of the quota reform movement also manifest uncanny transgression of the fundamental right to secure medical treatment by the wounded and the sanctity of a medical premise. Such tactless measures will only contribute to further deterioration of the already charged political environment. The government should immediately halt detaining and harassing the students for their role in the quota reform movement and instead take stern and visible action against those involved in wanton killing of hundreds of students, protestors, and bystanders.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Will the Democrats win after Biden's withdrawal?

Richard Haass,
president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and a senior counsellor at Centerview Partners, previously served as director of policy planning for the US State Department (2001-03).

RICHARD HAASS

US President Joe Biden's decision to step aside as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate this fall has transformed American politics. It caps a historic July in the United States, one defined by far-reaching Supreme Court decisions and the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump on the eve of the Republican Convention.

Biden's decision, urged by many Democratic Party officials and donors and favoured by many voters, was the right choice. In the wake of a debate widely viewed as a debacle for Biden, his age had made it all but impossible for him to make the case to the American people that he deserved another four years—and was making it impossible for him to make the case that Trump did not.

It is too soon to write about Biden's legacy, if for no other reason than that his presidency still has some six months left. But by stepping aside, he has gone a long way toward eliminating the potential critique that by staying in the race he paved the way for a successor who shared little of his commitment to American democracy and the country's role in the world. Indeed, had Trump defeated Biden in November, as polls were forecasting, this would have largely overshadowed Biden's accomplishments as president.

The odds are strong that Vice-President Kamala Harris will be the Democratic nominee. Biden's endorsement will help her. But it does not settle matters, because Biden only has the authority to release party delegates committed to him, not to require them to support someone else.

So, the Democratic Convention in Chicago this August will be an open one, and the four weeks between now and then could go a long way toward determining what happens there. Harris could essentially run for the nomination unopposed, or one or more challengers might emerge. Assuming she prevails, the latter scenario might actually be to her advantage, as the process would further hone her political skills, help her be seen as a winner, and allow her to get out from under the shadow of an unpopular president.

The process would also shine a spotlight on the Democratic Party at a time when it needs to reintroduce itself to the electorate. This is essential, as Trump and Senator J D Vance, his pick for vice-president, promise to be formidable campaigners. And even if Harris were to run and lose to them, polls suggest that she would outperform Biden, improving Democrats' chances of winning the House of Representatives (keeping control of the Senate appears out of reach) and thus preventing Republicans from controlling the entire federal government.

Trump is slightly ahead of Harris in polls, but she could well get a boost in the next month as she steps into the spotlight. Harris's prosecutorial skills, which she honed as a prosecutor and later as California's attorney general, would serve her well in a campaign. She is well-positioned to take on the extreme anti-abortion stance of this Supreme Court as well as Vance. And she would benefit from the absence of a woman or a minority on the Republican ticket.

One unavoidable challenge, however, is what might be described as the Hubert Humphrey dilemma. In 1968, Humphrey, who was vice-president at the time, won the Democratic nomination after the incumbent president, Lyndon Johnson, chose not to run for re-election. The words in Biden's withdrawal letter echoed many used by Johnson 56 years ago, the principal difference being that Biden put out his statement on X and Johnson appeared on national television.

The dilemma is this: how to appear loyal and take credit for what was popular about a presidency without being weighed down by policies that were unpopular. In 1968, it was the Vietnam War that complicated Humphrey's run, as he found it hard to distance himself from a policy that he had been associated with and from a boss who had little tolerance for disloyalty.

No single issue dominates public debate today, but there is still a need to differentiate the Democratic nominee from Biden, as incumbency has become a burden at a time when many seek change. Anyone doubting this only needs to look at recent election results in South Africa, India, the United Kingdom, and France.

This means that the Democratic nominee, whether Harris or someone else, would do well to embrace the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act, efforts to combat climate change and defend democracy, access to abortion and birth control, and military assistance to Ukraine. But it also suggests that the candidate might want to distance themselves from a Middle East policy seen by many Americans as too pro-Israel, and from policies on the border and crime viewed by many as too lax.

If Harris is the Democratic choice, her selection of a running mate will matter. Several Midwestern states are likely to be decisive in November's election, and there is a large pool of independent voters to be won over. Governors Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Andy Beshear of Kentucky, and Roy Cooper of North Carolina would presumably be considered, as would several members of Biden's cabinet.

Perhaps the only thing that is certain is that less is certain after Biden's stunning announcement. One thing is clear, though: the outcome of the presidential election will matter enormously for the US and the rest of the world. This is not normally the case, as the candidates' similarities tend to outweigh their differences. Not so this time. The differences are profound, making it difficult to exaggerate just how much is at stake when Americans vote this November.

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

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Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
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Subscription:
01711623906

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The government on Monday admitted that taking a 17-year-old college student on remand, and tying him with ropes, was a mistake.
PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ARREST OF 17-YEAR-OLD

Juvenile justice must prevail

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MD KOWSHIK SHAHRIAR

Hasnatul Islam Faiyaz, an eleventh-grade student at Dhaka College, was put on a seven-day remand in a case filed with Jatrabari Police Station, accusing him of killing a police constable on July 19 amid the violent clashes that erupted throughout the country. He was made the 16th accused among 17 in the case file, which erroneously listed his age as 19 years old. But since then, Faiyaz's remand has been cancelled, and he has been sent to a Child Development Centre in Gazipur. This is despite the High Court saying the government can consider keeping Faiyaz in his parents' custody. However, the government on Monday admitted that taking a 17-year-old college student on remand, and tying him with ropes, was a mistake, and that it will take steps so that such mistakes are not repeated.

However, the court proceedings that preceded these remedial steps had shockingly disregarded the legal and constitutional obligations meant to protect a minor, who is clearly 17 years old, as evidenced by his birth registration and SSC certificates. He had been treated as an adult, resulting in a series of legal errors and violations of his rights. This mistreatment of a minor was not only a gross violation of human rights; it also demonstrated a disregard for the legal protections afforded to juveniles in Bangladesh.

The court proceedings that preceded these remedial steps had shockingly disregarded the legal and constitutional obligations meant to protect a minor, who is clearly 17 years old, as evidenced by his birth registration and SSC certificates. He had been treated as an adult, resulting in a series of legal errors and violations of his rights. This mistreatment of a minor was not only a gross violation of human rights; it also demonstrated a disregard for the legal protections afforded to juveniles in Bangladesh.

The Children Act 2013 explicitly mandates that minors should be tried in juvenile courts, which are designed to consider their best interests and focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. In Faiyaz's case, a petition had been filed for the transfer of the hearing to a juvenile court, but the lower court didn't respond to the plea and placed him on remand.

Furthermore, Faiyaz had been tied with a rope around his waist, just like other adult accused, when he was brought into the court. This conduct plainly violated the dignity, care, and respect that juveniles are entitled to get under the act, which prohibits such mistreatment. It also stipulates that juveniles should not be handcuffed or presented to court in such a disgraceful manner. There is no doubt about the fact that a minor, who is barely out of adolescence, being treated as an adult offender is a serious violation.

Faiyaz had been tied with a rope around his waist, just like other adult accused, when he was brought into the court. This conduct plainly violated the dignity, care, and respect that juveniles are entitled to get under the act, which prohibits such mistreatment. It also stipulates that juveniles should not be handcuffed or presented to court in such a disgraceful manner.

According to media reports, outside the courthouse on Saturday, Faiyaz's family members stated that he had been missing for four days and alleged, quoting Faiyaz, that he had been subjected to severe physical and mental torture during the days prior.

Despite some loopholes, Bangladesh has a moderate regime for birth registration, which is the cornerstone of the traditional age verification procedure in judicial proceedings. In cases where official documentation is unavailable or contested, courts frequently depend on the subjective standard of physical maturity, which is often unreliable but widely practiced. Even with adequate documentation of his age, Faiyaz's appearance—such as his lack of facial hair and overall childlike looks—should have been a strong indicator of his minority. In the past, courts have exercised discretion based on such visible signs of youthfulness.

While costly and time-consuming, forensic age assessment methods like dental analysis or bone ossification are more reliable and have been applied in past cases, such as the Oishi Rahman case (2013), where courts have ordered forensic assessments to resolve age disputes. The lower court's unwillingness to verify Faiyaz's age using such methods, despite these precedents, was a significant oversight. Moreover, ignoring the legal protections afforded to juveniles by failing to verify his age using reliable forensic methods or any other means represents a major weakness in the judicial process, as accurate age verification procedures are required to avoid such grave errors and ensure the lawful treatment of minors.

The question inevitably arises regarding the uniform manner in which the court should handle the determination of the minority status of any accused at the very first instance. The current system appears to rely substantially on the court's discretion, especially where the age is contested and before forensic assessments are directed. However, as Faiyaz's case shows, this procedure is not beyond the possibility of legal error. Therefore, a mechanism should be in place to order an initial age verification procedure before appearing in court, which involves reviewing birth certificates, academic records, and any other relevant documents. This should uphold a propositional burden on relevant stakeholders for securing justice for a certain juvenile group vulnerable to judicial proceedings. While writ petitions can protect against legal errors that result in violations of fundamental rights, there should also be direct avenues for appealing remand decisions in higher courts specifically designed to handle juvenile justice issues.

The Children Act offers children under the age of 18 particular safeguards. According to the act, a minor shall not be held in police custody or jail unless it is absolutely required, and a child arrested must appear before a Children's Court within 24 hours. The Constitution of Bangladesh, on the other hand, forbids torture and cruel, inhuman, or humiliating punishment, according to Article 35(5). The claims of extreme mental and physical suffering that Fayaz endured while in police custody constitute a clear violation of his constitutional rights.

Bangladesh is a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), where Article 37 states that detention or imprisonment of children can be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest amount of time that is appropriate. This convention also forbids torture and other cruel treatment.

In the country's current context when law enforcement is in overdrive, there may be attempts to disregard such principles and prohibitions, but it is absolutely essential that nothing of this sort is allowed to happen in the name of ensuring security or rule of law. The protection of juvenile rights should remain a non-negotiable aspect of maintaining the integrity of the legal system in Bangladesh. Ensuring that juvenile rights are upheld at all costs is not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative as well. The legal system must ensure that the age of the accused is accurately determined, and that their rights are fully served, regardless of the circumstances.

How news consumers were deprived during the internet blackout

Azmin Azran
is digital features coordinator at The Daily Star.

AZMIN AZRAN

When internet connections went cold on the evening of Thursday, July 18, Bangladesh was suddenly and forcefully hurled back in time to an era when instant communication was not the norm. Without the internet, in the early 2000s and before that, the only notable and reliable sources of news were TV channels and print newspapers. As a consumer, you got the roundup of the daily news in the evening broadcast on TV along with hourly updates if something important was unfolding, followed by details on print newspapers the morning after. The media machine back then worked fine, and the public was used to this meandering speed of the news cycle.

The problem with being hurled back in time like this was that not everyone was prepared for time travel. Many people have stopped subscribing to print newspapers at their doorstep every morning, and cable connections at home have become increasingly rare. However, without the internet, these sources suddenly became the only place to get reliable information, especially TV channels as they have the ability to broadcast all day and all night.

In fact, given that the country had been embroiled in a remarkable level of violence at the time of the internet blackout, it could be argued that it was the responsibility of electronic media to make full use of the technology at their disposal, and keep people as up-to-date as possible. Lack of information, especially in a society that up until a minute ago was drowning in information, is a real crisis. It can lead to panic, bad decision-making, and suffering that is avoidable.

Throughout this terrible previous weekend, as people's phones kept ringing off the hook delivering devastating news, an unknown percentage of which were rumours, those with cable connections at home might have looked at TV news channels to corroborate or dispel what they were hearing. After getting home from work on Thursday evening having witnessed a city in turmoil, I found myself flipping through the channels on my TV to see if anyone had anything reliable to say about what I had just seen or the gunshots my friends were telling me they heard in their neighbourhood, but to no avail.

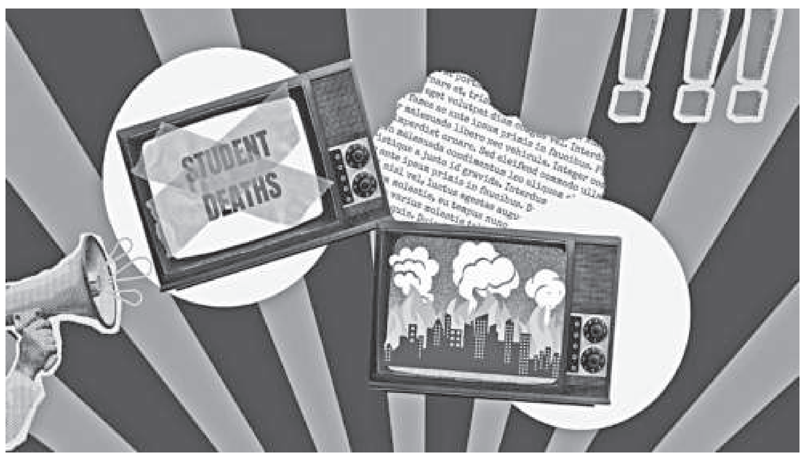
Of course, they did not fail to report on the cases of arson and vandalism at government establishments across the city. The comprehensive coverage provided to the data centre in a building adjacent to the Department of Disaster Management in Mohakhali deserves plaudits, as does the coverage of the devastating fires at BTV, Setu Bhaban, and toll plazas of Dhaka Elevated Expressway and Mayor Hanif Flyover. Yet, the dangerous events taking place across Dhaka that were killing and maiming people in scores did not seem to get the same spotlight.

The sudden disappearance of internet connectivity definitely hampered TV networks, and Thursday evening might have gone by with them simply trying to get a hang of the problem. It's understandable if they decided to divert resources from dangerous spots in the city from where it was getting increasingly difficult to collect reliable accounts, but during the day on Friday, by which time many newspapers had reported on the death toll and violence already, TV channels did not change their tune.

Friday saw the most violence in this whole sequence of events, and as terrified citizens were stuck at home, hearing the most bone-chilling accounts of what befell those unlucky enough to be on the streets, the lack of information put a final nail in the coffin in that day's dystopian reality. On TV, news scrolls appeared in some channels saying that clashes were going on in certain parts of Dhaka and the rest of the country, but the scale of it remained unuttered. This paper reported 66 deaths on Friday that it could independently confirm, taking place throughout the day at various locations. On TV, the death counts did not appear in scheduled broadcasts. The destruction that either precipitated or followed the deaths was given its due coverage, but for most people, it took until Saturday morning's papers to realise the extent of the horrors that people experienced. Those who didn't get newspapers on the first day of the curfew had to rely on whatever information they could gather from phone calls and text messages from friends and family.

As the curfew was enforced on Friday night, going into Saturday, many TV channels reported a relative normalisation of the situation. Reports of scattered clashes in various parts of Dhaka and the rest of the country appeared in news scrolls, but once more, details of the scale of the violence did not. I made the decision to leave my area and get to work, which falls under the category of essential services, through the Pragati Sarani road after watching a morning broadcast of the Notunbazar area where army and police checkposts seemed to have kept things calm. I turned back after starting once I received a couple of phone calls from friends in the area who reported hearing gunshots.

On Sunday morning as well, by which time TV panels were discussing how long it would take for things to get back to normal (while newspapers once again reported dozens of deaths on Saturday), I tried to exit the area I lived in through the Pragati Sarani road. This time, I found myself in a standoff between an unidentified group of individuals who had started a fire on the road, and armed police accompanied by an armoured vehicle. I stepped off the road with hundreds of others in fear of ensuing violence. By midday, violence ensued in the area I had assumed was safe in the morning.



VISUAL: STAR

If internet services had not been disrupted, hardly anyone would have looked to electronic media to get information about the safety conditions of the roads before going out during this weekend. As a society, we have learned to trust collective information gathering via the internet, and many of us have learned the skills to be able to differentiate between reliable accounts and rumours. These five days without the internet shows why people have made that decision. Traditional news sources like TV networks had the opportunity to step up to the plate and properly help the public at a time when they desperately needed it. The fact that they could not provide this service even at this desperate hour proves that it was futile to have this expectation in the first place. It is either a lack of ability or a lack of will that is at play here, and whatever the reason behind it, TV channels do not serve its viewers.

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LTM-Tender Notice

LTM-Tender are invited in The National e-Gp system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj for the procurement of

SL No	Tender ID # & Package No	e-Tender Description	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	1005262, 01-LTM/e-GP/Mundiv/ 2024-2025	Emergency Repair byBase Type-II, DBS-Wearing Course, Clearing and Grubbing, Sand Filling, Banner Placing at " Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Mohasarak" (N-8) (Mawa End Service Road) for VVIP Movement under Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj During the year of 2024-2025.	11-08-2024 16:00	12-08-2024 09:00	12-08-2024 09:00
2	1005263, 02-LTM/e-GP/Mundiv/ 2024-2025	Earth Filling for Munshiganj Division Office Compound under Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj During the year of 2024-2025.	11-08-2024 16:00	12-08-2024 09:05	12-08-2024 09:05

1. The above tenders are online Tenders. Where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-Gp portal and no Offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-Gp system portal (http:/www.eprocure.gov.bd).
2. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National E-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branch.
3. Further information and guidelines are available in the National E-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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(Dewan Abul Kashem Mohammad Nahin Reza)
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GD-82

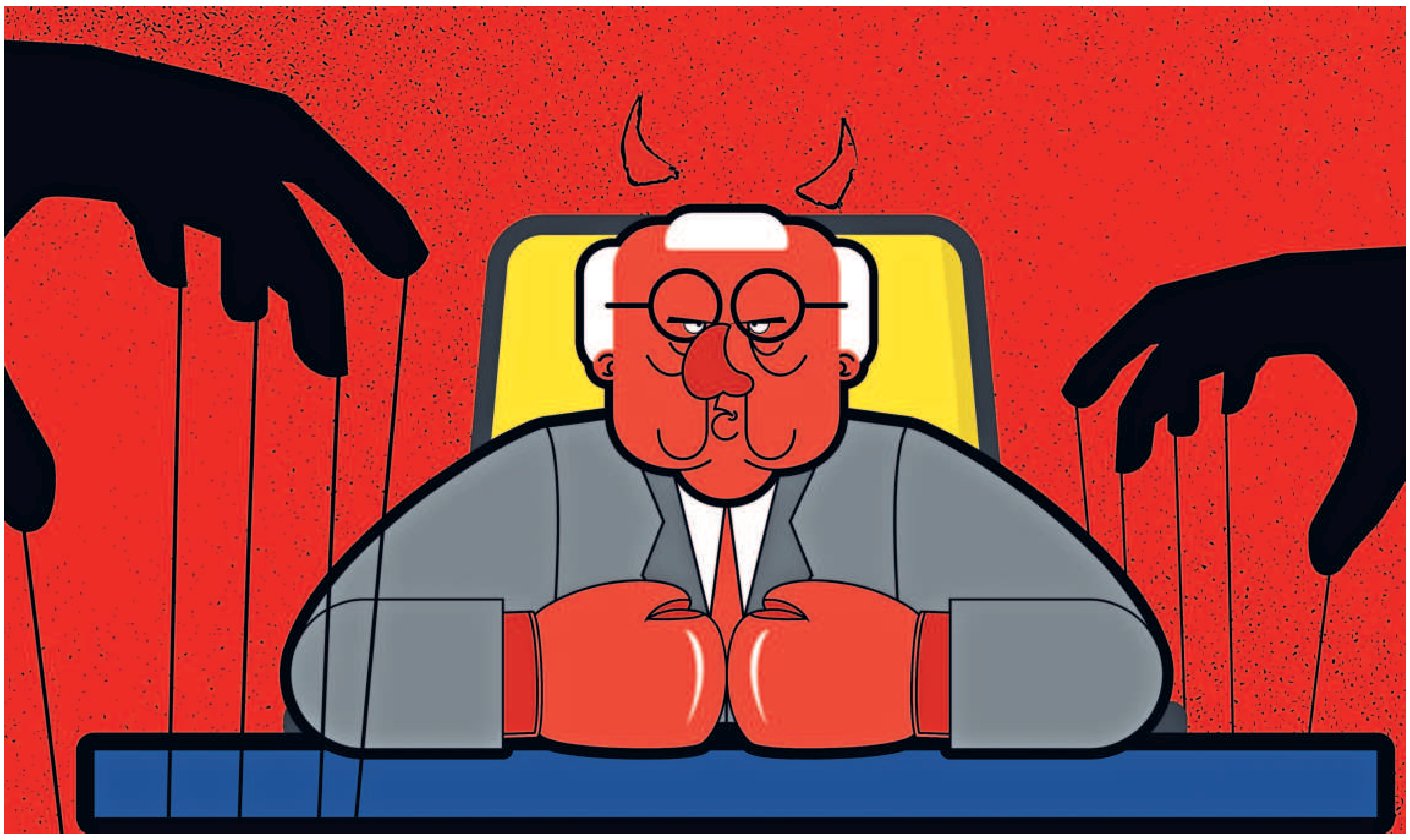


ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

5 signs of toxic leadership in the workplace

A short guide on how to recognise toxic behaviour in your boss and how to advocate for change

> **Toxic leaders are typically the least empathetic managers one could encounter. They often show little understanding or concern for their employees' personal circumstances, such as family emergencies or health issues. This lack of empathy can make employees feel undervalued and unsupported.**

ZARIF FAIAZ

Effective leadership is crucial for the success and well-being of any organisation. A good leader fosters a positive work environment, drives innovation, and motivates employees to reach their full potential. However, not all leaders possess these qualities. Some exhibit toxic traits that can undermine morale, stifle creativity, and create a culture of fear and resentment. Understanding the signs of toxic leadership is the first step towards advocating for change.

Micromanagement and control

Toxic leaders often feel the need to control every aspect of their team's work. They micromanage tasks, leaving little room for employees to take initiative or make decisions. This can lead to a stifling environment where creativity and innovation are suppressed. Employees may feel undervalued and untrusted, decreasing job satisfaction and productivity. A work culture dominated by excessive control from the top can quickly become unproductive and demoralising.

Intimidation and fear tactics

Toxic leaders often use intimidation and fear to maintain control. They may belittle employees, threaten job security, or create a hostile work environment. This type of behaviour can lead to high levels of stress, anxiety, and a high turnover rate. By fostering a culture of fear, such leaders ensure that employees are more focused on avoiding punishment than on excelling in their roles.

Toxic leaders are also often boastful and arrogant, believing they are always right and expecting others to accept their word without question. They resent being corrected, especially by subordinates. This irritability can create a tense and oppressive work atmosphere, inhibiting creativity and discouraging employees from speaking up. This also creates an environment where collaboration and learning are stifled, as the leader's ego takes precedence over collective success. In contrast, effective leaders demonstrate humility and a willingness to learn from others.

Autocratic

A toxic boss often expects their directions to be followed without question, treating their own opinions as the only ones that matter. This autocratic style discourages input and feedback, leading to a disengaged and demoralised workforce. Employees under such leadership are often seen as mere tools to execute the leader's vision, rather than valued contributors with their own insights and ideas. Good leadership, however, values diverse perspectives and fosters an environment of open dialogue and collaboration.

Nepotism and favouritism

When a leader shows favouritism towards certain employees or hires friends and family members regardless of their qualifications, it can create a toxic work environment. This can lead to feelings of injustice and resentment among other employees, who may feel their hard work is not recognised or rewarded. An environment where merit is sidelined in favour of personal connections is detrimental to both morale and productivity.

Lack of transparency and openness

A toxic leader often operates in secrecy, withholding important information from their team. This lack of transparency can breed mistrust and suspicion among employees. When decisions are made behind closed doors without input or explanation, it can lead to confusion and frustration. An opaque approach to management can also create a disconnect between leadership and staff, exacerbating tensions and reducing overall organisational cohesion.

How to bring about change

Changing toxic leadership requires a collective effort from employees and a commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture. Document and communicate issues by keeping a record of specific instances of toxic behaviour. When communicating with higher management or HR, provide concrete examples to support your claims.

Building alliances with like-minded colleagues who share your concerns is essential. A united front is more likely to be heard and taken seriously by higher management. Highlight the benefits of change by presenting a clear case for how a change in leadership style can benefit the organisation. Use data and examples to show how a positive work environment can lead to increased productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall success.

Lastly, be patient and persistent. Change often takes time, especially when it involves deeply ingrained behaviours and attitudes. Stay persistent and continue to advocate for a healthier, more positive work environment.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

UNDP - Gender Analyst

Deadline: August 8

Eligibility:
- Master's degree or equivalent in any social discipline from a recognised university, preferably in Gender Studies/ Anthropology/Sociology/ Development Studies or a related field.

Minimum experience: 2 years

North South University (NSU) - Grant Writing Specialist, Office of Research

Deadline: August 14

Eligibility:
- Master's degree, preferably in a natural science or engineering discipline, with experience in research grant writing in a research organisation.

Minimum experience: 2 years

Roche - Technical Support Specialist, Field Services

Deadline: August 4

Eligibility:
- Electrical/Electronic/Biomedical tertiary or equivalent qualification.

Minimum experience: 3-5 years

Embassy of Sweden, Dhaka - Programme Assistant/ Financial Assistant

Deadline: August 3

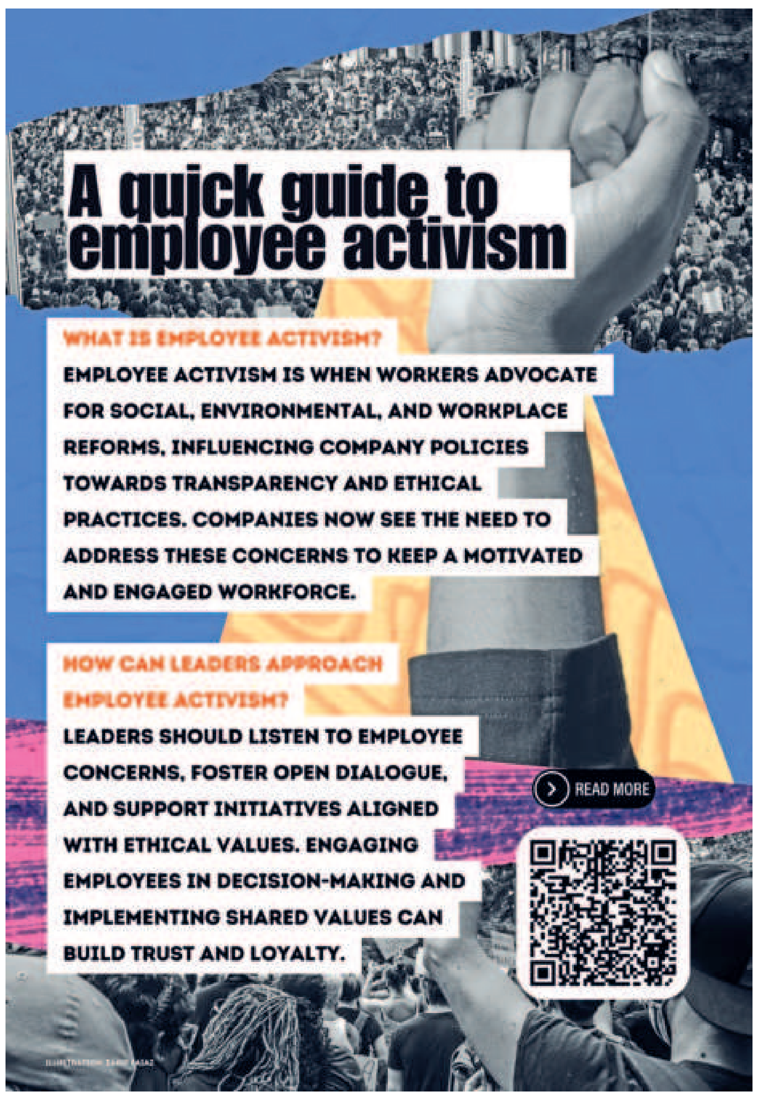
Eligibility:
- Relevant academic background with experience in similar roles in international organisations, embassies, etc.

Minimum experience: 3 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

> "It always seems impossible until it's done."
> - NELSON MANDELA



A quick guide to employee activism

WHAT IS EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM?

EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM IS WHEN WORKERS ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND WORKPLACE REFORMS, INFLUENCING COMPANY POLICIES TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICAL PRACTICES. COMPANIES NOW SEE THE NEED TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS TO KEEP A MOTIVATED AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE.

HOW CAN LEADERS APPROACH EMPLOYEE ACTIVISM?

LEADERS SHOULD LISTEN TO EMPLOYEE CONCERNS, FOSTER OPEN DIALOGUE, AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES ALIGNED WITH ETHICAL VALUES. ENGAGING EMPLOYEES IN DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING SHARED VALUES CAN BUILD TRUST AND LOYALTY.

Refocusing on work when nothing feels right

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

In these uncertain times, staying updated on current events can lead to feelings of dread. This dread, if left unchecked, will eventually creep in on your daily tasks and leave you an empty husk. Amid an urge to return to normalcy, you wouldn't be shamed for feeling a bit overwhelmed. Unfortunately, whether we feel ready or not, we have to return to work. The bills don't pay themselves, after all.

While it may feel unjust to refocus on work amidst an ongoing national crisis, there are some steps you can take to ease this transition and make your return to work more manageable.

Treat your work as a digital detox

Staying glued to your screen and waiting for every update will slowly take a toll on your mental health. Consider treating your work as a distraction from the ongoing chaos. During work, look away from your phone screen. Engage in your work as such so you don't feel the constant urge to look up something that might upset or depress you. This will, at least for a brief moment, help you not over worry about the ongoing situation.

Of course, this doesn't mean you should be completely unaware of what's happening. Try to allocate specific times after work to catch up on the news. Furthermore, focusing on work during the day can help calm your mind and allow you to offer better support whenever it is needed.

ILLUSTRATION: **ZARIF FAIAZ**

Take control of your deadlines

The dread of knowing about all the chaos happening around you with the pre-existing fear of work-based deadlines creates a fatal combination. Getting back to work after a long break will mean you may easily lose track of your previous progress, and you will be expected to pick up the pace as soon as you return.

Instead of succumbing to the rush of deadlines, break your tasks into smaller ones and create a personalised schedule to maintain them. See if the deadlines of existing projects are flexible and, if you're managing a project, discuss possible extensions with your supervisor. Explain that prioritising quality over a rushed output is crucial, and most likely, they will understand and accommodate such a request.

Take small breaks to avoid getting overwhelmed

Work can be a lot to take in when you are back from a long break, especially when it is due to some crisis that has left you feeling powerless. To avoid getting overwhelmed while staying on top of your work, consider taking small breaks between tasks. During the pauses, focus on relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or simply stepping away from the desk for a few minutes. This mental reset can end up improving focus and productivity.

Don't be afraid to seek support

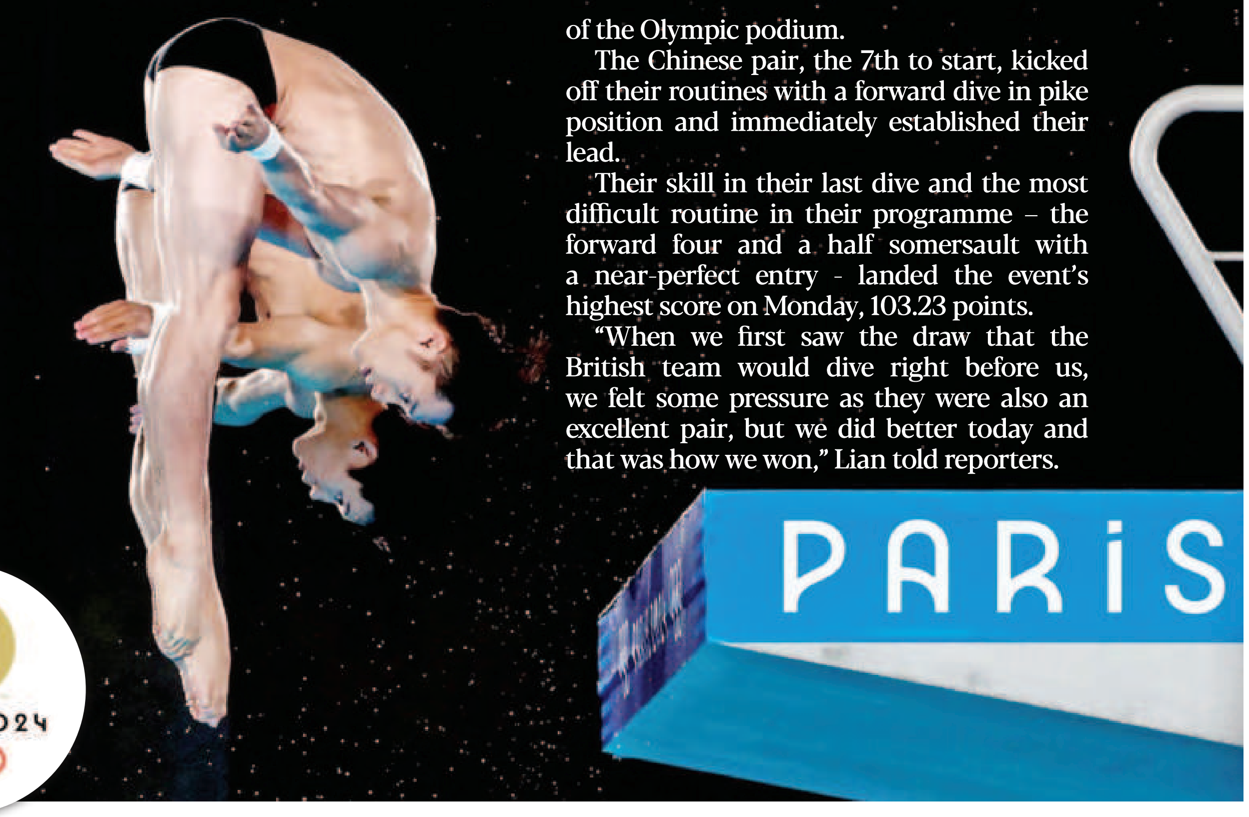
Despite your best efforts, you might still find it impossible to refocus on your work amidst the ongoing chaos. If such is the situation, simply seek support. In the workplace, sharing concerns with a coworker you're close with can create a more supportive work environment. Collaboration and open communication can make the return to work less daunting and more manageable, even if readjusting may seem impossible at first glance. Take things one step at a time, and fingers crossed, you will feel productive again soon.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Sri Lanka vs India
Third T20I
Live from 7:30 pm
GT20
Mississauga vs Toronto
Live from1 11:00 pm
Brampton vs Montreal
Live from 2:00 am (Wednesday)
SONY SPORTS 5
The Hundred
Northern Superchargers vs
Southern Brave
Live from 12:30 am (Wednesday)

China's clean sweep dream in diving on track

AFP, PARIS



Yang Hao and Lian Junjie played their parts with aplomb in China's bid to take all eight diving golds on offer by winning the men's synchronised 10 metre platform event on Monday.

The pair led the event from the first round and finished on 490.35 points - becoming the second Chinese diving pair to top the podium so far at the Paris Olympics.

Britain's Tom Daley was dethroned as Olympic champion on Monday but took an emotional silver medal with partner Noah Williams with 463.44 points, followed by Canada's Ryan Wiens and Nathan Zsombor-Murray who won bronze.

Yang, 26, and 23-year-old Lian have dominated the world championships in the last three years in the event but it was their first time to stand on top of the Olympic podium.

The Chinese pair, the 7th to start, kicked off their routines with a forward dive in pike position and immediately established their lead.

Their skill in their last dive and the most difficult routine in their programme – the forward four and a half somersault with a near-perfect entry - landed the event's highest score on Monday, 103.23 points.

"When we first saw the draw that the British team would dive right before us, we felt some pressure as they were also an excellent pair, but we did better today and that was how we won," Lian told reporters.

Heat warning issued for Paris

France's meteorological agency has issued a weather warning for Paris and the surrounding areas with storms and highs of 35 degrees Celsius expected on Tuesday as the capital hosts the Olympic Games. The agency put in place a "yellow alert" -- the second of four levels – which advises people to "be attentive" to the impact of heat when playing sports or engaging in other physical activity.

Triathlon-Swimming training cancelled for second day over Seine pollution

Paris Olympics organisers cancelled the triathlon swimming training session in the Seine river for a second day on Monday, 24 hours before the men's race, after heavy rain late last week increased both pollution levels and the speed of the current. Fifty-five triathletes are scheduled to line up today on a floating pontoon and dive into the Seine, marking the first time athletes have competed in the river at an Olympics since 1900.

Biles back at practice after injury scare

Simone Biles is doing well and was back at practice on Monday, a day after the American made a triumphant return to the Olympic stage despite being hobbled by pain in her left calf, her mother Nellie told NBC's Today Show. The four-times Olympic champion left the competition area on Sunday after performing on her first apparatus. Despite the nagging pain, Biles was dominant, leading the U.S. to a huge win in team qualifying while also qualifying first in the all-around before an ecstatic, star-studded crowd at the Bercy Arena.

Dealing with popularity a challenge for Lyles

AFP, *Paris*

Noah Lyles says he is relishing the chance to perform before a packed stadium at the Paris Olympics three years after running in eerie silence at the pandemic-hit Tokyo Games.

But the US sprint king tipped to be one of the faces of the Paris Games said Monday that his growing fame has become a problem in the Olympic Village.

Lyles, the reigning world 100m and 200m champion, is aiming to emulate his idol Usain Bolt by completing a sprint double in Paris, following a bitterly disappointing campaign in Tokyo.

Yet the charismatic American revealed that his preparations for Saturday's opening rounds of the 100m have been disrupted by his increasing popularity, boosted recently by the Netflix documentary "Sprint".

"I've become kind of popular in the village and unfortunately that has come with its own set of challenges in being able to find my own space within the village, whether that's eating or training in the gym," Lyles told a press conference on Monday.

The 27-year-old, who has openly talked about his struggles with mental health and depression in recent years, said he has been forced to eat meals at unusual times in order to find peace and quiet.

For now, Lyles has no plans to quit the village but he hopes in future more can be done to provide quiet areas for athletes.

"I know some athletes like to leave the village and have their own hotels but I like to enjoy the whole Olympic event. But it has come with its own challenge of finding a safe place.

"It's been kind of hard for me to find that place. I don't want to leave but it's definitely something I feel like after this Olympics I'm going to have to have conversations higher up than me about it," he said.

"I want to enjoy the Olympics but just being able to find a safe place has been a little difficult these past few days as I'm trying to prepare and dive deep into my mental state."

Despite his apparent unease with life in the village, though, Lyles cannot wait to parade his talents before a packed house at the 69,000-capacity Stade de France -- a stark contrast to Tokyo, where Covid-19 restrictions meant athletes performed in an empty stadium.

"I'm an emotional person," Lyles said. "And when I got to the finals in Tokyo and we walked into that empty stadium, and we're all just standing behind the blocks. That's usually the moment in my head where I'm like 'It's showtime!'

"And I just remember thinking 'This is not it. This is not fun. This is not cool. This is not what I wanted.' And it sucked."

Lyles left Tokyo with only a bronze medal from the 200m and later broke down in tears talking to reporters when reflecting on his disappointing Olympic campaign.

BFF expects FIFA go-ahead on Centre of Excellence

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation has said it expects a positive response from football's world governing body, FIFA, over its proposed Centre of Excellence in Cox's Bazar following completion of assessment over the project's environmental impact.

According to the federation's general secretary, Emran Hossain Tushar, the BFF received positive recommendations on the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) from the Department of Disaster Science and Climate Resilience of Dhaka University and send the same to FIFA earlier this month.

The BFF spokesperson said they would start construction work on the 20-acre land project in Ramu upazila of the coastal district once given the go-ahead by FIFA, expected by the end of next month.

The government had allocated the land in Khuniya Palong reserved forest to BFF in July 2022, much to the frustration and anger for environmentalists and wild life enthusiasts.

FIFA, after scrutinising media reports and through own assessment, asked the BFF to conduct an independent environmental assessment in February this year.

"We have received a positive assessment report," Tushar told reporters yesterday.

"The salient recommendations of the report are: We cannot build any infrastructure outside the designated 20-acre land; we will have to plant more trees than those that will be cut; we will have to create some vegetation for the elephants and create a water body for reptiles. We will also have to integrate the local populace with the project, either through creating employment opportunities for the adults or through giving sporting opportunities for their children.

"We have already sent the recommendations to FIFA in the beginning of the month and we expect an instruction from FIFA by the end of August," Tushar added.

The Centre of Excellence is supposed to be a residential training facility, under a FIFA project worth 3.6 million dollars, featuring two standard-sized football pitches apart from a four-storey dormitory and medical facilities, among other things.

Bijoy falls in nervous 90s in practice match

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB Green opener Anamul Haque Bijoy fell on nervous nineties while Yasir Ali and Mushfiqur Rahim scored fifties on Day One of the three-day practice match against BCB Red at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Monday.

Bijoy made 90 off 185 balls with seven fours and a six before he was trapped in front by pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib just after the tea break.

The opening day's proceedings were interrupted by rain after the same over. BCB Green were 220 for five at that time and the day's play was called off two hours later due to bad light.

Despite losing two quick wickets to Sakib (3-35) after being sent into bat first, Bijoy steadied the ship by adding 95 runs for the third wicket with Yasir.

Yasir made 58 off 71 balls while Mushfiqur hit three fours and as many sixes for his 53-ball 51 before he became pacer Khaled Ahmed's first scalp in the innings.

Out of the box thinking earns HP win over Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

"All's well that ends well," said Bangladesh Cricket Board High Performance Unit's captain Mahmudul Hasan Joy, whose maiden five-wicket haul in first-class cricket earned his side a five-run win over Pakistan Shaheens in the second four-day game in Darwin, Australia yesterday.

The match swung in the balance throughout Day four, testing both teams resolve but in the end the HP were able to find a way, albeit a bit unconventional, to get the job done.

The HP Unit required six wickets to win while having 160 runs left to defend on the final day and expectations were that the pace trio of Ripon Mondol, Rejaur Rahman Raja and Maruf Mridha, who collectively claimed eight wickets in the first innings, will be leading the charge.

But on the day, it was the part-time off-spin of Joy that won the HP Unit the game.

Joy, who had broken a 96-run opening stand the previous day, first sent back two set batters in Tayyab Tahir (43) and Omair Yousuf (45).

Later, when tail-enders Khurram Shahzad and Mohammad Ali were running away with the game, having formed a 57-run stand for the eighth wicket, Joy turned the game around once again by removing both batters in consecutive overs.

Selector Hannan Sarkar, who is with the HP outfit in Australia, felt that Joy bowling his part-time of-spin with the second new ball won the HP Unit the match.

"We normally use pacers from both ends when we take the new ball [available after 80 overs]. But in this game the pacers didn't get the breakthroughs with the new ball, Joy did. The batters played for the turn but the new ball doesn't turn, it goes straight on so they missed the line of the ball," Hannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

With the win, HP Unit also drew the two-match series as they had lost the first match against the Shaheens by 149 runs.

But their gritty performance in the second game and their willingness to use an unconventional method to win brought a pleasing end to the red-ball part of their Australia tour.

Hathurusingha's 'different style' a problem for Tigers?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon all but laid bare the intricacies of the Tigers' dressing room and the inherent culture of the country's cricket during his press conference on Sunday, admitting that coaching style of head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was a mismatch in Bangladesh's circumstances as he did not give any preferential treatment to star players.

Hathurusingha in the past had differences with the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad in his first stint and his second stint has seen him falling out with Tamim Iqbal.

"I agree that his [Hathurusingha] man management style and communication is totally different. His biggest problem is his difficulty in adjusting to our country's culture," the BCB president said on Hathurusingha, whose contract will run till the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy.

"He doesn't give anyone special consideration, which is a big problem. In our country, you have to give some [special consideration]... especially for our more experienced players. But I didn't hear any complaint from the rest of the [T20] World Cup squad and most of them praised him," he said.

When the BCB appointed Hathurusingha for a second stint, despite the ungainly manner in which the Sri Lankan had left the Bangladesh job in 2017, they were hoping he would act as a strict disciplinary, like he had done in his first stint. However, now there appears to be mixed feelings following two failed World Cup campaigns.

"When he came [for the first time] and we interviewed him, I understood that he is a very strict person, like a strict principle. I felt it was important to bring discipline," Nazmul said on Hathurusingha's appointment in 2014 which was the precursor for his reappointment. "His analysis and planning were also brilliant. He would plan which ball we should use on what type of wicket against which opponent. We got success at that time and were happy with him," he added.

After falling back on proven methods, the BCB has now come to the realisation that cricket has moved onto a different plateau from 2014-2017 and the sluggish pitches used for short-term success at that time have directly contributed to current batting problems. But man management appears to be crux of the issue now and Papon said that players now have a different outlook on coaches after working under Steve Rhodes and Russell Domingo.

"Later when Hathurusingha arrived it was difficult for him to adjust and I am not denying it. I think the board should have been more involved and have more communication with the players and understand the players," he said, suggesting the BCB has a culture and management style issue to solve.

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'I'll never again tell anyone to send their kids to schools'

Says father as his bullet-hit son being treated in cop custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

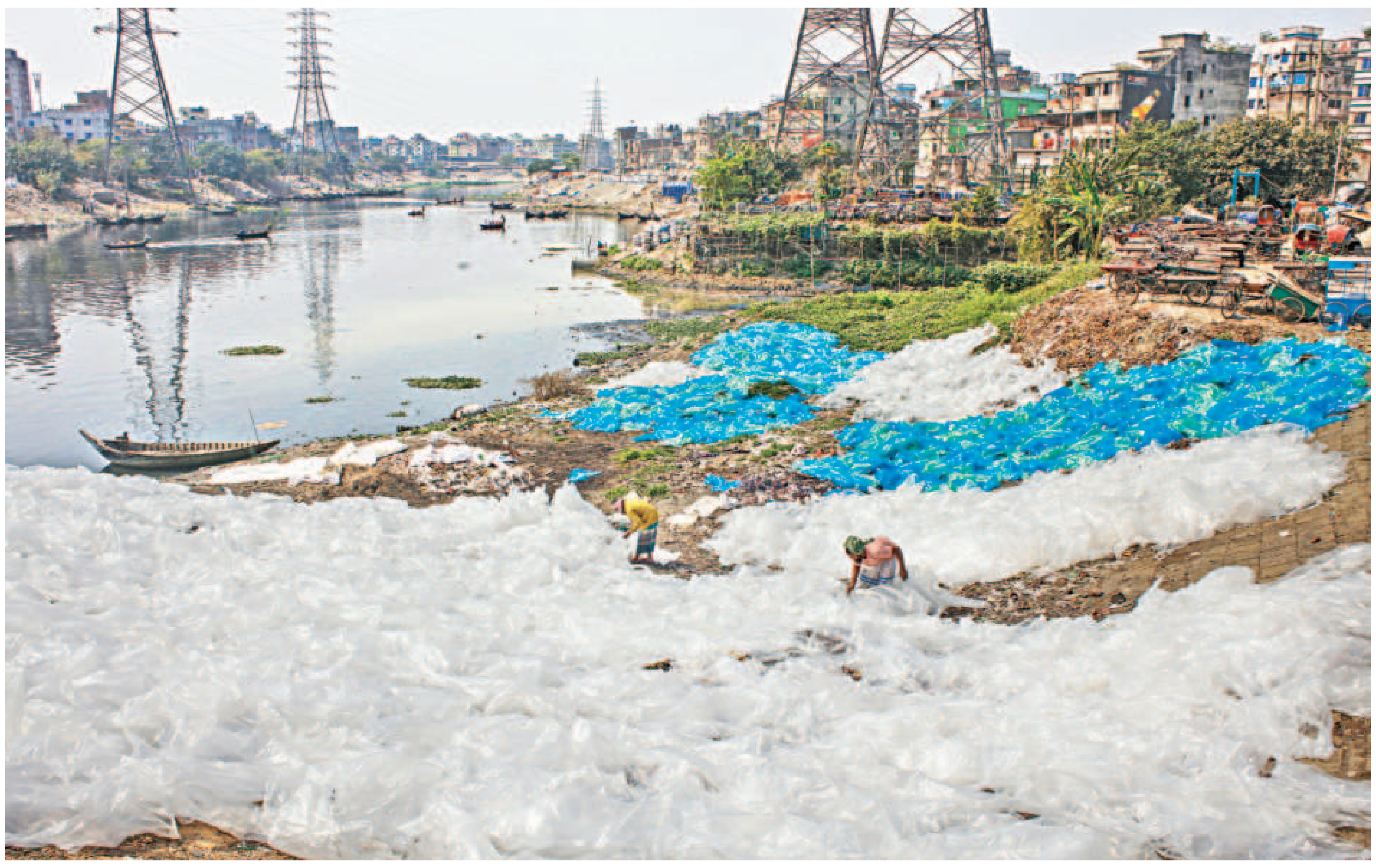
The sense of fear among the medical professionals in the capital's Holy Family Hospital is palpable. No one would speak on the record, and those that would speak off the record would only do so in a hushed voice. It is as if someone is always watching them even when there is no one around.

At cabin number 207/A, an injured student is being treated in police custody, and the hospital staff has strict orders not to share any information about him with anyone.

Mehedi Hasan Zumman, 23, was admitted to the hospital at 9:50pm on Friday with gunshot wounds.

Doctors call the nature of his injuries as broken "tibia-fibula," a fracture in the lower leg that

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Workers drying polythene bags in the sun on the bank of the Buriganga in the capital's Lalbagh so that they could be recycled. The bags, which had been used for packing chemicals, are washed in river, polluting its waters. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DEATHS DURING DEMO

74 eminent citizens call for probe under UN supervision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seventy-four eminent citizens, including human rights activists, lawyers, and academicians yesterday called for an independent UN-led investigation into all incidents of deaths, injuries, and torture of students and peaceful citizens caused by the excesses of police, Rab and other forces.

Their call included a five-point demand, emphasising the need for justice, transparency, and accountability.

The investigation, they insisted, should be conducted transparently and impartially under the supervision of a high-level UN team of experts, they said at a press conference.

The citizens also urged the UN to initiate this process and ensure that all those responsible, regardless of rank or political affiliation, face legal consequences.

They also called on the government for immediate action to ensure the safety of students, protection of their future, and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

VIOLENCE CENTRING QUOTA PROTESTS

More than 10,000 arrested in 12 days

At least 473 more detained in police raids from Sunday morning to yesterday evening

STAR REPORT

At least 473 more people were arrested in the capital and elsewhere in 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday as the nationwide crackdown on alleged saboteurs as well as protesters and opposition parties continues.

Of them 58 were arrested in the capital, and 386 in 39 districts by police.

Besides, Rab yesterday arrested 29 people across the country.

According to the latest count, at least 10,134 people, including students, BNP and Jamaat-Shibir leaders and activists, have been arrested in 872 cases filed in the capital and 51 districts over the last 12 days since July 18.

So far, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have arrested 2,822 people in 243 cases, which include 14 fresh ones filed yesterday.

The Daily Star has so far acquired documents related to 178 cases filed since July 17. The number of accused in those cases is 2,13,834. Of them, only 1,310 were named.

Besides, police have so far arrested 6,978 people in 51 districts in 629 cases filed against some 2,849 named individuals and over 80,000 unnamed others.

The cases were filed, mostly by police, with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson, said DMP sources.

In the cases, police brought charges of gathering illegally, rioting, assaulting law enforcers, and damaging properties.

The country witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale after the peaceful demonstrations for quota reform turned deadly on July 15 when Chhatra League attacked the protesting students on different university campuses.

> **Excluding the capital, police have so far arrested 6,978 people in 51 districts in 629 cases filed in connection with the recent violence.**

In the following days, violence escalated in Dhaka and elsewhere, leaving at least 162 dead, as per The Daily Star data. The death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Meanwhile, the DMP stopped providing official data on arrests and cases from yesterday. Seeking anonymity, a DMP official claimed since they won't conduct

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

QUOTA PROTEST

Another dies from bullet wounds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more person, who suffered bullet wounds during the recent clashes centring the quota protests, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Sunday night.

Babul Hawlader, 48, a painter from Munshiganj, suffered bullet wounds in the Rampura area on July 19. He passed away around 11:00pm at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), according to the hospital's death register and family members.

Babul's son, Parvez Hawlader, said his father was not involved in the protest. He suffered bullets as he was returning to their Ulan road house after Jumma prayers that day.

With this death, at least 163 lives have been lost since July 16, when six people were killed in clashes between agitators and law enforcers, and ruling party activists

Thirty people died on July 18, 66 on July 19, 25 on July 20, 14 on July 21, six on July 22, three on July 23, four on July 24, two on July 25, four on July 26, and two on July 27.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

DEADLY GOLAN STRIKE

Lebanon on alert as Israel vows 'severe' response

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday vowed a "severe" response to a deadly strike that killed youths in the annexed Golan Heights, as diplomats raced to contain escalation between Israel and Hezbollah.

On a visit to the site of the rocket strike which killed 12 children in the town of Majdal Shams, Netanyahu said: "The State of Israel will not, and cannot, let this pass. Our response will come and it will be severe."

He was greeted by protests during his visit, which came after mourners gathered in the Druze Arab town for the burial of the last victim, 11-year-old Guevara Ibrahim.

Israel and the United States have blamed the strike on Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah, which has traded near-daily fire with Israeli forces since the start of the Gaza war in early October.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said a flurry of diplomatic activity has sought to contain the anticipated Israeli response.

"Israel will escalate in a limited way and Hezbollah will respond in a limited way... These are the assurances we've received," Bou Habib said in an interview with local broadcaster Al-Jadeed.

The United States, France and others were trying to contain the escalation, he added, while Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that "talks are ongoing with international, European and Arab sides to protect Lebanon and ward off dangers".

Yesterday, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said he was "confident" a broader war can be avoided.

- » IDF drone strike kills two in south Lebanon
- » Flights to and from Beirut airport cancelled or delayed
- » Death toll in Gaza rises to 39,363

VIOLENCE OVER QUOTA

Noted citizens form probe commission

Urges people to send proof of violations of laws, human rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens of the country yesterday formed a commission to investigate allegations of gross violations of laws and human rights in the recent violence, including the loss of lives and mass arrests, over the quota reform protests.

The nine-member body -- National Mass Inquiry Commission headed -- will be co-chaired by Justice Md Abdul Matin and Sultana Kamal, according to a press release.

It said the commission has been formed with eminent personalities of Bangladesh on behalf of the country's teachers, lawyers, cultural activists, and general guardians, and urged people to send it information which would help it to unearth the truth behind the violent incidents.

According to the press release, the violence started on July 16 when students of the Dhaka University were attacked and assaulted to suppress their anti-discrimination protests.

"Abu Sayeed was shot directly in the chest in Rangpur as students and common people across the country took to the streets to protest the violence [attacks on students at universities].

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Djokovic eases past Nadal

AFP, *Paris*

Novak Djokovic crushed Rafael Nadal 6-1, 6-4 in their blockbuster Olympics clash on Monday as the two titans met for the 60th and possibly final time.

The showdown between the two most successful men's tennis players in history appeared to be fizzling out before a late fightback from Nadal enabled him to avoid his heaviest-ever defeat by Djokovic.

"I'm very relieved," said Djokovic. "Everything was going my way, I was 6-1, 4-0 up but I played a sloppy service game and gave him chances."

It was 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic's 31st win in a rivalry that began on the same Roland Garros clay courts in 2006.

The Serb added: "I never thought back in 2006 that we'd still be playing each other almost 20 years later."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Serbia's Novak Djokovic (R) shakes hands with Rafael Nadal after beating the Spaniard in straight sets in their second round match of Paris Olympics at Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Stop arrest, abduction of students

Over 100 univ teachers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over a hundred university teachers yesterday demanded that harassment of students by abduction and mass arrest be stopped, and they be released immediately.

Expressing solidarity with the protesting students' demands, they also called upon the authorities concerned to reopen all universities right away.

They observed a one-minute silence in remembrance of those killed in what they termed "July massacre".

University Teachers Network, a platform of public and private university teachers, made the demands from a "Anti-Repression Teachers' Rally" at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla at Dhaka University.

Prof Saeed Ferdous, of Jahangirnagar University's anthropology department, who presided over the rally, said the government is showing its two faces.

During the day, they are expressing grief over the deaths and offering compensation to the victims' families to get sympathy, but at night they abduct people and force people to issue statements to the media.

The government should stop this, he said, calling for an end to the abductions and killings.

He said the government is considering students their opponents, but they took to the streets to overhaul the country.

Students are making history by challenging the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

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QUOTA PROTESTS

All deaths unfortunate

Says HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said the deaths in the violence over quota reform protests were unfortunate.

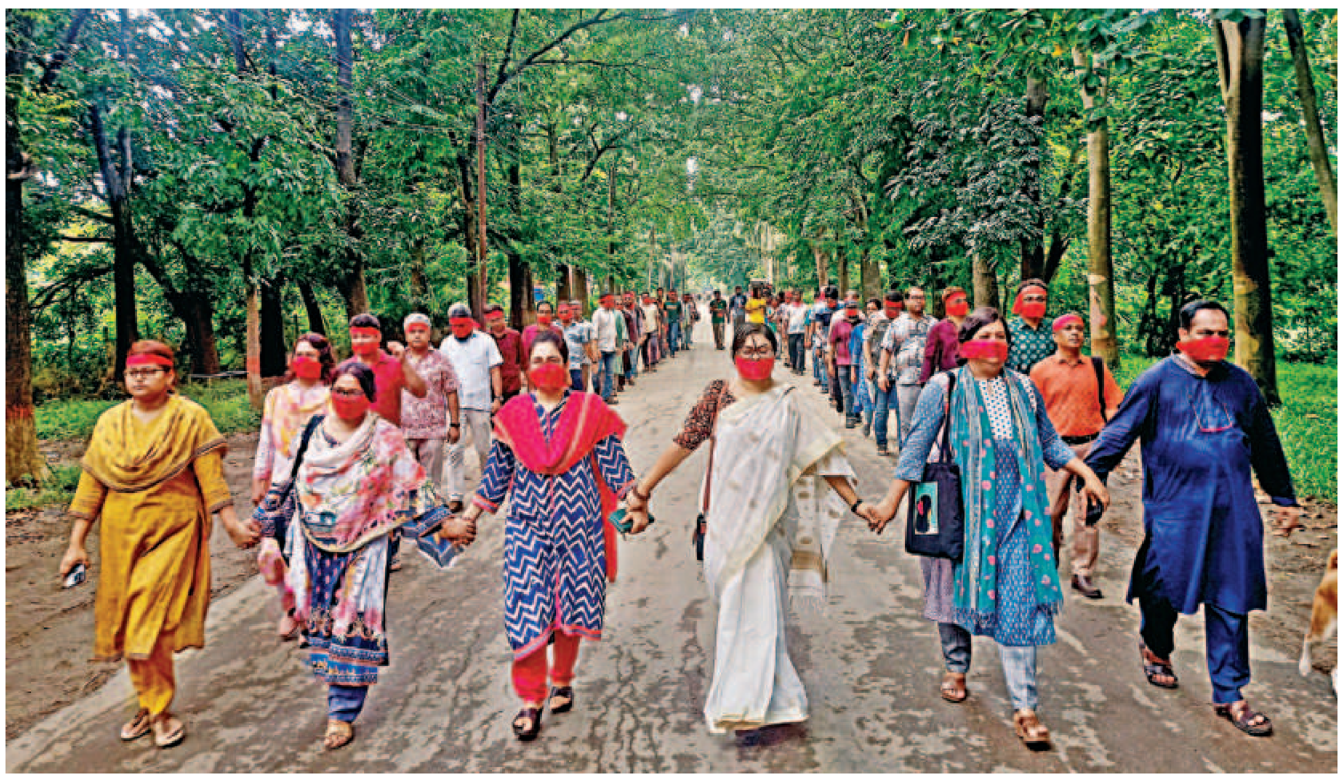
"These deaths are sad for all of us," the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon said during a hearing on a writ petition.

Lawyer Aneek R Haque presented newspaper reports on the death of six-year-old Ria on the roof of a house in Narayanganj. "When a life is lost, there are no sides. A six-year-old child."

Justice Mustafa, presiding judge of the HC bench, said, "We will not address emotional issues in this court. We are deeply ashamed."

The petition was filed by Supreme Court lawyers Aynunnahar Siddiqua and Manzur-Al-Matin on Monday seeking HC orders for the immediate release of six coordinators of the quota reform protests

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



With red cloths covering parts of their faces, teachers and students of Jahangirnagar University yesterday brought out a silent march to protest the torture and detentions of students and also to demand justice for those killed during the unrest centring the quota protests.

PHOTO: **AKHLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH**

Govt largely to blame for huge loss of lives

Says eminent citizens' platform, gives govt 24hrs for releasing quota protest organisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is largely responsible for the huge loss of lives during the quota reform protest, said eminent citizens yesterday.

The level of violence and attacks on peaceful protesters has shocked and outraged the people of Bangladesh and the world, they said at a press conference under the banner of Aggrieved Citizen Society at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

They said they were lost for words to condemn or protest such levels of brutal killings and violence.

The citizens also issued a 24-hour ultimatum for the unconditional release of the key organisers of the quota reform protest currently in the custody of the detective branch (DB) of police "for their security".

"Now, everyone is feeling insecure -- will [DB] provide safety to all by bringing them into their office?" said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

If the coordinators of the quota reform protest were not released unconditionally in the next 24 hours, tougher programmes will be announced, he said.

The citizens are concerned, shocked, and worried, he added.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, read out an 11-point demand.

It includes proper and transparent probes and accurate trials of the members of the police, Rab, Ansar, BGB, activists of Chhatra League, Jubo League and everyone who fired shots during the quota reform protests.

They also demanded an independent, acceptable and credible probe under high-positioned specialists of the UN into every killing, law enforcers' use of weapons, and use of force.

They demanded immediate release of the arrested students and suspension of all drives to arrest students.

All educational institutions must be reopened and the politics of arms and influence have to be stopped.

The citizens demanded the immediate disclosure of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Star BUSINESS

S&P lowers Bangladesh rating

S&P Global has downgraded Bangladesh's long-term sovereign rating from BB- to B+ amid deadly protests over the quota-based hiring system for government jobs. The country is still at risk of failing to rebound from lingering economic pressures, it said.

STORY ON B1

Teacher-student demo in several univs

Many take to social media to express solidarity; protesters to bring out processions today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and students at Jahangirnagar University and faculty members at Rajshahi University yesterday staged demonstrations, with red cloths covering parts of their faces, calling for an end to harassment, detention and torture of students.

They also demanded thorough investigation into the indiscriminate killings during the unrest over the quota reform movement.

In Khulna and Tangail districts, college students blocked intersections to press for the same demand.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

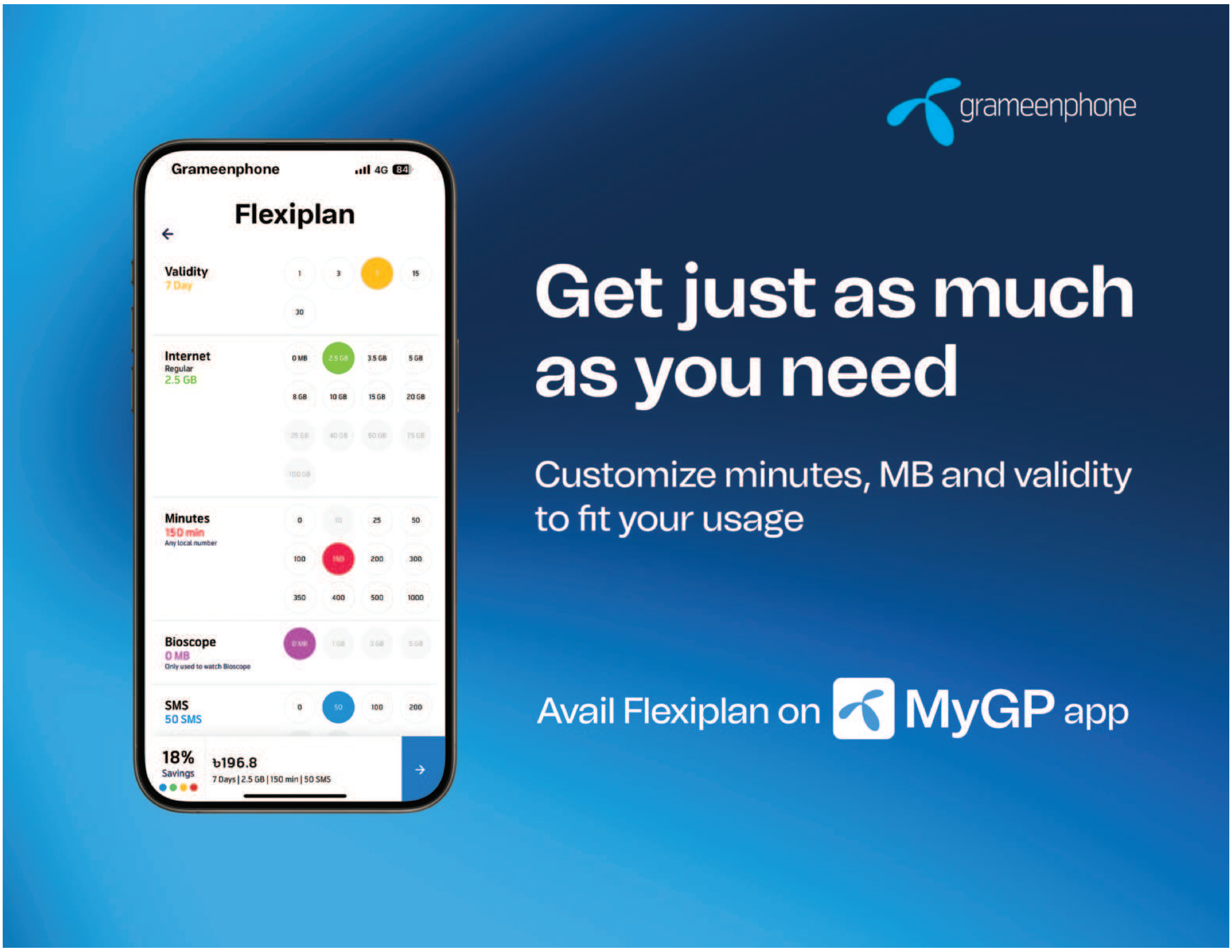
UN, EU call for thorough probe into the killings

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres remains concerned by emerging reports of excessive use of force by security forces and credible evidence of human rights violations in Bangladesh during the quota reform protest, said his spokesperson.

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Joseph Borrell also expressed grave concern at the announcement of a "shoot-on-sight policy" and unlawful

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4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NARSINGDI JAILBREAK

All 68 prison guards suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

All 68 prison guards have been suspended in connection with the July 19 attack on Narsingdi District Jail, which resulted in the escape of a total of 826 prisoners, including nine militants, and the looting of around 85 arms and 9,000 bullets from the jail's weapon's cache.

They were suspended on Monday, confirmed Tajwar Akram Sakapi Ibne Sazzad, additional deputy commissioner of Narsingdi, quoting an order of the home ministry's Security Services Division.

Earlier, Narsingdi Jail Superintendent Md Abul Kalam Azad and Jailer Md Kamrul Islam were suspended.

At least, at least 272 people have so far been arrested over the jailbreak incident, and five out of nine escaped militants have been apprehended.

On July 21, the district administration made announcements on loudspeakers asking the escaped inmates to surrender before the court.

In response, a total of 575 inmates have surrendered in the last 11 days till yesterday. On the other hand, 51 out of 85 looted arms and 1,091 rounds of looted bullets were recovered.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consoles a relative of a boy injured during the recent violence centring the quota reform protest. The PM yesterday visited several wards of the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital and enquired about the treatment of the wounded.

PHOTO: **BSS**

Taiwan's President Lai calls for unity in face of China 'threat'

AFP, TAIPEI

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te said yesterday "a threat from China to any country is a threat to the world", emphasizing to lawmakers of more than 20 countries that global democracies must unite against "authoritarian expansion".

China has in recent years stepped up military and political pressures on democratic Taiwan, which Beijing claims as part of its territory.

While Taipei officially only has a dozen diplomatic allies, it has strengthened partnerships with democracies around the world -- especially the United States, its largest weapons provider -- as Beijing ups the rhetoric of unification being "inevitable".

Yesterday, Lai attended a summit of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) -- a group of parliamentarians hailing from Uruguay and Canada to Japan and Britain concerned about how democracies interact with Beijing.

Praising the 49 lawmakers from 23 countries and the European Parliament for making the journey to Taipei, Lai said the delegation demonstrates "the importance and support" that various countries have for Taiwan.

"They send a crucial message to democratic partners worldwide: democracy requires unity and protection," he said.

"I want to emphasize that a threat from China to any country is a threat to the world. Taiwan will do everything to join democratic partners to uphold the umbrella of democracy, (and) protect democratic nations from the threat of authoritarian expansion."

Teacher-student demo in several univs

FROM PAGE 1

On social media platforms, students, teachers, guardians and people of different ages and walks of life changed their profile pictures to solid red, expressing solidarity with the the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement's programme.

Rejecting the government-announced nationwide mourning in remembrance of those killed in the recent unrest, the organisers on Monday urged people to cover their faces with red cloths and upload the photos on their social media.

The online protests went on despite restrictions on several websites, including Facebook. Many users bypassed these restrictions using VPNs (Virtual Private Network).

Under the banner of "Jahangirnagar Against Oppression", teachers of different departments held a silent march with their mouths covered with red cloths. Students joined the march, expressing solidarity.

The procession began at the university's Shahid Minar around 12:30pm.

Anwarullah Bhuiyan, a philosophy professor, said, "We can see the full design and implementation of misrule and a dictatorial mentality ... When the students took to the streets with their logical demands, the state's forces attacked them. Now again, the government is arbitrarily arresting the students, jailing and torturing them."

Towhid Siam, a coordinator of JU student movement, said, "Our protests will continue until our demands are met. We now also demand the unconditional release of Arif Sohail, a coordinator of the JU movement."

At RU, over 200 teachers, under the banner of "RU Teachers Against Oppression", demonstrated with the same demands.

Their procession started from the Shaheed Intellectual Memorial at 11:30am and marched through the university roads before a rally at the university's main gate.

Physics Professor Saleh Hasan Naqib, speaking at the rally, said, "The government has failed to deal with the student movement. The students are still being harassed and tortured. The government has resorted to all kinds of dirty methods, including taking student leaders into DB custody and forcing them to give statements.

"We want an end to such torture and harassment. We want proper investigation into the indiscriminate killings, and fair justice."

Economics Professor Farid Uddin Khan said, "The government first directed Chhatra League to attack the students who had been demonstrating peacefully. Then, the state used the law enforcement agencies to suppress the students' movement and shoot them dead on the streets."

Marketing Professor Faridul Islam, Arabic Professor Iftikharul Alam Masud, and Finance Professor Amzad Hossain also spoke. The teachers announced they would hold a similar programme today at the same place and time.

In Khulna, hundreds of students demonstrated at the Shibbari intersection around 11:30am, protesting the police firing at quota protesters. Blocking the intersection for over three hours, they chanted "Shooting won't stop the movement" and "One point, one demand, step down Sheikh Hasina."

Many people joined the students in solidarity.

One of the protesters said, "Bullets bought with our fathers' tax money are being used against us. The police shot and killed students in the quota reform movement, we demand justice for these killings."

In Tangail, a group of quota reform protesters wearing red badges brought a procession on the Registrypara Road around noon, but the march was halted by police near the Girls' School Intersection.

FRESH PROTESTS

Organisers of the quota reform movement yesterday announced a "March For Justice" programme at all educational institutions, court premises and major roads today to press home their nine-point demand.

The announcement was made in a press release, signed by Abdul Hannan Masud, a coordinator of the Anti-Discriminations Student Movement. Copies of the release were sent to media houses around 8:30pm.

Students and people are expected to join the programme around 12:30pm.

Their demands include an apology from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and resignations of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, Law Minister Anisul Huq, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, and State Minister for Post, Telecommunication and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

Some other demands are: dismissal of police high-ups in the districts, including Dhaka, where students were killed by law enforcers; resignation of the vice chancellors and proctors of every university, including DU, Jagannath, JU, RU and CU, where peaceful protesters were attacked by law enforcers; immediate reopening of all educational institutions and halls, and lifting of the curfew and removal of the police, Rab, BGB, Swat and army personnel deployed across the country.

(Our correspondents in Dhaka University, Savar, Tangail, Khulna, and a correspondent from Rajshahi contributed to this report.)

Govt largely to blame for huge loss of lives

FROM PAGE 1

the actual number and identities of the deceased, injured, and affected individuals.

The government must provide adequate compensation to the families of the deceased, take full responsibility for the medical treatment of the injured, and ensure the rehabilitation of those who have lost their eyes and limbs.

"The sick mentality of suppressing protests by firing must be stopped. The government must move away from the culture of intimidation," she said.

They also demanded curfew and army withdrawal, stoppage of block raids, mass arrests, student-parent harassment, and "helicopter patrolling".

The wife and mother of Nahid Islam, a key organiser of the quota reform protest and now in DB custody, was supposed to join the press conference but they backed out at the last minute, said Shireen Huq, a rights activist.

"The quota reform protesters were undergoing treatment and were taken by intelligence. Were they unsafe at the hospital and have they ever said they were not safe there?" she added.

The first attack on freedom of speech came when the students uttered slogans, said Gitiara Nasreen, a professor at the DU Department of Mass Communication and Journalism.

"It is unfortunate that most of the teachers, proctors and vice-chancellors did not come forward to save the students... We get paid because of the students. Students will now distrust teachers because they didn't protect them," she added.

ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Haque said that they did not participate in the Liberation War to see such a Bangladesh.

"Bullets bought with the taxpayers' money were being fired at the students. We have gone past the moment of saying enough is enough," he added.

Students and youths are being harassed in the name of block raids, said Asif Nazrul, a professor of law at Dhaka University.

"Have the government declared war on the youths and students? Is it the Gaza Strip? Is it Kashmir?"

He said, "I don't see the government cry for those killed. But I see them crying for structures [that were vandalised]. Everyone knows the truth, but the police FIR is saying that Abu Sayed [slain student of Begum Rokeya University] died when a chunk of brick was thrown. Are you kidding us?"

There is no evidence of who carried out the atrocities and still thousands of unrelated people are being arrested, Nazrul added.

When the students were attacked in front of the vice-chancellor's house, he was on the second floor, said Mirza Taslima Sultana, a professor of anthropology at Jahangirnagar University.

"But he did not open the gate for the students," she said, adding that outsiders were brought in to carry out attacks on the students.

Samina Lutfha, an associate professor at Dhaka University's sociology department, said she feels guilty as they have failed to save the lives of students.

"History will not forgive us if we don't stand beside the students during this trying times," she said.

UN, EU call for thorough probe

FROM PAGE 1

killings perpetrated in recent days by the authorities in Bangladesh.

They demanded a thorough investigation into the killings and holding accountable those responsible.

The government put the death toll in the violence at 150.

But according to The Daily Star's count, at least 163 people were killed.

The death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists could be much higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

Besides, law enforcers have arrested over 10,000 people in connection with the violence and destruction of properties.

During a regular briefing in New York on Monday, UN secretary-general's Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said Guterres reiterated his call for all acts of violence to be investigated promptly, transparently, and impartially, and for those responsible to be held to account.

The secretary-general remains deeply concerned about the situation in Bangladesh and notes reports of the resumption of student protests and reiterates his call for calm and restraint.

"The secretary-general is concerned about reported mass arrests of thousands of young people and political opposition in connection with the current student movement. He underscores the importance of due process and the right to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

"We continue to raise our concerns about the situation in the country with relevant authorities, both in the capital, Dhaka, and here in New York, and we count on Bangladesh to respect and uphold human rights, including as a top troop contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions."

He said the UN took note of the statements by Bangladesh authorities that UN-marked vehicles are no longer being deployed within Bangladesh.

Following a UN statement on the use of UN-marked vehicles during the violence in Bangladesh, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud had said such vehicles were mistakenly used. Later, the UN marks were erased.

Guterres said the equipment marked with UN insignia is used only when peacekeepers perform mandated tasks during peacekeeping operations.

Meanwhile, EU High Representative Joseph Borrell in a statement yesterday said that in the margins of the ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting in Laos on July 27, he conveyed to the representative of Bangladesh and former foreign minister AK Abdul Momen his grave concern at the announcement of a "shoot-on-sight policy" and unlawful killings perpetrated in recent days by the authorities in Bangladesh.

"I'm also deeply concerned by the killings of law enforcement officers, violence, torture, mass arrests, and damage to property that have taken place."

He said these acts must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

"There must be full accountability for the numerous instances of use of excessive and lethal force by the law enforcement authorities against protesters and others, including journalists and young children. The thousands arrested must receive due process.

"We will follow closely the actions of the authorities in the context of this crisis and ... expect all human rights to be fully respected," Borrell said.

The EU is Bangladesh's largest export destination, with about $30 billion a year. It has been providing duty-free access to Bangladesh as an LDC. However, as the country graduates from LDC bracket by 2026, the duty-free facility will not be abolished.

The country can enjoy similar privileges after 2026 under another scheme called GSP Plus, which will, however, require conditions on human rights, labour rights, democracy, and environment.

All deaths unfortunate

FROM PAGE 1

from law enforcers' custody and stopping the use of bullets on protesters.

The bench held hearing on the petition for the second consecutive day yesterday amid chaos and commotion in the packed courtroom.

The court will hold another hearing today and issue an order.

Lawyers Sara Hossain and Aneek represented the petitioners while additional attorneys general SM Munir, Sk Md Morshed and Mohammad Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury the state.

Reading excerpts from the Police Regulations Bengal and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) about law enforcers' use of bullets, Aneek said if the police have to shoot, they should aim at legs. If someone is committing a robbery at night, law enforcers can shoot directly in self-defence.

A loss for the nation should not only mean the damage to some buildings and structures, the loss of life is also a loss for the nation, the lawyer argued, adding that police used to spray hot water and pepper to suppress or disperse protests.

Justice Mustafa said teargas shells and rubber bullets can be used but before that warnings should be made through loudspeakers.

Lawyer Sara said six coordinators of the quota reform protests are in custody.

No one can be detained illegally, she said. "No action can be taken beyond legal capacity. It is being said that their family members were able to meet them. But there is no way to know who they [the coordinators] want to meet."

The court said detentions should be made in a legal process.

"Produce them before the court," the bench added.

Additional Attorney General Munir said law enforcers did not use excessive force and they abided by the Police Regulations Bengal.

The petitioners must prove whether the law enforcers used excessive force, he said, adding that the petitioners' lawyers had omitted that the family members of six organisers had met them and said they were well.

Justice Mustafa said, "We ourselves have said that the family members met them."

The court said the person, who was victimised, should talk about it.

SM Munir said the writ petition was unacceptable because it lacked grounds and it was devoid of facts.

Additional Attorney General Mehedi said the writ petitioners and their lawyers came to the court to protect personal interests.

"They formed a mass inquiry commission. All of those who have come here are members of this commission. They have an ulterior motive. The chairman of the commission is the father [Justice MA Matin, a retired judge of the Appellate Division] of one the petitioners [Manzur-Al-Matin]," he said.

Citing a UN charter on the principles on the use of forces and firearms by the law enforcement, of which Bangladesh is a signatory, he said law enforcers can open fire during a serious offence to lower the damage and save lives.

Lawyer Mehedi said at least three policemen were killed and around 1,200 others were injured.

Fifty-two police personnel were rescued by helicopters from the miscreants, he said, adding that the police have the right to self-defence.

Additional Attorney General Morshed said none of the six coordinators was detained or arrested. Rather, they are kept at the detective branch office for their security. Therefore, the question of bringing them before a court within 24 hours cannot arise.

The right to assembly and gathering is subject to some reasonable restrictions which cannot be challenged in the court, he said.

Sk Morshed said Justice MA Matin, who had issued restrictions on holding gatherings in the Supreme Court premises in 2005, has been chairman of the mass probe commission, although the government has constituted a judicial commission to conduct inquiry into the incidents of deaths in violence and the judicial commission has been working to this effect.

The writ petition is not acceptable, he added.

Senior lawyers Md Nurul Islam Sujan, Azahar Ullah Bhuiyan and Shah Monjurul Hoque told the court that the writ petition had been filed from a misconceived idea, and therefore it should be rejected.

Russia stages naval drills involving most of its fleet

AFP, *Moscow*

Russia yesterday began large-scale military drills involving every part of its navy not engaged in the Ukraine offensive, the defence ministry said.

Some 300 vessels, including submarines, and more than 20,000 personnel will be involved in the exercises, which are being staged in the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, as well as the Baltic and Caspian Seas.

The drills will involve "more than 300 combat exercises with the practical use of combat weapons", the ministry said.

"The main purposes of the exercises is to test the actions of the navy's military command at all levels, as well as the readiness of the ships' crews, naval aviation units and naval coastal troops," it continued.

Units from four of Russia's five navy divisions -- the Northern, Pacific and Baltic fleets, and the Caspian Flotilla -- will take part, each staging training exercises in its own "operational zones."

Russia's Black Sea Fleet, the fifth division, is engaged in the offensive on Ukraine, where it has sustained significant losses over more than two years of combat.

Ukraine claims to have damaged or destroyed a third of Russia's fleet in the Black Sea -- a notable military success for Kyiv as its troops struggle to hold ground on land.

Satellite images show Moscow has been forced to move most of Black Sea fleet away from its historic naval base at Sevastopol, on the annexed Crimean peninsula, to Novorossiysk, further east on the Russian mainland.

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Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches

Will take foreign tech support for judicial probe

Says PM

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will seek foreign technical assistance for the judicial probe committee investigating the deaths centring the quota protests, to ensure a thorough and standard inquiry.

"We will take foreign technical assistance for the judicial inquiry committee to make it appropriate and standard," she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

WHY DID YOU KILL MY CHILDREN ?

GUARDIANS BESIDE CHILDREN. Holding a placard that says "Why did you kill my children?", a guardian leaves the premises of Dhaka Medical College yesterday after law enforcers barred them from holding a sit-in there. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Guardians barred from staging sit-in at DMC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police barred a group of guardians from holding a sit-in under the banner of "Santaner Pashe Obhibhabok (Guardians beside children)" in front of Dhaka Medical College yesterday.

They announced the programme at the main entrance of DMC, demanding answers for the deaths of their children in clashes centring the quota reform protests.

Shima Dutta, a guardian, said they wanted to hold a silent sit-in to protest the killings of their children.

"We requested the police to permit us to hold the sit-in for just 10 minutes. But they refused. We have the right to stand anywhere to express ourselves. The constitution guarantees this," Shima told the media.

> **We requested the police to permit us to hold the sit-in for just 10 minutes. But they refused. We have the right to stand anywhere to express ourselves.**

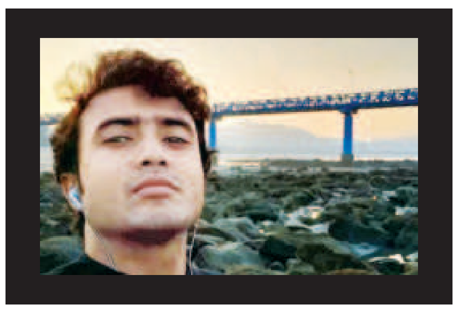
Md Aktarul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (Ramna zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that they were not allowing the demonstration because the guardians had not obtained permission from the DMP.

"Without permission, we cannot allow them to hold their programme here," he added.

Later, they visited injured students undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The students suffered injuries in recent clashes with law enforcement agencies and pro-government groups during the protests.

More than just NUMBERS

A 28-year-old father shot and killed in Dhaka. A 35-year-old farmer died from bullet wounds in Mymensingh. A 25-year-old son fatally shot in Cox's Bazar. At least 162 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters. But these victims are not just statistics; they were children, husbands, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.



Why isn't father calling me?

4-year-old daughter of Priyo, who was shot dead on July 19, keeps asking

MD ABBAS

On July 19, journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo, 28, was fatally shot in the head as law enforcers opened fire to disperse quota reform protesters in the capital's Science Lab area.

Priyo's friends, present at the protest, saw him fall as the shots rang out.

Despite trying to reach him several times, they were forced back by the police gunfire. Later, they watched as officers retrieved Priyo's body and took it away.

As the situation calmed, Priyo's friends searched from one police station to another for Priyo's body.

Their search met deadends as no station provided information about Priyo's whereabouts.

The next day, a lead took them to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College.

After obtaining the necessary police clearance, they entered the morgue, bracing for the worst. Their worst fears were realised as they found Priyo's body lying in the morgue among other victims.

THE CHILD WHO LOST HER FATHER

Priyo left behind his four-year-old daughter Sadira Zaman.

The bond between Sadira and Priyo was a cherished one, built through nightly video calls that kept them connected despite the physical distance.

"Why isn't my father calling me," she

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Saiful's daughter still waits for his return

Tragedy strikes family twice as his grief-stricken grandfather dies from stroke

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

For the last couple of days, two year-old Sayma Akter holds a mango in her hand, hoping her father will return home so that they can share their favourite fruit together.

But her father, Md Saiful Islam, 35, will never return home. He was killed after a bullet pierced through him, when law enforcers opened fire at Amuakanda Bazar area in Phulpur municipality of Mymensingh on July 20.

However, this would not be the only death in their family that week.

"Hearing the news of Saiful's death, my grandfather Aftab Uddin, 80, cried out and suffered a stroke from the sorrow. He died on July 23, three days after Saiful," said Hafizul Islam, Saiful's younger brother.

Meanwhile, Sayma still firmly believes her father will return home with more mangoes.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

We miss him every day

Says mother of 25-year-old Ahsan who died from bullet wounds

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, *Cox's Bazar*

Hasina Begum has become numb since her eldest son, Ahsan Habib, 25, died after being shot in the neck during a clash centring the quota reform protest on July 18.

"Who will I blame for the death of my child? I am leaving it up to the Almighty to deliver justice," she kept on saying.

"Not a day goes by that we don't think of him... We miss him every day," Hasina added.

Ahsan used to work as an office assistant at a cable service centre in Cox's Bazar town to support his family.

Besides studying in pass course at Chakaria Degree College with an aim to improve his life and support his family members better.

His father, Helal Uddin, a vegetable seller and resident of Fasiakhali village under Chakaria upazila, hardly earns enough to sustain his family of six.

As such, Ahsan's contribution to the family was significant, especially since he bore the cost of education for his two younger siblings.

All hopes of the family were dashed after a bullet took Ahsan's life early on July 19.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

David Hasanat sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent garment exporter KM Rezaul Hasanat David, chairman and CEO of Viyellatex Group, to jail on completion of his five-day remand in a case filed over vandalising and setting Setu Bhaban on fire on July 18.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saifur Rahman passed the order after Shikder Mohitul Alam, an inspector of the Detective Branch of Police and also the investigation officer of the case, produced him before the court in the case.

David was accused of financing the perpetrators.

The court also directed the jail authorities to provide

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Curfew relaxed from 7am to 8pm for four days

Normal office hours resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to relax the ongoing curfew for 13 hours for four days starting today.

The curfew will remain in force from 8:00pm to 7:00am till Saturday.

The decision will be effective for four districts -- Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Narsingdi. In other districts, the local administration will decide on the curfew.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan made the disclosure yesterday around 6:45pm after a special meeting at the Secretariat.

At the same time, all public and private offices will run their operations as per their normal schedule -- 9:00am to 5:00pm -- from today.

The Ministry of Public Administration sent an SMS to the media in this regard yesterday.

From July 28, public and private offices were operating for six hours, from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

At the special meeting, the home minister said the violence did not stop even after accepting all the demands of the students during the quota movement.

"So, we were forced to impose a curfew. We discussed the peace and law-and-order situation across the country.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

No journo should be in danger for doing their job

Says IPI, calls for probe into killings of 3 journos

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Press Institute (IPI) global network has called for a swift investigation into the deaths of three journalists, who were killed while covering the recent protests in Bangladesh, and ensuring a safe working environment for media.

Besides, around 30 journalists have sustained injuries while covering the protests demanding reforms to the quota system in government jobs, said IPI in a statement on Monday.

Hasan Mehedi, a journalist at Dhaka Times, was killed while covering clashes between protesters and police on July 18 in Dhaka. On the same day, Md Shakil Hossain, a correspondent for Daily Bhorer Awaj, was killed in Gazipur city, while on July 19, Abu Taher Md Turab, a correspondent for Daily Naya Diganta, was shot in Sylhet while covering the violent clashes.

"IPI strongly condemns the killings of Hasan Mehedi, Md Shakil Hossain, and Abu Taher Md Turab and calls for a thorough investigation into the circumstances of their deaths," said Amy Brouillette, director of advocacy at IPI. "No journalist should be in danger for doing their job."

"We once again renew our call on the government to take action to improve press freedom in the country and hold those responsible for crimes against journalists accountable," she also said.

Regarding injured journalists, some of them were caught up in the clashes, while others were attacked by the police or by the counter-protesters supporting BCL, according to Reporters Without Borders.

An IPI monitoring report from October 2022 to March 2023 indicates that journalists in Bangladesh operate in a hostile and difficult environment even when protests are not occurring.

> **An IPI monitoring report from October 2022 to March 2023 indicates that journalists in Bangladesh operate in a hostile and difficult environment even when protests are not occurring.**

They often face physical attacks, threats, and legal harassment, as well as censorship and surveillance.

In May 2023, IPI published an open letter calling on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, expressing concerns about the state of media freedom in Bangladesh and demanding that the government take steps to protect press freedom.

Curfew

FROM PAGE 3

The curfew will be relaxed from 7:00am to 8:00pm from Wednesday to Saturday. Besides, the education minister will decide when the educational institutions will open. Considering the technical issues, the state minister for ICT will decide when the internet will be fully restored," he said.

The nearly three-and-a-half-hour-long meeting, attended by the seven ministers and state ministers, started around 3:20pm.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway (BR) will resume operations of passenger trains on a limited scale from tomorrow, around two weeks after the service was suspended.

Some local, mail and commuter trains will be operated on the short-distance routes during the break of the ongoing curfew, Railways Minister Zillul Hakim said yesterday.

However, no decision regarding the intercity train service was taken, he told reporters after a meeting with the officials of his ministry and railway at Rail Bhaban.

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 31

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	4-20	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	4-55	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: **ISLAMIC FOUNDATION**

Business picks up for boat makers

SUZIT DAS, *Faridpur*

The century-old Bhanga Boat Market in Faridpur's Bhanga municipality is going through a busy time amid rise in demand for boats in monsoon.

Every year since the British era, the famed market opens twice a week on Mondays and Fridays between June and September, in Chiladharchar area on the bank of Kumar river near Dhaka-Barishal Highway.

Hundreds of boat makers, sellers and buyers from Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj and other neighbouring districts gather at the market to buy and sell boats for communication in riverine areas of the country's southern region, said Hafizul Mia, a leaseholder of the market.

Visiting the boat market recently, this correspondent saw at least 200 boats of different sizes were on sale.

Many people came to the market as visitors alongside buyers and sellers who were engaged in bargaining.

"I have made 30 boats with help of an assistant in last one month. Today, I brought three boats to this market, and sold two of those at Tk 5,000 each," said Goutam Mandol, 50, a boat-maker from Brahmapara village under Bhanga upazila.

Babul Mandol, 42, another boat-maker from the same area, said their boats are made from Raintree and Chambal wood at a cost of around Tk 4,000-4,200 each.

Jagadish Mandol, 69, of Azimnagar area, said, "I have been selling boats in this boat market for last 45 years. Even though the demand for boats is no longer like it was before, I continued to remain engaged in my ancestral profession."

Ratan Sheikh, 37, of Dangarpara village under Bhanga upazila, came to the market to zzbuy a boat. "I am a jute cultivator. I needed a boat to transport my jute from the cropland, and bought one for Tk 6,000," he said.

Amir Khan, 50, a boat trader in the market, said he purchases boats from Barishal and sells those in the market for Tk 5,500-7,500 each. He makes a profit of Tk 300-500 from each boat.

"The boat market becomes busy during monsoon, but not as much as it used to be in its heyday. Once I could sell 15-20 boats on a single day, but now it is tough to sell even half the number," he added.

BANNING JAMAAT-SHIBIR

Govt trying to distract people

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is bringing the issue of banning Jamaat-Shibir to distract people from the current situation, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

"Why did the government not ban Jamaat before? Why are they taking the decision now after so many years," he asked.

He said this in response to journalists' questions at a press conference yesterday afternoon at the BNP Chairperson's office in Gulshan.

"The government creates such issues to divert attention of people," he added.

Fakhrul said, "BNP believes in multi-party democracy. It is the responsibility of the people to decide whose politics they will accept and whose they won't. For this, a free, fair, and acceptable election is needed."

Referring to the ban on the Communist Party during Pakistan era, Fakhrul said, "Authoritarian regimes are the ones that resort to such decisions; they feel compelled to make such moves."

In response to a journalist's question about BNP's stance as an ally regarding the ban on Jamaat, Fakhrul stated, "This issue is not our concern; it is the government's decision."

Nirmul Committee and Gonojagoron Mancha welcome the decision

STAFF CORRESPONDEENT

The Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and Gonojagoron Mancha have welcomed the government's move to ban Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The Nirmul Committee, following a joint meeting with advisory councils and central committee members, led by Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, yesterday said they welcomed the move, although the government has delayed in making the decision.

They urged for these groups to be recognised as war criminal organisations through trials by the International Crimes Tribunal.

In a press release, they also called for a commission, including a Supreme Court judge, to investigate Jamaat and its affiliate parties for killing, torturing, and creating anarchy.

The committee emphasised the need to probe the financial, social, and cultural institutions controlled by war criminals and Jamaat-Shibir.

Gonojagoron Mancha similarly welcomed the government's decision.

"We have learned from media sources that the 14-party alliance unanimously decided to ban the politics of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir on July 29," said Imran H Sarkar, the platform's spokesperson.

"Banning Jamaat-Shibir's politics was one of the demands of Gonojagoron Mancha, which started on February 5, 2013," Sarkar added.

Abba will come

FROM PAGE 3

"I cannot bear the pain when Sayma says, 'abba ashbe, aam niye' (father will return with mangoes)," said Rahima Akter, Saiful's widow.

A father of three children, Saiful worked as a sharecropper to support his five-member family.

Hailing from the remote Chak Dhakirkanda village in Mymensingh's Phulpur upazila, he was unaware of the unrest gripping the country at the time.

On the day, Saiful along with his elder brother Shahidul Islam went to Amuakanda Bazar to sell their paddy.

After selling their crops, they sensed a commotion near the Amuakanda Bridge area. Before he could even figure out what was happening, Saiful was shot on the right side of his forehead.

Saiful was taken to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex, but doctors referred him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. On the way to the hospital, Saiful died, said Shahidul Islam.

Saiful was buried at their family graveyard.

"My children have lost their father. Who will take the responsibility of my three children?" asked Rahima, weeping.

"My brother has no connection with politics or the protest. Yet, he died by the bullets of police," said Hafizul.

We miss him

FROM PAGE 3

"On July 18, a clash ensued in the evening between police and ruling Awami League activists on one side and protesters demanding quota reform on the other, near Ahsan's office in Cox's Bazar town," said his uncle Masud Siddique.

"At around 7:00pm, after hearing gunshots, Ahsan came out of his room in the office to an open space on the second floor of the building, when a bullet hit him in the neck. He was taken to Cox's Bazar General Hospital from where someone informed me over the phone," he added.

"I immediately went to the hospital, where doctors advised us to take him to Chattogram Medical College Hospital since his condition was critical. We hired an ambulance and were on the way to the hospital when he passed away around 1:00am," Masud said.

"It was a terrible blow to the family. Ahsan was not involved in any political or criminal activity. He was working hard, alongside continuing his studies, to support his family. His parents have become shell-shocked since they came to know of Ahsan's untimely demise," he added.

Contacted, Md Ziaur Rahman, deputy manager of BRB Cables in Cox's Bazar where Ahsan worked, said Ahsan was an office assistant of their organisation.

David Hasanat

FROM PAGE 3

him with proper treatment as per the jail code after his lawyer submitted an application in this regard.

On July 25, another Dhaka court placed David on a five-day remand in the case.

In the forwarding report, the IO said David gave important information about the incident, which is being verified. The IO appealed to the court to confine him to jail until the investigation is completed.

David started his garment business in 1996 and over the last three decades, he diversified his business empire to power generation, tea estate, educational institution, agriculture, engineering and banking sector.

Viyellatex Group's garment section is known for its green garment initiative with the reuse of steam heat, reuse of water, harvesting the rainwater and planting trees for compensation to the carbon emission.

The group's export is more than $400 million apart from its local business conglomerate. According to the Viyellatex website, his company employs over 300 management staff and over 15,000 workers.

A relative of David, requesting anonymity, said they do not know exactly why he has been arrested as they think he was not involved with any such activities.

Invitation to submit proposals for two Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by UNICEF Bangladesh

RFP No. LRPS-2024-9191852: To provide technical support to SBC capacity building strategy implementation-Phase-1.

UNICEF Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong track record and professional credibility of providing the above-required services under one contract. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to **supplybangladesh@unicef.org**

The pre-bid meeting schedule and bid submissions deadlines are mentioned in the respective bid document.

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org/bangladesh

unicef | for every child

game

McGill UNIVERSITY

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
UGC Bhaban, Plot # E-18/A, Agargaon Administrative Area
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.ugc.gov.bd

UGC-McGill Ph.D Fellowship Program

University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh and McGill University, Canada joint Ph.D Fellowship Program (UGC-McGill Ph.D Fellowship Program) has been announced. Applications were invited on 23 May 2024 from the interested public universities' faculties of Bangladesh. **Application process must be completed before 14th August, 2024 (Canada standard time and date).** Details of the necessary information are available at this website www.ugc.gov.bd (Notice Board or Scholarship/Fellowship Box). Applicants must collect all the information from the website by their own responsibilities. No personal communication will be made with the applicants.

N.B: UGC, Bangladesh & McGill university, Canada preserve the rights to take any decision regarding UGC-McGill joint PhD Fellowship and that will be considered as the final decision.

Dr. Ferdous Zaman
Secretary, UGC

GD- 94

Waste being dumped near KU's main

FROM PAGE 5

Like Munna, 11 others also collect wastes from around 2,500 families in the locality.

Ashiquazzaman Ashiq, former chairman of the local Jalma union parishad, said, "We do not have any dumping ground or STS (Secondary Transfer Station) in the area. So, local collectors dump those here. Shopkeepers of Gallamari kitchen market also do the same."

"We charge Tk 100 from each house for the salary of waste collectors and other maintenance. However, the city corporation should collect the wastes from the spot regularly,'' he added.

Sadhon Chandran Swarnokar, assistant professor of KU's environmental science department, stressed that such unchecked waste dumping adversely impacts the environment in numerous ways, including polluting soil and air, and potentially contaminating any nearby water sources.

"KCC must develop a well-managed waste management policy," he added.

Anwarul Kadir, a civil society member and educationist, echoed him.

Md Anisur Rahman, chief conservancy officer of KCC, said, "The dumping spot is located outside the city corporation area. However, we still collect wastes from there regularly. The local union parishad should construct a STS to solve the issue."

Will take

FROM PAGE 3

The prime minister made these remarks while German Ambassador to Bangladesh Achim Tröster visited her at Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary M Nayeemul Islam Khan briefed reporters.

The government has formed a judicial probe committee, headed by a High Court justice.

The envoy said Germany will stay beside Bangladesh.

Why isn't father

FROM PAGE 3

keeps asking her grandmother since July 19.

This question has left Priyo's mother, Shamsi Ara Zaman, grappling with an answer she could not bring herself to give.

"What should I tell this little child?" she asked.

Priyo and his wife had got divorced early, and Sadira lived with her father until he moved to Dhaka for work.

Since then, she has been staying with Priyo's mother in Rangpur.

When Priyo's body was brought home, Sadira asked visitors not to disturb him, saying, "Baba ghumacche, tomra disturb koro na (My father is sleeping, do not disturb him)."

The house was filled with mourners, a crowd that puzzled Sadira.

She asked her grandmother why so many people had gathered at their home.

UNFULFILLED DREAM

According to his mother, Priyo had a passion for cinematography and aspired to be a movie director. After passing the HSC examination, he moved to Dhaka to pursue his dream, enrolling at Pathshala South Asian Media Institute instead of university.

Priyo worked as a journalist for the online news portal thereport.live and was about to join another portal.

He actively participated in 2013 protests against war criminals, 2018 quota reform and road safety movements, said his mother.

During the recent clashes, Priyo's mother asked him not to participate due to the danger, but he insisted, saying, "This is a just movement, and I have the responsibility to join it."

Priyo's uncle, Alamgir Kabir, said Priyo had immense courage, reminiscent of his grandfather, a hero of the Language Movement.

Address: 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka
Phone: 02-9561674, 02-9514046
PABX: 9566160-69
E-mail:dgmeed@agranibank.org

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Establishment and Engineierng Division

Amendment Notice

No.: E&ED/ ENGG./ MECHA-2/161/2024 Date: 28/07/2024

This is to inform all concern that the notice for invitation of tender for supply and installation of Air Cooler published in newspaper and website has been amended as follows:

Sl. No.	Ref No. & Date	Name of Work	Field Name	Previous Closing & Opening Date-Time	New Closing & Opening Date-Time
01	IFT No.: E&ED/ENGG./MECHA-2/130/2024, Date: 09/07/2024 Ammendment Notice No.: E&ED/ENGG./MECHA-2/157/2024, Date: 24/07/2024	Supply & Installation of Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Type Air Cooler for Agrani Bank PLC., Laldighi East Corporate Branch, Chattogram.	Last Selling Date	28/07/2024 From 10:00am to 6:00pm	04/08/2024 During Office Time
			Closing Date	29/07/2024 At 3:00 pm	05/08/2024 At 3:00 pm
			Opening Date	29/07/2024 At 3:15 pm	05/08/2024 At 3:15 pm
02	IFT No.: E&ED/ENGG./MECHA-2/148/2024, Date: 15/07/2024 Ammendment Notice No.: E&ED/ENGG./MECHA-2/157/2024, Date: 24/07/2024	Supply & Installation of 12 (Twelve) Air Coolers for Agrani Bank PLC., Bangabandhu Avenue Corporate Branch, Dhaka and Shaikh Mujib Road Branch, Chattogram.	Last Selling Date	04/08/2024 During Office Time	11/08/2024 During Office Time
			Closing Date	05/08/2024 At 3:00 pm	12/08/2024 At 3:00 pm
			Opening Date	05/08/2024 At 3:15 pm	12/08/2024 At 3:15 pm

All other terms and conditions of above mentioned IFT will remain unchanged and this amendment notice will be also a part of the tender document.

(Md. Abdur Rahman) 24/07/28
Deputy General Manager

GD- 93

Why did they shoot my boy?

Asks mother of Ziaul, 20, who sustained bullet wound

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

"If my son had committed any crime, they (police) could have arrested him, but why did they shoot my boy?" said Khorsheda Begum while sitting beside her son Ziaul Hoque, 20, on his bed at the orthopedic ward of Chattogram Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Ziaul had sustained a bullet wound in his right leg while going to his brother's house in the port city's Bahaddarhat area during a clash involving law enforcers, Chhatra League activists, and protesters demanding reform to quota system in government jobs, on July 18.

The youth from Chakaria of Cox's Bazar, who works in a factory in the port city besides studying at Chittagong College, is now groaning with pain in his leg and in risk of becoming crippled for the rest of his life.

"The physicians removed the bullet surgically on Saturday, and told me that the condition of my son's leg isn't good. I am worried about his future," she added.

In the same ward, Yeash Sharif, 17, a college student, was also seen being treated. He was shot in his leg by unidentified people during a clash in Bahaddarhat area on July 18.

Just around a month back, Yeash's mother Ruby Akter passed away after suffering from several ailments. His father, Aziz Khan, who has been attending his son at the hospital, was found sleeping on the hospital floor.

"I did not approve of him joining the protest, but he did so nonetheless. My sons are the lone reason why I live," Aziz said later.

A total of six people died and five others are being treated at CMCH after being wounded in clashes at different areas in port city since July 16, said Alauddin Talukder, sub-inspector of Chattogram district police attached to the hospital.

"We are providing all facilities to those injured in the clashes as per instruction of the health directorate," said Brigadier General Taslim Uddin, director of CMCH.

Heaps of trash and food waste, collected from various areas, are dumped right next to the entrance of Khulna University, creating not only hindrance for students but also commuters. PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Waste being dumped near KU's main entrance

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

In the vicinity of the main entrance of Khulna University, merely 200 metres from the four-lane Sher-e-Bangla Road, an important thoroughfare in Khulna stretching from Zero Point to Moilapota intersection, awaits an abominable sight -- a waste dumping ground.

According to locals, some of the neighbouring areas, including Mohammad Nagar, Sachibunia, Hanna Sarak, Zero Point, and Hall Road, fall outside the jurisdiction of Khulna City Corporation.

Over the past few years, household wastes from these areas, as well as wastes from the city's largest kitchen market located in Mohammad Nagar, have been collected by local waste collectors. They then discard those at the spot near the KU entrance.

Later, KCC collects the wastes from the spot once in a while and dumps those in Thikraband area.

Visiting the spot recently, this correspondent observed that around a 200-metre-stretch along the Sher-e-Bangla road in front of KU campus was full of waste, which got mixed with rainwater and spilled all over the place. Pedestrians and commuters were seen passing while covering their noses and holding their breath.

A dormitory for KU's male students is located just 40 metres from the spot, while the Sheikh Russel Children's Training and Rehabilitation Centre lies barely 20 metres away. Besides, an office of additional project director of Sustainable Marine Fisheries Project is just a yard away from the spot.

Abu Bakar, a local filling station staffer, informed that KCC did not collect wastes from the spot recently.

Addullah Al Mamun, a second-year student of KU's English department, said, "It is just unimaginable that a waste dumping spot can be found near the main entrance of a university. We cannot walk along the newly constructed footpath due to bad odour,"

Md Munna Sheikh, a waste collector, said, "I collect wastes from 150 houses and dump it on the spot near Khulna University as per instructions of the waste management committee of Mohammad Nagar."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Crops worth Tk 63cr damaged in Sirajganj flood

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, *Pabna*

Crops worth around Tk 63 crore have been damaged in the ongoing flood in Sirajganj district, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension.

The damaged crops are of different varieties including paddy, jute, pulses, vegetables, banana, and green chili, among others.

"The floodwaters inundated 6,525 hectares of cropland across the district's five upazilas since early this month. Even though water started receding since mid-July, crops on at least 3,185 hectares of land were completely damaged," said Babul Kumar Sutradhar, deputy director of DAE in Sirajganj.

"The estimated damage to crops is worth Tk 62.78 crore," he also said.

"I had cultivated pulses on 4 bighas of land, which was not ready for harvest when floodwaters inundated the cropland, and hence all of it was damaged," said Afsar Bhuiyan, a farmer of Bonnir Char (shoal) under Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

Mazeda Khatun of Kawakola village had cultivated jute on 10 bighas of land after taking a loan of Tk 20,000.

"All the jute saplings were damaged in the flood. I am now worried how to pay back the loan, and whether I will be able to cultivate the land again in Bangla 'Kartik' month after floodwaters recede completely," she said.

Many other farmers across the vast shoal areas in the district faced a similar plight.

Babul Kumar said they have listed the names of flood-affected farmers to provide them support including seeds in the upcoming crop season.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board, Jamuna's water has been receding since July 14 and is now flowing below danger level.

"A total of 336 sq km area across 34 unions in five upazilas of Sirajganj has been submerged under floodwaters. Many shoal areas are still inundated and may remain so longer," said Md Nazmul Hossain, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB in Sirajganj.

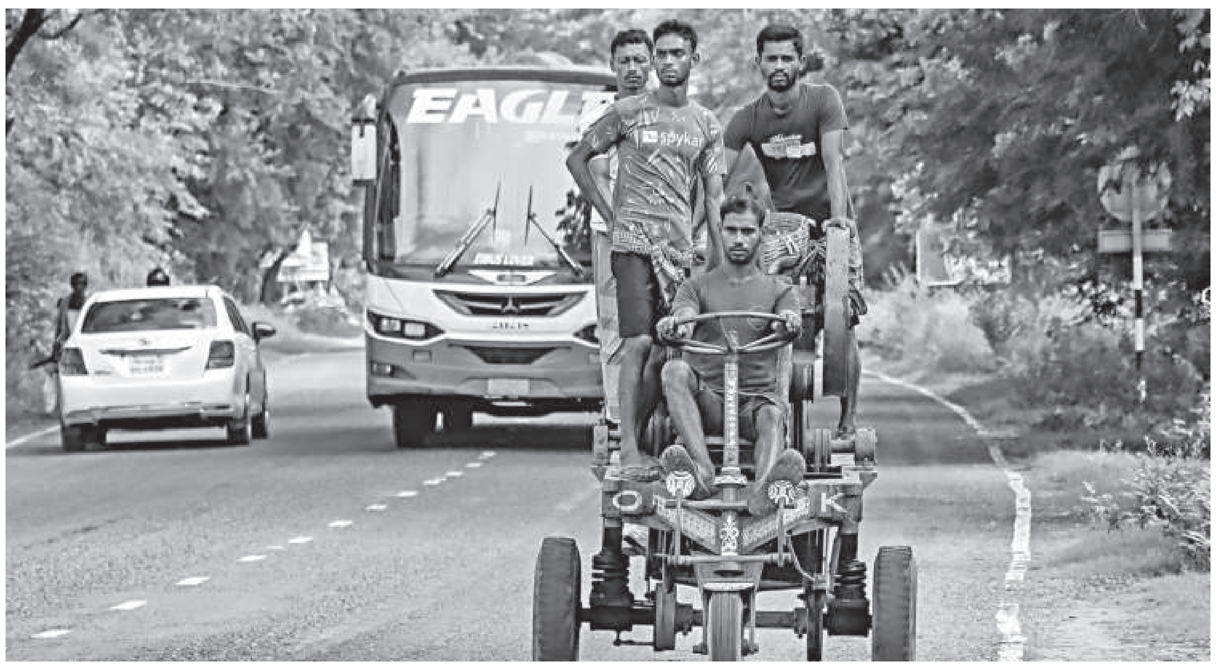

PHOTO: **HABIBUR RAHMAN**

Despite ban, a makeshift three-wheeler plies the highway in Khulna. Such slow moving vehicles are often involved in accidents with cars and buses going at high speed. The photo was taken in Beel Pabla area yesterday.

Office of the Mirkadim Paurashava
District: Munshiganj.

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No-Mika/Paura/Engr-10-110/24/428 Date-28/07/2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM) No. 03/2024-25

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal(http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of:

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Package No	Name of the work	Closing and Opening Date & Time
1	1005059	UIIP-BC/PCO/W-624	**A)** Improvement of Existing BC Road by starting from Nagarkasba Ayna Cinema hall more to Mirkadim bazar Mosque (Ch0.0-1+290m) in ward No 07,08, & 09 under Mirkadim Paurashava (Salvage Amount Tk1,06,236.00). **B)** Improvement of Existing damaged brick drain beside road starting from Nagarkasba Ayna Cinema hall more to Mirkadim bazar Mosque with RCC (Ch0.0-0+110m) in ward No 07, 08 & 09 under Mirkadim Paurashava (Salvage Amount Tk98,843.00).	13.08.2024 Time: 13.00

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration to the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Mohammad Quayum Chowdhury)
Executive Engineer
MirkadimPaurashava

GD-89

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Sadar, Laxmipur.
www.lged.gov.bd

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

Memo No-46.02.5143.000.14.001.24-160 Date: 29/07/2024

e-Tender Notice (LTM)
Tender Notice No:03/2024-2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works as stated as below:

Sl No	Package No.	Tender ID No	Tender Submision Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1	e-Tender/LAX/SAD/UDF/2023-2024/W-38	990409	25-August-2024 15:00	25-August-2024 15:00
	e-Tender/LAX/SAD/UDF/2023-2024/W-39	990410	25-August-2024 15:00	25-August-2024 15:00
	e-Tender/LAX/SAD/UDF/2023-2024/W-40	990411	25-August-2024 15:00	25-August-2024 15:00

This is on an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http:///www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to ***12:30pm*** on 25-August-2024 Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md Jahangir Kabir)
Upazila Engineer
LGED
Sadar, Laxmipur.
ue.laxmipur-s@lged.gov.bd

GD- 90

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

Local Press Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from Genuine Importers/Reputed and Related Suppliers for Supply of following Chemicals for WTP (Potable Water), Boiler Softner and Feed Water Tank at EDCL, 3rd Plant Gopalgonj on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	EDCL/PUR/Chem/PT/ 2024/310 Dt. 30/07/2024	01. Sodium Chloride (NaCl) 02. Sodium Hypochlorite (NaOCI) 03. Anti Scalant (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 500.00/set Non-refundable	Closing: 11/08/2024 at 12.00 PM Opening: 11/08/2024 at 12.30 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by a amount of Earnest Money mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Company Ltd" without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever

(5Incx4Colum)

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director.

Anti-Maduro protests spread

Venezuela opposition says he stole vote; four killed in police shooting

REUTERS, *Caracas*

Protests spread around Venezuela yesterday and police fired tear gas in the capital Caracas as the opposition said it had voting-tally proof it won a weekend election awarded to long-ruling socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

Demonstrations began after the election board, which critics say is in the pocket of a dictatorial government, declared on Monday that Maduro had won a third term with 51 percent of the vote, extending his "Chavista" movement's quarter-century rule.

But the opposition said the 73 percent of vote tallies to which it has access showed its candidate Edmundo Gonzalez had won by a landslide, with more than twice as many votes as Maduro.

Many Venezuelans staged "cacerolazos", a traditional Latin American protest where people bang pots and pans in anger. Some blocked roads, lit fires and threw petrol bombs at police. At least four people were killed as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters.

Demonstrators react when molotov cocktails hit the ground in front of security forces during protests against election results after Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro and his opposition rival Edmundo Gonzalez claimed victory in presidential election, in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela on Monday.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

CHINESE ACTIONS IN DISPUTED WATERS

US pledges funds to boost Philippine defences

REUTERS, *Manila*

The United States yesterday pledged funding of $500 million for the Philippines' military and coast guard in a big show of support for Manila as it faces Chinese actions in disputed waters in the South China Sea.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met their Philippine counterparts in Manila to reaffirm Washington's unwavering commitment to its oldest treaty ally in Asia.

"This level of funding is unprecedented, and it sends a clear message of support for the Philippines, from the Biden-Harris administration, the US Congress and the American people," Austin said in joint press conference following security talks.

Ahead of their meetings, Blinken and Austin met with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr who has moved the Philippines closer to Washington since he replaced Rodrigo Duterte, who was openly hostile to the Americans and pursued warmer ties with China during his six-year term.

"I'm always very happy that these communication lines are very open so that all the things that we are doing together... are continuously examined and re-examined so we are agile in terms of our responses," Marcos said.

The Philippines has competing claims with China in the waters to its west also known as the South China Sea. China claims 90 percent of the sea as its sovereign territory.

Violence broke out after a Filipino sailor lost a finger in a June 17 mission to resupply troops stationed at a contested shoal after what Manila described as "intentional-high speed ramming" by the Chinese coast guard.

Manila reached a provisional arrangement with China for resupply missions this month to ease tensions and manage differences, but the two sides appear at odds over the details of the deal, which has not been made public. Philippine foreign minister Enrique Manalo said in the same news conference his country agreed to an "exchange of information" under its arrangement with China.

Blinken said the US shares the Philippines' concerns about "escalatory" actions China has taken in the South China Sea.

Blinken also reaffirmed Washington's "ironclad" commitment to the defend the Philippines against an armed attack on its vessels, aircraft and soldiers in the waterway.

A 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague found that China's claims had no basis under international law.

SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

EU offers Vietnam security support

REUTERS, *Hanoi*

The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said yesterday EU wanted to guarantee peace in South China Sea and told Vietnam the bloc could help boost its maritime security and cybersecurity capabilities.

The Southeast Asian country is at odds with China over its boundaries in the South China Sea, a crucial shipping waterway which Beijing claims almost in its entirety - a stance that has caused tensions with other countries in the region as well.

In a meeting with Vietnam's Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son in Hanoi, Borrell, who is approaching the end of his five-year term as High Representative for EU Foreign Affairs, said the 27-country bloc had a "direct interest in maintaining peace and stability" in the South China Sea, where over a third of EU imports and more than 20% of its exports transit.

Lift curfew

FROM PAGE 12

"The high death toll is a shocking indictment of the absolute intolerance shown by the Bangladeshi authorities to protest and dissent. The unlawful use of force, including lethal force, against protesters shows the authorities' callous disregard for the right to life and an abject failure by law enforcement officials to uphold their obligations under domestic and international human rights law."

In the last 10 days, Amnesty has monitored and documented the grave human rights violations, the open letter said.

"Our findings point to unlawful use of birdshot against student protesters, dangerous use of teargas in enclosed student spaces and unrestrained use of lethal firearms, such as AK-pattern assault rifles, by security forces.

"At midnight on Friday, July 19, police in Bangladesh were granted 'shoot-on-sight' orders and a nationwide curfew was imposed. The arbitrary imposition of a total shutdown of the internet across the country, a blanket ban on protests in Dhaka followed by a shoot on sight curfew across the country marked an unprecedented clampdown on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly," it added.

Amnesty said such blanket restrictions violated Bangladesh's international obligations as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Citing media reports, Amnesty said around 10,000 arrests have taken place, mostly targeting opposition leaders and activists and student leaders and protest participants.

"Additionally, over 213,000 people have been accused over the recent protest related violence in around 200 cases filed with police stations in the capital alone. Most of these accused individuals are unnamed. The tactic of not naming the accused in first information reports [FIRs] leaves room for law enforcers to arrest anyone they want, as has been previously documented by Amnesty International," the rights organisation said.

The mass arrest and arbitrary detention of student protesters has further perpetuated a climate of fear, it added.

Amnesty said several INGOs, including Amnesty International, and UN bodies have called for the Bangladesh government to uphold its obligations under international law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, but the government of Bangladesh has repeatedly shown an unwillingness to uphold international human rights obligations.

The rights watchdog urged Hasina to instruct law enforcement agencies to exercise restraint, not to use unnecessary or excessive force against demonstrators to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

It also urged her to cooperate with the UN to conduct a thorough, effective, independent, and impartial investigation into the deaths and injuries during the crackdown. Those found responsible for the unlawful use of force must be held accountable, Amnesty said.

It called for providing full reparations, including adequate compensation and guarantees of non-repetition, to the victims and survivors of unlawful police violence, including those who have been injured and family members of those who have been killed.

It urged the government to guarantee the protection of the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression in accordance with the constitution of Bangladesh and international human rights standards and repeal legislation which contravene these standards, including but not limited to the Cyber Security Act 2023 and Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

ফোন অফিস ঃ ০২৪৭৮৮০৭৬১৫
বাসা ঃ ০২৪৭৮৮০৭৪৮০

রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা কার্যালয়
রাজবাড়ী

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

সীমিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিঃ-০১/২০২৪-২৫

স্মারক নং-রাঃপৌঃ/প্রকৌঃ/২৯৭

তারিখঃ ২৯/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ

০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২।	এজেন্সি/প্রতিষ্ঠান	ঃ	রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা, রাজবাড়ী।
০৩।	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির নাম	ঃ	মেয়র, রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা, রাজবাড়ী।
০৪।	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির কোড নং	ঃ	প্রযোজ্য নহে।
০৫।	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির জেলা	ঃ	রাজবাড়ী।
০৬।	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	ঃ	এল,টি,এম (LTM) (PPR/2008 অনুযায়ী)।
০৭।	কাজের নাম	ঃ	তালিকা সংযুক্ত।
০৮।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং	ঃ	০১/২০২৪-২৫
০৯।	তহবিলের উৎস	ঃ	"পৌর সিটি সেন্টার মার্কেটের দোকান কক্ষ বরাদ্দের সেলামীর অর্থ (Cost Recovery)"
১০।	দরপত্র ক্রয়ের স্থান	ঃ	(ক) উপপরিচালক, স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজবাড়ী। (খ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, এলজিইডি, রাজবাড়ী। (গ) নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস।
১১।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	ঃ	নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস।
১২।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১৩/০৮/২০২৪ইং অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১৩।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১৪/০৮/২০২৪ইং দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৪।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ	নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	১৪/০৮/২০২৪ইং দুপুর ৩-০০ ঘটিকা।
১৬।	প্রি-বিড মিটিং এর তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৮/০৮/২০২৪ইং বেলা ১১-০০ ঘটিকায় নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস কক্ষে।
১৭।	দরপত্র বৈধতার মেয়াদ	ঃ	দরপত্র খোলার পর হতে ৯০ (নব্বই) দিন পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকিবে।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	ঃ	এএইচএস মোঃ আলী খাঁন
১৯।	পদবী	ঃ	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী
২০।	ঠিকানা	ঃ	রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা, রাজবাড়ী।
২১।	(ক) দরদাতার দাখিলকৃত দর প্রাক্কলন মূল্যের ৫% (শতকরা পাঁচ ভাগ) এর অধীক কম/বেশী হলে দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। (খ) দরদাতাগণের দাখিলকৃত দর একই হলে লটারির মাধ্যমে ঠিকাদার নির্বাচিত করা হবে। (গ) দরপত্রের সাথে অবশ্যই জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, হালসনের নবায়নকৃত ঠিকাদারি ও ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট ও আয়করের সনদপত্র এবং ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে। (ঘ) শুধুমাত্র রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা এর তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ স্ব-স্ব তালিকাভুক্ত শ্রেণী অনুযায়ী এ দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। (ঙ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের ব্যয় পৌর সিটি সেন্টার মার্কেটের দোকান কক্ষ বরাদ্ধের সেলামীর অর্থ দ্বারা নির্বাহ করা হবে। এ বিষয়ে কোন ওজর-আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।		
২২।	দরপত্রের সকল বিষয় রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভার প্রকৌশল বিভাগ থেকে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা/দেখা যাবে।		
২৩।	কর্তৃপক্ষ কারণ ব্যতিত যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।		

প্রকল্পের নাম

গ্রুপ নং	কাজের নাম	প্রাক্কলিত মূল্য	জামানতের পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য	সময়সীমা
১	২	৩	৪	৫	৬
০১	পৌর সিটি সেন্টার মার্কেট সংলগ্ন গর্ত ভরাট কাজ।	৮৩,৬৫,৭৫৫.০০	১,৬০,০০০/-	৮,৪০০.০০	৯০ দিন

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী
রাজবাড়ী পৌরসভা

GD- 91

Government of The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Naogaon.

www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No.: 46.02.6400.07.000.001.24-2435

Date: 30/07/2024 খ্রীষ্টাব্দ
১৫/০৪/১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ

e-Tender Notice No :05/2024-25
Tendering Method (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following Packages :

Sl No	Description of Work & Package No.	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)	Tender Opening (Date & Time)	Tendering Method
01	(A) Improvement of Pungi-Mohaver Road from Ch. 1250-2230m, (B) Construction of 1 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 1425m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Road ID No- 164694003) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-239). (Tender ID-1004092).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
02	(A) Improvement of Dampura High School Pucca More-Dhahuka via Nichintopur-Paroil Pucca Road from Ch. 00-1000m. (B) Construction of 3 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 75m, 345m, & 425m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Road ID No- 164695114) (Package No.NDRIDP/W-293). (Tender ID-1004090).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
03	(A) Improvement of Nacholpucca Road-Sonapur-Mongletara Road from Ch. 00-600m, (B) Construction of 2 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 120m & 420m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Road ID No- 164695083) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-280). (Tender ID-1004089).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
04	(A) Improvement of Modhoil-Rawtal Road from Ch. 1722-5780m, (B) Construction of 11 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 1990m, 2930m, 3052m, 3080m, 4239m, 4557m, 4592m, 4720m, 4898m, 5209m & 5688m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Road ID No- 164695048) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-238). (Tender ID-1004088).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
05	(A) Improvement of Choyghatidighi-Layapukuria pucca Road from Ch. 00-1100m, (B) Construction of 3 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 70m, 365m, & 852m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Road ID No- 164695108) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-296). (Tender ID- 1004087).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
06	(A) Improvement of Niamatpur Collage More-Morihari-Bijli village Road from Ch. 1000-2700m (B) Construction of 6 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 1120m, 1570m, 1790m, 1865m, 2310m & 2575m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. Salvage Cost Tk. 1,05,328.00 (Road ID No- 164694058) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-283). (Tender ID- 1004086).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
07	(A) Improvement of Aghor-Ramgaon Road from Ch. 1500-2780m (B) Construction of 3 Nos 0.60x0.60 Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 2008m, 2280m & 2507m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon (Road ID No-164694033) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-253). (Tender ID- 1004085).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM
08	(A) Improvement of Chatra GC-Chandannagr UP-Banipur hat Road from Ch. 5000-5980m (B) Construction of 5 Nos 0.60x0.60m Culvert 6m Long at Ch. 5130m, 5172m, 5480m, 5654m & 5835m on same Road under Niamatpur Upazila, District: Naogaon (Road ID No-164693005) (Package No. NDRIDP/W-233). (Tender ID- 1004084).	28-Aug-2024 17:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	29-Aug-2024 12:00	OTM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP system portal (http:www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branches up to Last Selling Date & Time as mentioned above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk **(helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)**

৩০/০৭/২৪

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GD-92

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

State is yet to answer for so many deaths

Why the silence around security forces' role in quota protests?

The government seems to be in overdrive to identify those involved in the violence centring the quota protests, which would have been welcome had it included in its assessment of "violence" the role of its own security forces, especially in the deaths of over 165 people (as verified by this paper) that occurred during those violent clashes. In this connection, more than 10,000 people have been arrested in 12 days, and at least 473 more detained in police raids till July 29, according to our reports. Many of the arrests and detentions, as highlighted by a recent editorial in this daily, have been taking place without following due process of the law.

Unfortunately, despite the gravity of the violence against students and the general population, the government's sole focus seems to be catching those who carried out vandalism of public properties, or clashed with security forces and members of ruling party affiliated groups—totally disregarding the role played by the latter in terms of instigation, escalation, and even the commission of killings. It is not for nothing that the students are now asking if the damage and destruction caused to public establishments, which we must condemn, are worth more to the current regime than the loss of citizens' lives.

By the home ministry's own count, at least 150 people have so far lost their lives in the recent violence over the quota reform protests. Would the ministry please provide an answer for how these people died? Was there really a shoot-on-sight order? If so, who ordered it, and why? And if not, why did law enforcers go out of their way to indiscriminately open fire on protesters? It is beyond comprehension that law enforcement would react the way they did when there are many options available to riot police to dissipate protests in non-lethal manners. Verified videos, media reports, and eye-witness accounts have provided chilling evidence of the cruelty of the state apparatuses, which didn't even spare a four-year-old standing on his balcony.

Despite repeated calls for accountability and justice—not least from the students themselves who have lost their comrades—we have not seen any real attempt by the government to address the mass killings, even as it observed a nationwide mourning in remembrance of those killed in the recent violence. The judicial probe commission that was formed has confirmed that it will only investigate the six deaths that took place on July 16 for now. Who will answer for the blood that has since been spilled? And when?

As the government goes all out to quell the protests—by using the full force of the state—they seem to be missing the point altogether. Public anger and calls for accountability cannot be supressed by mass arrests and crackdown on social media. By refusing to acknowledge the complicity of state apparatuses in the deaths, it is trivialising the sanctity of the lives of citizens and in the process further eroding its own credibility in the public eye. We can observe a national mourning day, but without unearthing what caused so many deaths, it will lack any moral authority.

Politically-motivated lending must stop

Take measures to rein in NPLs and reduce banking sector vulnerabilities

The World Bank's (WB) recent observation about non-performing loans (NPLs) and its connection to politically motivated lending in Bangladesh does not come as a surprise. We have repeatedly warned about the risks of bending banking rules to lend to politically connected special interest groups, which has led to default loans soaring. Experts too have called attention to this issue over the years to no avail.

Consequently, there has been a 20.7 percent increase in NPLs from 2022 to 2023, amounting to a total NPL of Tk 145,633 crores in December 2023, with almost half belonging to state-owned banks. When the Awami League assumed office in 2009, the NPL figure was Tk 22,481 crore. Over the last one and a half decade, while private commercial banks mushroomed (from 30 in 2008-2009 to 43 in 2024), NPLs grew by more than six times. Loans were given out without proper credit risk management, lending and recovery rules were bent or relaxed, and the independence of regulatory bodies further compromised all to favour certain politically linked borrowers, many of whom later became defaulters. Meanwhile, no big defaulter has been brought to book.

As the WB report rightfully points out, honest borrowers and businesses are bearing the brunt of the NPL burden, as interest rates continue to rise and ailing banks face liquidity crisis. Despite repeated warnings, no effective measures have been taken to rectify the poor governance, weak market discipline and low capital buffers in the banking sector. Capital adequacy ratio in Bangladesh's banking sector is in fact one of the lowest in South Asia, which means that in the face of unexpected losses, many banks may not have adequate capital to meet their obligations to depositors and creditors.

Unfortunately, the effort spent to understate NPLs by using poor accounting and disclosure standards and regulatory forbearance, was absent in the government's initiative to properly address the vulnerabilities of the financial sector. Before we thrust ourselves to a point of no return, the government must heed expert advice and warnings by the WB and other international financial institutions and put an end to political consideration in lending and default loan recovery. Lastly, authorities must ensure the autonomy of the central bank, not only on paper but in actual terms, upgrade its supervisory and regulatory capacity to fix the problems of the banking sector, and ensure that banks in the country are strictly adhering to internationally accepted banking guidelines and standards.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Fidel Castro temporarily hands over power to his brother Raul Castro

Because of health problems, longtime Cuban leader Fidel Castro handed over provisional power to his brother Raul; the latter served as the country's acting president until officially assuming the post in 2008.

KILLINGS DURING QUOTA REFORM MOVEMENT

Crossing the red line

Kallol Mustafa
is an engineer and writer who focuses on power, energy, environment and development economics. He can be reached at kallol_mustafa@yahoo.com.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

Law enforcement forces of a civilised and democratic country can never use weapons on an indiscriminate, wholesale basis against their own people.

FILE PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

A recent example of what can happen if there is no minimum democratic and governance accountability in a country is the unprecedented brutality shown by the government and the killing of more than 200 people (according to *Prothom Alo*) during the quota reform movement this month. The agitation, which began following a High Court verdict on June 5 reinstating the quota system in government jobs, was limited to peaceful rallies. But the government did not give due importance to the students' demands and did not even try to negotiate with them, saying that it was a court matter.

The movement turned violent on July 15 when the ruling party's student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), attacked protesting students at several public universities, including Dhaka University. Even after the tragic killing of six youths on July 16 in attacks by police and BCL, the government did not budge. If it had removed the police and BCL men from the streets and had taken the initiative to negotiate with the protesters on their quota reform demand, the subsequent brutal killings could have been avoided.

Analysing 150 of the deaths, *Prothom Alo* found that students and workers were the majority of the victims of the fatal violence and clashes centring around the quota reform movement. As many as 113 victims (75 percent) were children, teenagers and young adults. Nineteen were children and adolescents including a four-year-old child. Ninety-four were 18-29 years old, 21 were 30-39 years old, and 16 were about 40 years old. At least 45 victims were students of different public and private universities, schools and colleges. Besides, a large number of the dead were labourers, petty traders, shopkeepers, drivers, and low-income earners. The analysis also revealed a horrifying reality: most of the dead bodies bore live bullet injuries, while marks of pellets, rubber bullets or other types of injuries were little.

Usually during a mass movement when thousands of people take to the streets, there is a belief among them that law enforcement agencies will not fire directly on them no matter what. If there is a large number of people in a protest march, there is no fear. One reason for this is the collective power of a large crowd. Another reason is the idea that no state force would open fire on large numbers of people. It is a red line that LEAs around the world would never cross—except those in countries that are ruled by military dictatorship or occupation armies. The LEAs and militaries of any modern state have a wide variety of weapons at their disposal—machine guns, tanks, fighter jets, helicopter gunships, etc—which can kill a large number of people in an instant. But law enforcement forces of any decent civilised and democratic country would never use these weapons on an indiscriminate, wholesale basis against their own people. They simply can't, because crossing this red line means breaking the people's contract with the state. The people give the exclusive power to use force to the state on the condition that this force would be used to protect the people, not to kill them.

That's why in the situation of mass unrest, LEAs use non-lethal weapons and tear gas, charge batons, use water cannons, etc and try their best to disperse people without causing fatal harm. In some extreme cases, if law enforcers are forced to shoot, they usually shoot at legs, and they don't fire indiscriminately in such a way that it might kill not only the demonstrators, but also the pedestrians, shopkeepers, rickshaw pullers, hawkers and even children standing on rooftops or balconies. No law enforcers of any democratic country would directly shoot at the chest, head or eyes of the common people, because they will be held accountable for every shot. Once this red line is crossed, a country's government loses its legitimacy and people's trust.

In Bangladesh, the ruling Awami League-led government has employed the country's law enforcement agencies against the people before. They have been accused of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and violent suppression of the political opposition's activities. These are also red lines that no democratic government should cross. But this time, the line crossed by the government while suppressing the quota reform movement with authoritarian aggression is completely different. It is one thing to unleash sudden violence on the rallies of opposition parties or commit targeted enforced disappearance or extrajudicial killings, but it is completely another to permit indiscriminate shooting on thousands of agitating protesters, including school, college and university students, who have taken to the streets across the country for several days.

Even after so many killings, there is no credible action on the government's part to admit the wrongdoings or bring the killers to justice. Not only that, cases have been filed against hundreds of thousands of people without proper investigation, and activists and opposition party members are being arrested at a wholesale rate in block raids. This is indicative of more oppressive government action in the coming days.

If the government cannot be pressured strongly and effectively from all quarters for impartial investigations, trials and accountability of these killings, and if the perpetrators get away with killing so many innocent people, including children, the danger will increase even more for the people of the country.

Are we failing our own future?

Jannatul Mawa
works in online education and youth development.

JANNATUL MAWA

Students' protests against discrimination, law enforcers on university campuses, brutal crackdown by law enforcement personnel, shocking violence and rage against the citizens, complete internet blackout, and finally a nationwide curfew—this series of events have been overwhelming, to say the least, for the whole nation. The young generation of today is fighting and struggling, in countless ways and forms, in a free country. So, as we stand in 2024, after 53 years of independence, tagging those who hold a different opinion as "anti-state" and "anti-independence" has become an outdated and overused tactic. This tagging has caused widespread violence against students, leading to deaths and injuries.

Over the last decade, we have seen several student uprisings demanding some of the basic rights. Each time, a similar formula has been applied, starting with alleging their affiliation with other political entities and ending with a combined Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and police brutality. However, the senseless brutality, mass arrests of students and social media blackouts that the nation has witnessed this time is unprecedented. This time, it is creating a prolonged state of fear. Law enforcement personnel are still roaming the streets. One of the most powerful slogans heard during the protests was "proshason jobab chai," which is basically asking to hold the authorities accountable for their inaction and hoping for proactive steps. But the very authorities that are accountable for protecting us have failed to do so—be it the university authorities, the police, or the government itself.

This brings forth a series of questions. Who is fighting against whom? Why did the vice-chancellors of most of the public universities essentially disown their students? Why did law enforcement personnel open fire against unarmed students? Why did the authorities use such force against the students who want but the bare minimum of equity?

The answers to all these questions go beyond the current movement. The students know the system is becoming increasingly rotten. Still, they want reforms to ensure a just system, even after knowing that it may not make much difference because many a job is now for sale. As the movement got momentum and the students felt they were being insulted, they understood it was time to continue fighting, not only for the reformation of the system but also to find their voices because, apparently, no one else has the courage to do so.

Bangladesh has a long history of student movements. The public universities, especially Dhaka University, have their pride in leading the successful and justified movements that have always shifted the course of history. So, why did a student movement that started with a demand to reform a discriminatory and unconstitutional system get so violent?

Many are now attempting to satisfy their own agendas. But in this age of technology, countless video footage showed BCL and law enforcement agencies' brutality against the protesters clearly. It should not be difficult for them to find out the people who killed so many people and were involved in the looting and destruction of public properties.

> **Some ministers' comments during this crisis were neither responsible nor sensitive; rather they were provocative against students who were practising their democratic rights. During a crisis, the true face of both the people and the system comes out. This nationwide movement is not an exception, of course; it is rather doing an excellent job of revealing the failure of our institutions.**

This leads to another question: can the students and the nation expect transparency and justice from these very agencies responsible for this violent crackdown?

Even before the nationwide complete shutdown on July 18, the whole country was shocked to see the degree of police brutality when Abu Sayed, a fourth-year university student in Rangpur, was shot dead. Some ministers' comments during this crisis were neither responsible nor sensitive; rather they were provocative against students who were practising their democratic rights. During a crisis, the true face of both the people and the system comes out. This nationwide movement is not an exception, of course; it is rather doing an excellent job of revealing the failure of our institutions. The damage is bigger than it appears on the surface. Will the students who saw the police beat up their friends, or who got stuck in a place and saw armed people, along with law enforcement members, waiting to attack them, or simply witnessed their friends getting shot and die, get over this trauma that their very own government agencies brought upon them? The mistrust created among general students and mass people will have a long-term implication.

Now, the final question: was the situation unavoidable? The authorities eventually admitted that the students' demands were logical, and reformed the quota system. But why did logic require these deaths to be considered and applied? The cruelty that some agencies showed against the country's future generation is upsetting and terrifying. Will they ever be able to recover from that? More importantly, do they want to at all?

The Daily Star
Reg. No. DA 781

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Mahfuz Anam
Printed by him on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd at Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, editor@thedailystar.net

Registered & Head Offices: The Daily Star Centre
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215
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Subscription:
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There's a lot at stake for Bangladesh on the global stage

*In light of Bangladesh's student protests and the government's response that has brought the nation to a standstill—with violence, mounting death toll, and a brutal crackdown—***Michael Kugelman***, the director of South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, talks to* **Ramisa Rob** *of* **The Daily Star** *about the implications for the country on the international front.*

Michael Kugelman.

As an observer from outside, but one specialising in South Asia, did you expect the student protests for quota reform to escalate to one of the biggest challenges that the Awami League government has faced?

It was surprising. There have been plenty of protests during Awami League's regime over the last 15 years, but nothing as large, long, and violent as this one. That's likely because there was a perfect storm this time around: an unpopular court decision, an especially ferocious government response—incendiary rhetoric along with violent actions of great scale—a deep repository of pent-up public anger and grievances against the state, and growing economic stress that accentuated the public's grievances.

Can you describe the international response towards the spiralling situation and particularly the government's handling of student protests from the beginning?

There have been expressions of concern from the UN, some lawmakers, and some leaders around the world, especially in the West. And there have of course been strong condemnations from the international media and human rights groups. But on the whole, the international response, especially from foreign governments, has been rather muted.

Some may find this relatively restrained international response to be puzzling, given the scale and egregiousness of the violence. There are several reasons for it. One is quite simple: the world is on fire, and with multiple major wars playing out, an internal crisis in Bangladesh won't register high on many radars. Another reason is very practical: many governments prefer to keep a low profile and say little publicly at such a dangerous and volatile moment in Bangladesh, to avoid any risks to their nationals and interests in the country.

But let's be clear: many governments, including in the US, are concerned. Bangladesh may not be a major power, but it's a consequential and strategically significant player, especially in an era of intense great power competition. It's also a top global economic player. From the international community's perspective, there's a lot at stake with Bangladesh, and when it's convulsed by unrest and uncertainty, that doesn't serve anyone's interests.

What do you make of the government's narrative that the protests were orchestrated by the opposition parties from the beginning, and is it of concern internationally?

I know this is the narrative the government is trying to project, but aside from the hardcore Awami League support base and certain constituencies in India, I don't think anyone is buying it. The protests were organised and spearheaded by members of the public, not political parties. They were led by students, not political partisans. This isn't to say opposition forces didn't exploit and infiltrate the protests—I'm sure they did, given the opportunity it provided. But these were public protests led by student leaders.

There've been plenty of protests against the Awami League government over the last 15 years, but nothing as large, long, and violent as this one.

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

It's a painful truth for the Awami League that there were mass displays of public anger against the government. That's a big reason why it has put out the narrative that it has: by blaming it all on the opposition, you try to hide the reality that many Bangladeshis—common people, not political partisans—seem to be fed up with the government.

In January, after the US deemed the election was not "free and fair," you had written that Bangladesh remains a "test case" for US value-based foreign policy in a world where realpolitik often prevails. Do you think the current situation will have an impact on the US approach?

This crisis will, I think, validate those in the US government that believe that rights and democracy should remain a focus of the policy towards Bangladesh. And it presents a challenge for those in Washington charged with focusing more on the interests-based part of the relationship—scaling up economic cooperation, furthering strategic collaborations, and so on. If the crisis recedes and instability subsides relatively soon, it will be easier to get back to that balance of values and interests that the Biden administration has sought to strike post-Bangladesh election, with the letter that was issued in February. But prolonged unrest and crisis will make that much tougher to pull off.

This crisis could have a big impact on one particular key US policy: sanctions on Rab. The US has said in recent weeks that it has no plans to remove those sanctions. But events of recent days, especially if the US concludes Rab was involved in the unlawful use of force during the protests, will make it even more unlikely that those sanctions will be removed anytime soon. Additionally, we've seen over the last year some US visa restrictions that targeted those that undermined the election process. So, we can't rule out additional visa restrictions that target those linked to the illegal uses of force during the protests.

What would you think are the general concerns of this ongoing unrest and instability for nations that have economic and political ties with Bangladesh?

Stability risks are a major problem for countries with both economic and political ties with Bangladesh. Countries and investors operating commercially in Bangladesh have already been spooked by the scale of the violence, and they'll be nervous about the possibility of additional flare-ups down the road. And the sense of uncertainty about what could be coming next will add to that sense of anxiety. This isn't good for Bangladesh, especially as it's already dealing with growing economic stress and badly needs course corrections that include more FDI flows.

Bangladesh's diplomatic ties could also be hampered, and especially in a worst case scenario where foreign governments scale down their diplomatic presence due to extended security concerns. That would make diplomatic relations more difficult. And that would be quite disappointing for a government—and a ruling party—that has long prided itself on its ability to conduct relations with countries across the board, and navigate fierce geopolitical competition, come what may. Let's be clear: it's hard to show "friendship to all, malice towards none" if many of your friends are taking a step back due to security concerns.

What do you believe are the geopolitical implications for Bangladesh's reputation from this current movement? Is there any way to turn back the clock at this stage?

Bangladesh's global reputation and image have taken serious hits. But I wouldn't overstate the geopolitical implications of this. The Chinas, Russias and Indias of the world, and much of the Global South, won't let the internal policies of the Bangladesh government—including and especially the use of repression—impact their relations with it. I envisage a fair degree of continuity in policy.

Whether Bangladesh's relations with the West will face any consequences remains to be seen. These relations will largely be impacted by how long this crisis plays out. A prolonged crisis, and especially one that involves more state repression, could pose a challenge to Dhaka's relations with the West—from its efforts to earn more trade privileges from the EU to prospects for arms sales with the US and others. At the end of the day, the West—including the US—won't be stopped from engaging with Bangladesh if strategic interests warrant that engagement. But this has been an especially serious crisis, with especially grave concerns about the actions of the Bangladesh government and state actors.

If the situation were to calm down, do you expect a major shift in the strategic significance of Bangladesh, especially in regard to the nation's position as a key battleground for great power competition?

That strategic significance will remain entrenched, regardless of whether and when the situation calms down. Bangladesh's location, size, economic status, and relations with great powers are constants that won't be impacted by prolonged instability.

But there's a cautionary tale here. India has been successful in leveraging its own strategic significance, ensuring that the West remains closely engaged with it despite concerns about its domestic policies. Bangladesh is also strategically significant, but not so much that the US was willing to hold back from pursuing tough policies—including sanctions—that risk aggravating relations. In effect, Dhaka can't use its strategic significance as a shield, in the way that New Delhi can.

Who would be better for Palestine: Trump or Harris?

Ramisa Rob
is in-charge of Geopolitical Insights at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

The Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, against whom there exists an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, delivered a controversial address to Congress, just days after incumbent Joe Biden dropped out of the high-stakes presidential race. Thousands and thousands of protesters gathered outside, and Netanyahu called them "Iran's useful idiots," as bipartisan—though mostly Republican lawmakers—clapped theatrically.

Joe Biden has been the face to blame for abetting the genocide of over 40,000 Gazans, and rightly so, as he's deferred to Netanyahu, providing his extremist government with billions of military aid and lethal weapons to annihilate a whole population. Ahead of the 2024 elections, Biden's role in Gaza genocide had birthed a sinister question: would Donald Trump have been better for Palestinians? Now that Vice President Harris is poised to replace Biden on the Democratic ticket, the question still remains: Will Donald Trump be better for Palestinians than Kamala Harris?

First, an undeniable fact must be addressed: the US political establishment itself is Zionist, and it is in no position to pivot from favouring Israel over Palestinian lives. Harris, as a presidential candidate in the US, cannot win by being "anti-Israel," but the conundrum she faces is that young voters will not tolerate further US-backed brutality in Gaza. Her first foreign policy challenge, in her newly launched presidential campaign was the way she dealt with Netanyahu's visit, as left-leaning Democrats insisted that she must clean up Biden's Gaza policy mess—which has actually harmed Democrats much more than Biden's debate performance. A recent Century Foundation poll, conducted before Biden dropped out, showed that nearly four in 10 voters (38 percent) said they were less likely to vote for Biden due to his handling of Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Harris did not attend Netanyahu's address, which she would normally preside over, but she met him privately, after which she, expectedly, harped on the harmful rhetoric, "Israel's right to defend itself." But she also expressed concern, more vocally than Biden, regarding innocent Palestinians in Gaza. "We cannot allow ourselves to be numb to the sufferings and I will not be silent," she said. It's far from enough, but she did carve a microscopic space for Palestinians in the conversation, which is a shift from Joe Biden, who has, for the most part, glossed over the large number of civilian casualties of Palestinians in Gaza, and even questioned them.

In an interview with the *Nation*, during the historic US student protests against the genocide in Gaza, Harris seemed to show sympathy with students, though restrained, stating that, "They are showing exactly what the human emotion should be, as a response to Gaza." Kamala Harris has irritated Israeli ministers, including the President Isaac Herzog who said in a recent interview, that "she has made quite a few problematic statements in the context of the war in Gaza," which he added, "might have been influenced by the more progressive camp in the Democratic Party." While Biden is more of an old-school Zionist in his personal views, Harris' own personal views are unclear. She has internally advocated for more pressure on Netanyahu to agree to a ceasefire. But she keeps showing double standards with her staunch support for Ukraine against Russian invasion, while reiterating that the Israeli persecution of Palestinians "is not a binary issue." Bernie Sanders was one of the very few US politicians, other than Rashida Tlaib—the only Palestinian American in Congress—to contextualise the Hamas attacks and lightly address the root of the conflict. He has been condemned by many, including Democrats for it. So, to expect Harris to act like Sanders or Tlaib, who was censured for her pro-Palestinian comments, and win the nomination and election, is utopian.

As for Donald Trump, he shares a close relationship with Netanyahu. When addressing Congress, Netanyahu thanked former President Trump for the historic "Abraham Accords," which sought to normalise diplomatic relations between Israel and other nations in the Middle East. Trump was coaxed to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal during his presidency, secured by Obama, and almost went head-to-head with Iran—a long-time dream that Netanyahu has had. The Abraham Accords only emboldened Netanyahu's plans to annex the West Bank, and greenlit illegal settlements on Palestinian Territories—which Biden tepidly sanctioned during the ongoing genocide. Trump's actions in Netanyahu's Israel were far from advancing the cause of "peace," but rather reflected a coordination between two corrupt politicians. Trump warmly hosted Netanyahu in Washington, and told reporters, "No President has done what I've done for Israel." He then went on to lambaste Harris for voicing her concerns for Palestinian civilians, saying, "I think her remarks were disrespectful."

Right after the October 7 Hamas attacks, Trump criticised Israel's security failure, condemning Biden, and then went on to say that he would expand a freeze on refugees that he enacted during his presidency to cover people from the Palestinian territory of Gaza. He has now vowed to set new restrictions on immigration crackdowns, saying, "If you want to abolish the state of Israel, you're disqualified."

Israeli Ministers like the extremist Ben Gvir have openly expressed they prefer Trump and Republicans, saying, "Instead of giving his full backing, Biden is busy with humanitarian aid. If Trump was in power, it would be different." And that should itself be the answer to the question on a lot of progressives' minds.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Palestinians expressed their belief that Trump would exacerbate their suffering, and he's also made it clear in the presidential debate, that Israel needs to "finish the job." It's also remarkable though, that residents expressed scepticism regarding Harris' presidency due to her cozy history with pro-Israel lobbying groups. Fathmi Nimr, a Palestinian political analyst, told Al Jazeera that a "major shift" in US policy in the Middle East under Harris is unlikely. Some believed the only change would be that she could be tougher on Netanyahu, whom many accuse of prolonging the war to remain in power in a nation where he is copiously disliked.

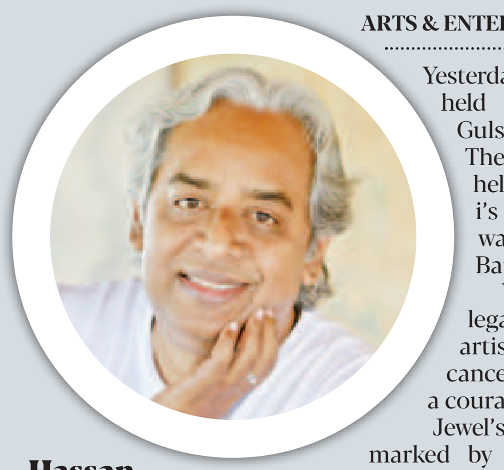
The fact that the "will Trump be better" question is even being asked stems from a concept that's been going around for quite some time: Donald Trump is "anti-war,"and it's also become the new MAGA pitch. In January, Senator JD Vance—now Trump's running mate—had claimed that Trump's legacy was that he "started no wars." And it's working, as the anti-war left and just anti-war people who've been seeing thousands and thousands murdered have said the same on social media. But Trump's chaotic presidency and xenophobic foreign policy seems to have been memory-holed. Under Trump, the civilian deaths in Afghanistan skyrocketed. He widely supported the Saudi Arabian war against Yemen, started the trade war with China among many other inflammatory incidents he created himself. During the Black Lives Matter movement after the killing of George Floyd, as police fired tear gas onto the protesters, Trump deployed National Guard troops on the streets of Washington DC. If he had reacted with military force during the BLM movement, then would he have not done the same––if not worse––during the pro-Palestine student encampments that shook the nation this year?

One thing is for sure, Trump has never hidden behind the facade of "human rights," and maybe he deserves credit for that. But he will not be championing any kind of peace for Palestinians—whose lives reflect a slur to him. To think that he will is simply asinine. Progressives in the US, advocating for an end to the worst military campaign in modern history, need to unfortunately settle for a stable candidate who will not repress public pressure, but who has more chances of reacting to it. If pressured, Harris has a higher likelihood of deviating from the unilateralist and militarist US foreign policy, where the US weapons industry proliferates at the cost of the violence unleashed onto the rest of the world. There could be a starting point with Harris at least, whereas with Trump there definitely won't be.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Hassan Abidur Reja Jewel
A beloved face in music lost

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Hassan Abidur Reja Jewel, a revered figure in Bangladesh's music and television industry, passed away yesterday, leaving behind a rich legacy spanning over three decades. Known for his soulful voice and exceptional production skills, Jewel emerged as a prominent artiste in the early 1990s when band music was burgeoning in the country.

Yesterday, his *janazah* was held at Azad Mosque in Gulshan after Asr prayers. The second *janazah* was held at 6pm on Channel i's premises, and he was later laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

We honour the life and legacy of this esteemed artiste, who succumbed to cancer at the age of 56 after a courageous 13-year battle.

Jewel's childhood was marked by frequent relocations across Bangladesh, shaping his diverse cultural exposure. Encouraged by his parents, he began singing at a young age, starting formal lessons in first grade and performing on stage by fourth grade. Despite his passion for music, Jewel ensured it wasn't his sole source of income, pursuing a career in television production to balance artistic pursuits with practical considerations.

His debut album was released in 1992, marking the beginning of a prolific career that saw 10 albums over 28 years. His collaborations with legendary guitarist Ayub Bachchu, who composed seven of his albums, left an indelible mark on Bangladeshi music. Jewel's influence extended beyond the studio; he also captivated audiences on stage, even though his later years were devoid of new releases. Yet, music remained an integral part of his life, a constant companion through highs and lows.

Among his numerous songs, Jewel held a special fondness for ***Amar Ache Ondhokar***, penned by Sayed Awlad and composed by Bappa Mazumder, with musical arrangement by Ayub Bachchu. This track, the title song of his 1995 solo album, held a special place in his heart.

In 2015, with Bachchu's permission, Jewel reintroduced ***Amar Ache Ondhokar*** with a new piano arrangement, showcasing his deep voice in a fresh, stripped-down format. This rendition was shared on his YouTube channel with a lyrical video and the story behind its creation.

Before Ayub Bachchu's passing, Jewel reflected on the album's creation in an interview with the rock legend, recounting, "The album was set to release on Eid, but Boss (Ayub Bachchu) couldn't find time. So, I came up with an idea and got Boss off the hook for four days. We then checked into a hotel in Shanti Nagar. Boss, Tutul, and Fanti (the drummer) got to work with great enthusiasm. Boss would take a lyric, grab his guitar, and compose a tune. Fanti would handle the rhythm section, while Tutul recorded keyboard layers and music sequences."

The team completed 11 songs by the afternoon of the second day, leaving only the title track, composed by Bappa Mazumder. Upon hearing the demo of it, Bachchu approved, stating, "The melody and lyrics are great, Julu! It's perfect for you. Let's do it. Call Bappa." This collaboration resulted in one of Jewel's most cherished songs, blending Mazumder's composition with Bachchu's arrangement.

His notable productions include ***Ek Bikele*** (1994), ***Amar Ache Ondhokar*** (1995), ***Ekta Manush*** (1996), ***Beshi Kichu Noy*** (1998), ***Bedona Shudhui Bedona*** (1999), ***Firtee Pothe*** (2003), ***Dorja Khola Bari*** (2009), and ***Emon Keno Holo*** (2017). Among his 10 solo albums, ***Ek Bikele*** gained the most popularity, earning him the moniker 'Ek Bikeler Jewel'.

His passing has left a void in the industry, as expressed by fellow artistes and fans.

Singer Elita Karim posted, "Dearest Jewel *bhai*, may he rest in peace. May the Almighty grant him the highest honour in heaven. He was one of the finest human beings in the music industry, and I am so glad that I had the opportunity to actually say this to him a while ago."

Singer Konal reflected, "Jewel *bhai*, our industry's musical jewel, and a gem of a human being, left us for the heavens. I lost one of my mentors today."

Debashish Biswas, Khijir Hayat Khan, Rafiath Rashid Mithila, and Adnan Faruque Hillol, among others, also expressed their deep sorrows.

Jewel's departure marks the end of an era for Bangladeshi music, but his contributions and the memories he created will continue to resonate with his fans and loved ones.

PHOTO: GR SOHAIL & STAR

Shweta Tiwari to star in Karan Johar produced web-series

Shweta Tiwari was once a household name, popularly known for her role as Prerna in the Indian television series ***Kasautii Zindagi Kay***. The actress recently joined forces on a Karan Johar-produced web-series.

In a recent interview with an Indian newspaper, she talked more about the project, "I've signed with Dharma Productions for an upcoming series where I play a don-like character in a saree who smokes cigarettes (laughs). The role seemed challenging, which is why I'm excited about it."

Besides, she is set to reprise her cop role in ***Singham Again***, which stars Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, and Arjun Kapoor.

Jimmy Kimmel not returning to host Oscar

Jimmy Kimmel, a four-time Oscar host, has turned down the offer to host the 2025 Oscars. He is tied with Whoopi Goldberg and Jack Lemmon for fourth in hosting duties, behind Johnny Carson (5), Billy Crystal (9), and Bob Hope (19).

People Magazine reports that Jimmy Kimmel has declined to host the 2025 Oscars, so he won't be on stage for the 97th Academy Awards. Kimmel previously hosted in 2017 and 2018; the ceremony had no host from 2019 to 2021.

The 97th Academy Awards will be broadcast live at 7pm (ET) on ABC on Sunday, March 2, from the Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood.

NEWS

One bullet

FROM PAGE 12

in Shonir Akhra's Rayerbagh area on July 20, Jisan was hit by a bullet, which pierced through his eyebrow and exited through his skull. He died on the spot.

This, however, was not the end to the tragedy.

Unable to bear the pain of losing her husband, Mishti had stopped eating from the very day he was shot dead.

Nine days later, she died by suicide.

"She couldn't bear the thought of living without him," said Jisan's father Babul Sarder, a Bangladeshi working in South Sudan for the past nine years, after travelling from Rangpur to Dhaka following Mishti's burial in her family cemetery yesterday morning.

"She went into shock after my son was killed and was starving herself. She clutched onto his clothes and cried continuously."

Babul had always hoped his son would join him abroad for a better future.

But Jisan was adamant not to leave Mishti behind. Though this frustrated Babul, he ultimately accepted his son's decision.

Jisan was a hardworking young man and made around Tk 700 a day by supplying drinking water.

On the day of the clash, his mother pleaded him to stay home. Jisan, however, insisted on going to work, hoping to earn his daily income.

When he got caught up in the clash, he took shelter in a nearby shop. It was just when he peeked outside to check if the violence had stopped that he was fatally shot.

Babul was in South Sudan at the time and rushed back to the country when he heard of his son's passing.

"My son often wanted to buy a bike but I didn't allow it fearing what if something happened to him ... there would be no one to carry my coffin after I died, as he is my only son. I never imagined that I would be the one carrying my son's coffin instead.

"In Sudan, even the poorest people have AK-47s, but they don't kill innocent people like birds. But my son was killed like one," Babul cried.

"Nobody from the government or police even came to offer their condolences or apologise for such a tragedy in our lives but I saw our prime minister shedding tears over the metro rail, which was built with remittance from people like us.

"The metro rail stations can be repaired but can she give back my son and daughter-in-law?"

"I have left justice up to the Almighty," he added, his voice choked with the grief he must bear for the rest of his life.

Judicial probe

FROM PAGE 12

the inquiry commission has been expanded. The commission can [probe] incidents that took place up to July 21. A notification in this regard has already been sent," Anisul said.

It was decided in the meeting that the ongoing curfew in four districts would be relaxed for 13 hours every day for four days from today, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

The curfew will be enforced from 8:00pm to 7:00am in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Narsingdi, he said.

Apart from Asaduzzaman and Anisul, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun; Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury; State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat; State Minister for Labour and Employment Md Nazrul Islam Chowdhury; and State Minister for Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak also attended the meeting.

Secretaries of different ministries, the inspector general of police, director general of Rab, and top officials of law enforcement and intelligence agencies were also present.

Responding to a question, Asaduzzaman said law enforcers were arresting people based on evidence.

"We are not arresting any innocent person. We are arresting those who we have been able to identify with intelligence information, footage, and witnesses' accounts," he said.

"We are not making any mass arrests."

He said those involved in the violence have committed seditious acts and action must be taken against them in accordance with the law.

Education Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury said they want to reopen educational institutions gradually after considering public safety and the risks.

"We have repeatedly said that public safety is most important when it comes to the question of reopening educational institutions ... We want to open the educational institutions step by step in consultation with all authorities," he said.

Primary schools will be opened after assessing security risks and then the decision will be made regarding secondary schools, he said.

State Minister Palak said the government will inform people about reopening social media platforms, including Facebook and TikTok, by 11:00am today.

"We wrote to TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook seeking explanations, verbally and in writing. TikTok responded. They said they intend to show up and respond verbally and in writing tomorrow [Wednesday]. As far as I know, Facebook and YouTube have not responded."

He said, "We have written to these organisations [TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook] to appear before the BTRC at 9:00am, 10:00am, and 11:00am tomorrow."

Landslides kill 123 in Kerala

FROM PAGE 12

unaccounted for, state authorities said. Local Asianet TV put the death toll higher at 119.

Yesterday's landslides are the worst disaster in the state since 2018 when heavy floods killed almost 400 people.

"There are still people who are trapped under the ground and those who have been swept away," Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told reporters. "The rescue operation will continue with all possible strength and means."

More than 3,000 people had been moved out of the area and accommodated in 45 relief camps in the district, he said, adding that hundreds of personnel, including army soldiers, using drones and sniffer dogs were searching for survivors amid heavy rains, reports Reuters.

Vijayan, a survivor who gave only one name, said he woke up in the middle of the night to feel the ground shake and see electric poles fall.

"A couple of neighbours and I ran to nearby houses where we heard cries for help and took some of the injured to safety," he told Asianet.

"My father, mother, sister and her daughter were in the house and as I went towards them the next landslide hit with a roaring sound," he said. "I clung to a window bar as I saw my mother and sister disappear under the mud, I couldn't do anything."

Jamaat, Shibir

FROM PAGE 12

The petitioners said Jamaat was a religion-based political party, and it did not believe in independence and sovereignty of Bangladesh.

Jamaat later filed an appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC verdict. The SC upheld the HC verdict declaring Jamaat's registration illegal.

The party secured the registration on November 24, 2008, after making many changes to its charter in line with the EC requirement.

Families of the Liberation War martyrs and war crimes trial campaigners have long been demanding Jamaat be tried as a party for committing crimes against humanity in 1971. Even the war crimes investigators found proof of committing crimes against humanity by the party and recommended charges be pressed against it.

Law Minister Anisul on many occasions had said the government would amend the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 to try parties. But the act is yet to be amended.

Controversial Islamist thinker Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi founded Jamaat in undivided India under the British colonial rule in 1941.

The government of independent Bangladesh had banned five communal outfits, including Jamaat, which not only opposed the nation's independence but also actively helped Pakistan occupation forces commit genocide and other crimes against humanity.

The banned parties were given the green light to do politics during the rule of late president Ziaur Rahman after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

The international crimes tribunals in their judgments described the Jamaat's role in 1971.

Several top leaders of Jamaat have been executed over committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

Some judgments also said Jamaat played a leading role in creating Pakistan occupation army's auxiliary forces like Al-Badr, Razakar, and Al Shams, and formation of peace committees that actively took part in atrocities against Bangalees.

Jamaat was banned twice before, in 1959 and 1964 in Pakistan, for its communal role.

In 1971, the party took stance against the nation's independence and massacred pro-liberation activists.

Jamaat represented in parliament after its candidates won seats in 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008 national elections.

In 2001, BNP-Jamaat formed the four-party alliance government.

The AL, Jamaat, and several other political parties waged a joint movement in 1996 to press home the demand for holding general elections under a caretaker administration.

WHAT JAMAAT SAYS

Protesting the decision to ban the party, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman in a statement yesterday said the government's decision is "illegal and unconstitutional".

"Jamaat-e-Islami is an established democratic political party, which has participated in all credible elections in Bangladesh. The party had representatives in parliament," he said.

The Jammat chief said people will not accept the government's decision.

SIX ORGS BANNED SO FAR

Previous governments through executive orders banned five organisations between 2003 and 2009. They are Shahadat-e-Al Hikma (banned in 2003), Jagroto Muslim Janata Bangladesh (2005), Jamaa'tul Mujahedin (2005), Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (2005), and Hijubut Tahrir (2009).

Purbo Banglar Communist Party was also banned for its terrorist and anti-social activities.

Police drives, arrests continue

FROM PAGE 12

Replying to a query, Biplob said law enforcers would be withdrawn from duty and prosecuted to the full extent of the law if there was any proof that they were demanding money from detainees or their families for their release.

Asked about video footage of police shooting unarmed citizens, he said, "Every incident has to be judged individually. For each case of police firing reported, the context under which it happened will be reviewed. We will ensure a fair investigation in each case."

Among those arrested in 29 districts in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday, two are in Thakurgaon, five in Madaripur, six in Rangpur, three in Feni, four in Sylhet, four in Tangail, one in Moulvibazar, three in Habiganj, 20 in Rajshahi, 10 in Bogura, six in Gaibandha, nine in Narsingdi, 23 in Narayanganj, one in Khulna, 17 in Pabna, five in Mymensingh, four in Kishoreganj, two in Netrokona, five in Satkhira, one in Cox's Bazar, seven in Cumilla, two in Natore, 46 in Chattogram, two in Lalmonirhat, five in Nilphamari, eight in Noakhali, five in Laxmipur, three in Brahmanbaria, and six in Barishal.

MORE ON REMAND

A Dhaka court yesterday placed former Jubo Dal general secretary SM Jahangir and BNP's Vice-Chairman Barkatullah Bulu's son Omar Sharif Md Imran, alias Saniat on a five-day remand each in connection with a case filed over the vandalism of the Mirpur-10 Metro Station on July 19.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Farzana Shakila Sumu Chowdhury passed the order after DB inspector Shikder Mohitul Alam produced them before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

The same court rejected the bail petition of BNP's International Affairs Secretary Nasir Uddin Ahmed Ashim and sent him to jail on completion of his three-day remand in the same case.

Besides, the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saifur Rahman placed Bangladesh Jatiyo Party (Manzu) Chairman Andaleeve Rahman Partho on a fresh three-day remand in a case filed over the attack on Setu Bhaban in Dhaka on July 18.

The same court sent Rezaul Hasanat David, chairman and CEO of Viyellatex Group, to jail on completion of his five-day remand in the same case.

On July 25, Partho and David were placed on a five-day remand each in the same case.

The same court yesterday placed Nazmus Shakib and Tauhid Ibn Badar, students of Titumir College, on a four-day remand each in the same case after they were produced before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

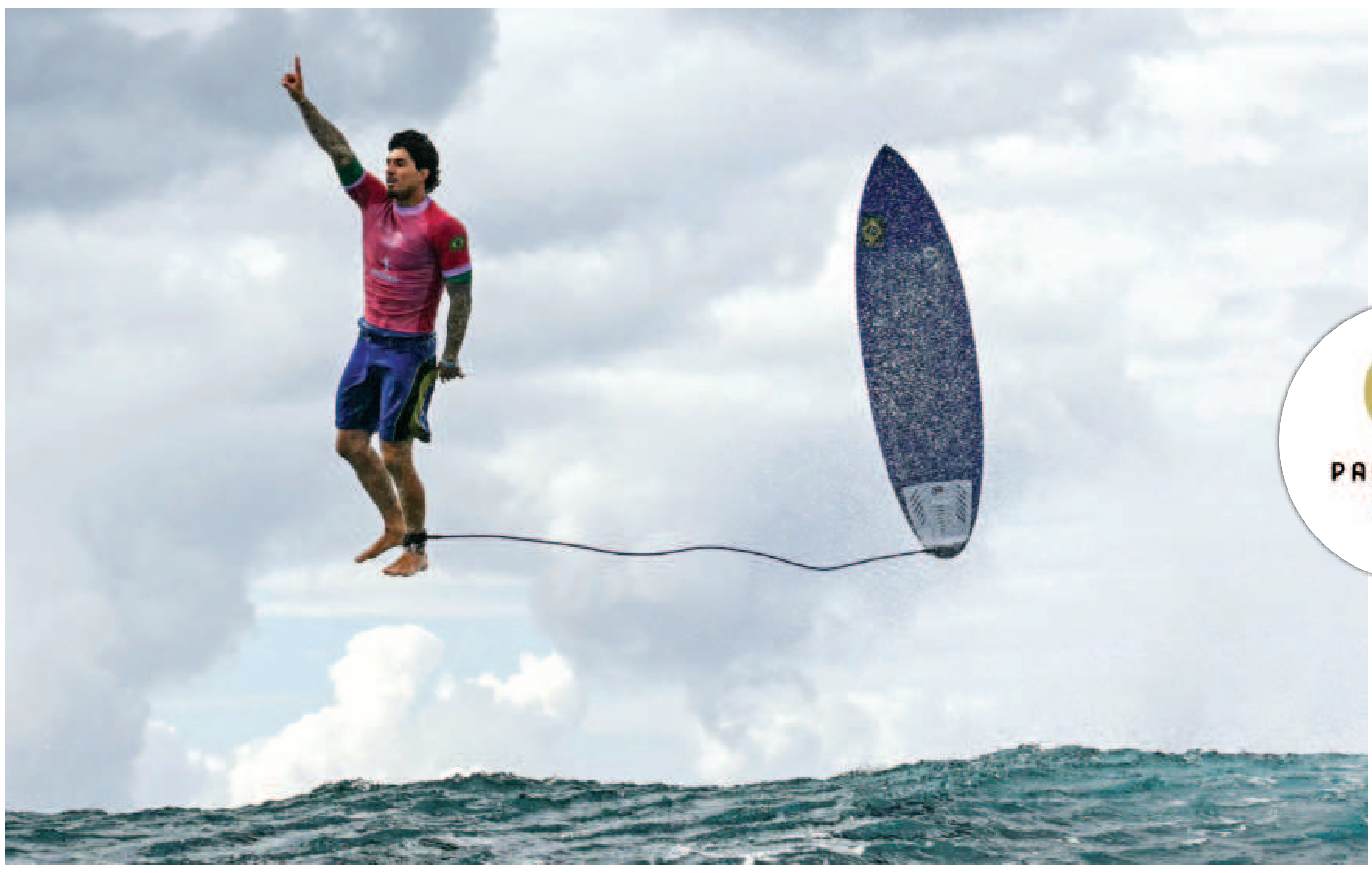
Star
DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 31, 2024, SRABAN 16, 1431 BS

SPORT

What to WATCH

T Sports
GT20
Mississauga vs Surrey
Live from 9:00 pm
Brampton vs Vancouver
Live from 2:00 am
(Thursday)
The Hundred
Trent vs Birmingham
Live 12:30 am
(Thursday)

'A DEFINING IMAGE OF TRIUMPH'



AFP photographer Jerome Brouillet's perfectly-timed shot of Brazilian Olympic surfer Gabriel Medina earned the adulations it deserved, with TIME magazine describing it as "the defining image of triumph of the 2024 Summer Games". Even though Brouillet said he did not have a clear line of sight of the initial action, he still managed to catch Medina soaring ramrod-straight above the waves pointing one finger in the sky, his surfboard pointing skyward at his side. This picture of Medina kicking out of the wave after a ride that earned a record Olympics score in Tahiti became a global sensation for its sheer brilliance and significance, with this being used by scores of publications around the world and shared or liked millions of times online.

Covid looms: Several athletes test positive

REUTERS, *Paris*

Three years after the Tokyo Olympics were held amid strict precautions and with no fans because of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the virus has forced athletes to withdraw from events and has others donning masks once again at the Paris Games.

Several athletes have tested positive, including Australian swimmer Lani Pallister who was a medal hope in the women's 1,500 metres freestyle but had to withdraw from the event. Pallister has been instructed to isolate in her room.

British swimmer Adam Peaty tested positive a day after he narrowly missed out on 100 metres breaststroke gold, sharing silver with American Nic Fink. He, however, hopes to compete in relays later this week.

Meanwhile, multiple Australian women's water polo players tested positive for Covid in the days leading up to the opening ceremony, forcing them to isolate from other team members.

Men's triathlon postponed due to Seine pollution

REUTERS, *Paris*

The men's triathlon at the Paris Olympics did not go ahead as planned on Tuesday as pollution levels in the Seine remained too high, World Triathlon said in a statement, dealing a blow to organisers and leaving athletes facing more uncertainty.

The race was postponed to Wednesday at 10:45 am (2:45 pm Bangladesh time), immediately after the women's event.

Should levels of bacteria remain too high by Wednesday morning both the men's and women's races are likely to be postponed to Friday, the contingency day reserved for the events.

If by Friday the water quality is still not good enough the swim leg will be scrapped and athletes will compete in a duathlon instead.

O'Callaghan, Popovici poised for revered twin gold

AFP, *Paris*

Mollie O'Callaghan and David Popovici backed up from winning 200m freestyle gold with strong 100m heat swims Tuesday.

Australia's O'Callaghan upset defending champion Ariarne Titmus to clinch the 200m crown on Monday, while Romanian teenager Popovici won by a fingertip in a frenetic men's race.

They both returned barely 12 hours later, with Australian two-time world champion O'Callaghan fifth fastest through the heats, while 19-year-old Popovici -- who burst onto the scene by winning the 100m-200m freestyle double at the 2022 world championships -- was third best.

With reigning champion Emma McKeon failing to qualify at the Australian trials, O'Callaghan has a golden opportunity to secure the revered 100-200 double.

The men's 100m is also without a defending champion after Caeleb Dressel's failure to make the grade at the US trials, leaving it wide open.

'Now is what matters' for history-maker Bhaker

AGENCIES

Scripting a story of remarkable resilience, shooter Manu Bhaker became the first Indian female athlete to win multiple medals in a single edition of the Summer Games and the first Indian to achieve this feat in the post-independence era.

After breaking the country's 12-year Olympic shooting medal drought with a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol event on Sunday, Bhaker, alongside Sarabjot Singh, defeated their South Korean counterparts in the 10m Air Pistol mixed team event to bag another bronze.

In the gold medal match, Serbia's Zorana Arunovic and Damir Mikec staged a dramatic comeback to beat Turkey's Sevval Ilayda Tarhan and Yusuf Dikec 16-14.

Bhaker's debut at the Tokyo 2020 Games was marred by disappointment as she failed to reach the final in any of the three events she participated in.

"After Tokyo I was very disappointed... It took me a long time to overcome that. However, I came back stronger. So, what is now is what matters and the past should remain in past," Bhaker concluded.

Prior to Bhaker, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard had won two silver medals in the 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at the 1900 Olympics, before India's independence.

International Olympic Committee member Nita Ambani is hopeful the 22-year-old can take her tally to three medals from the Paris Games after taking part in the individual 25m pistol event too.

"The entire nation is keeping its fingers crossed for her hat-trick now!" said Ambani.

Swimmer Samiul hits new personal best

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi finished 69th among 79 participants in the 100m freestyle event of Paris Olympics yesterday, despite slightly improving on his personal best timing,

Samiul, who trained in Thailand ahead of the Games, took 53.10seconds to finish fifth among eight competitors in his heat at the La Defense Arena in Paris.

His previous best was 53.13 seconds, thereby the 19-year-old improved his timing by 0.03 seconds.

Jack Alexy of USA produced the fastest timing in the heats at 47.57 seconds while 16th and last qualifier, Sunwoo Hwang, timed 48.41 seconds.

Sakib takes five-for in practice game

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib starred for BCB Red as he claimed a five-wicket haul against BCB Green on the second day of three-day practice match at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Tuesday.

Sakib, who claimed three wickets on the opening day, took two more wickets to finish with 5-53 and helped his side dismiss BCB Green for 290 in their first innings after they had resumed on 220-5.

BCB Green's wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali Anik, who was unbeaten on 12 runs overnight, made 50 off 91 balls while Mahedi Hasan scored 19 runs. Both batters were dismissed by Sakib after the match started with nearly three hours' delay due to rain.

BCB Red batters then faced the wrath of Hasan Mahmud (3-24) and Mahedi's (2-25) bowling to be reduced to 92-6 at stumps.

Pritom Kumar and Nayeem Hasan made unbeaten 28 and 17 runs respectively and shared a 44-run stand for the seventh wicket to bring some respite after being 48-6 at one stage.

Earlier on Day One, Anamul Haque Bijoy made 90 runs while Yasir Ali and Mushfiqur Rahim scored fifties for BCB Green after being sent into bat first.

BCB reunites with Stonier

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has reunited with U-19 World Cup-winning strength and conditioning coach Richard Stonier, roping him for two years in the same capacity ahead of the upcoming ICC U-19 World Cup, scheduled to be held in Namibia and Zimbabwe in 2026.

BCB is now back with all of their previous foreign coaching staff for the U-19 unit, with the board already appointing Naveed Nawaz as head coach. Nawaz had guided them during their U-19 World Cup triumph in South Africa in 2020.

"It is confirmed, Richard is returning, he will join on August 3," AEM Kawser, BCB's game development manager confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

Stonier, who previously worked for BCB between 2018-2022, also confirmed his arrival to Bangladesh.

"Hoping to arrive at the weekend. Leaving London as we speak for visa once again," said Stonier.

Kawser also informed that they also hired a performance analyst for the U-19 team, Sandip Kumar Ramal, who also had experience of working in the same capacity.

Both Richard and Sandip will join the U-19 group in Khulna, where they will have a selection camp until August 20.

"Sandip Kumar Ramal, a performance analyst from India, will also join us in the upcoming camp. He worked with us in the last U-19 World Cup as well," Kawasar said.

"There will be four selection games. They will go to Khulna on August 4. The camp will run till August 20 and they will return on the 21st," he concluded.

Lack of options sees Soumya cross over to red-ball zone

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named a host of players for 'A' team's tour of Pakistan to play Pakistan A in two four-day matches and three one-day matches. Two separate squads were announced for the two four-day matches and another squad for the one-day matches on August 23, 25 and 27 respectively.

The A Team's longer-version matches will be followed by the national team's two-Test tour of Pakistan and it could be surmised that the first four-day match of the A team's tour is being prioritised to allow a few national team players to adjust to the conditions in Pakistan before the Test matches.

The Daily Star had previously reported that Mominul Haque and Mushfiqur Rahim, two veterans of the national team's Test squad, are to play the first four-dayer for A team. Along with those two, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shahadat Hossain Dipu, Nayeem Hasan and Hasan Mahmud from the national team have been selected for that match, which will begin in Islamabad on August 10.

The national team squad for Pakistan Tests is yet to be announced but it is believed that at least six players from the first red-ball game will join the national team camp in Pakistan after the match.

Surprisingly, Soumya Sarkar and Tawhid Hridoy, who are considered white-ball players, have been named in the squad for the second four-day match of the A Team, scheduled to be played in Islamabad from August 17.

"They [Soumya and Hridoy] are basically for one-dayers and will play [four-day matches] if required. It's likely that the players for the second four-day game and the one-day players will go together. So the delegation of players will be 17 to 18 [members]. If there are injuries or otherwise, they are in the squad," BCB chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu told The Daily Star yesterday.

The selectors had issues selecting the 'A' team with quite a few players having just finished their BCB HP red-ball assignment in Australia. Thus, the likes of Soumya or Hridoy are not the priority for red-ball games but may play given that they are already named for the 'A' team's three-match one-day squad and will be travelling with the one-day squad together.

"There aren't too many players available and we have few players in Australia too. The likes of Soumya are not in the priority list for the four-day game even if they play there," Lipu informed.

Opener Anamul Haque, all-rounder Mosaddek Hossain, spinner Tanvir Islam and pacer Tanzim Sakib are in all the squads for both red-ball and white-ball assignments while all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, wicket-keeper batter Jaker Ali Anik, opener Mohammad Naim along with Soumya have made the squads for the second four-day and the one-day phase of the tour.

Leg-spinner Rishad Hossain and off-spinner Sheikh Mahedi were named in just the one-day squad. With a couple of players being carried over, following the announcement of the national team for Pakistan tour, the playing elevens of the 'A' team's second four-day match and one-day matches will find more solidity.

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'ANTI-STATE ACTIVITIES'

Jamaat, Shibir to be banned thru executive order

Says law minister a day after 14-party alliance recommended outlawing them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has announced that it will ban Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir by today for their alleged involvement in the recent "anti-state activities".

Law Minister Anisul Huq made the announcement yesterday, a day after the Awami League-led 14-party alliance unanimously recommended banning the two organisations.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat, the minister said, "The party will be banned through an executive order."

The recommendation for outlawing the two platforms came from a meeting of the 14-party alliance at the Gono Bhaban on Monday night. AL President Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The Election Commission on October 29, 2018, scrapped the registration of Jamaat, a longtime ally of the BNP, following a High Court verdict that declared Jamaat's registration illegal.

On August 1, 2013, the HC in a landmark verdict declared illegal the Jamaat's registration with the EC. The EC the same year suspended the registration.

Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, then secretary general of Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, along with 24 others filed a writ petition with the HC on January 25, 2009, seeking its order declaring Jamaat's registration illegal.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Japan team's gymnasts celebrate with the officials after winning the artistic gymnastics men's team final event of the Olympic Games at the Bercy Arena in Paris on Monday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Judicial probe to cover deaths till July 21

13-hour curfew break from today in 4 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial inquiry commission, led by a High Court judge, can probe all killings in violence centring the quota reform protest between July 16 and July 21, said the law minister.

The government is also planning to make the one-member commission a three-member body as the probe has become extensive, said Law Minister Anisul Huq after a meeting at the home ministry.

The government formed the one-member probe body, led by Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, on July 16 to unearth the reasons behind the deaths of six people and to identify those responsible for the deaths and violence.

The committee was given 30 working days.

"The scope for work and terms of reference for

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

One bullet, two lives and endless agony

Wife of fatally shot 19-year-old dies by suicide

NILIMA JAHAN *and* **RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA**

Life had just begun for 19-year-old Jisan Ahmed, a small-time vendor who supplied water to shops in his neighbourhood from his battery-run cycle-van.

Just over a year ago, he married the love of his life Mishti Akter. The newlyweds had known each other for three years before they tied the knot.

However, this blooming love story ended tragically, as both of their lives were brutally cut short.

During a clash between protesters and law enforcers

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Police drives, arrests continue

Another 354 held in Dhaka, elsewhere

STAR REPORT

At least 354 more people were arrested in the capital and elsewhere in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday as the nationwide crackdown on alleged saboteurs as well as protesters and opposition parties continues.

Of them, 215 were arrested by police in 29 districts.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) produced the 139 people arrested in the capital before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court.

The court sent most of them to jail and placed some on remand.

With the latest arrest, at least 10,488 people, including students and members of the BNP and Jamaat-Shibir, have been arrested in 672 cases filed in the capital and 51 districts over the last 13 days since July 18.

At least 10,488 people have been arrested in 672 cases filed in the capital and 51 districts over the last 13 days since July 18.

Several thousand named and several hundred thousand unnamed individuals have been accused in these cases.

The cases were filed, mostly by police, with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson, said DMP sources.

In the cases, police brought charges of gathering illegally, rioting, assaulting law enforcers, and damaging properties.

The country witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale after the peaceful demonstrations for quota reform turned deadly on July 15 when Chhatra League attacked the protesting students on different university campuses.

Biplob Kumar Sarker, joint commissioner (operations) of the DMP, stated at a briefing yesterday that block raids are to continue.

He also claimed that so far, 2,850 people have been arrested and some 264 cases have been filed with 50 police stations under the DMP in connection with the recent acts of sabotage and killings in the capital.

However, DMP sources had earlier said some 2,822 people were arrested in 243 cases till Monday.

Biplob also said that these cases would be investigated fairly and impartially.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Lift curfew, restore access to social media

Urges Amnesty in letter to PM, condemns crackdown on protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International in an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina demanded immediate lifting of curfew and restoration of full access to social media platforms.

It also called upon the PM to ensure that shoot on sight curfew orders and internet shutdowns will not be used in the future to crack down on protesters or to repress any other fundamental rights.

In the open letter, Amnesty Secretary General Agnès Callamard expressed grave concern over the recent violent crackdowns on the quota reform protests and urged urgent and concrete action to end the violence and ensure justice and accountability for the death of "over 200 people" during the protests.

The rights organisation also demanded immediate and unconditional release of all the detainees or arrestees held solely for exercising their right to protest peacefully.

On July 28, the home minister stated that the death toll from the violence is 147, while unofficial estimates put the figure at 211, making it one of the deadliest crackdowns on protests in Bangladesh's history, it added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

42 bodies found in Khan Younis

Say Palestinian health officials as Israeli forces quit southern Gaza city ending incursion

AGENCIES

Thousands of Palestinians returned to their homes in the ruins of Gaza's main southern city Khan Younis yesterday, after Israeli forces ended a week-long incursion there which they said aimed to prevent Hamas from regrouping.

Palestinian health officials said rescue workers had so far recovered 42 bodies of Palestinians killed in the Israeli incursion into eastern Khan Younis. Gaza's Civil Emergency Service said more searches were underway with 200 people still reported missing.

- More searches underway as 200 people still missing
- Israel army hits Hezbollah targets in Lebanon
- Death toll in Gaza now 39,400

The Israeli military said its forces killed more than 150 Palestinian gunmen during the week-long raid, destroyed Hamas tunnels and seized weapons.

After the Israeli forces left, people streamed back to their homes on foot and with donkey carts carrying their belongings. Many found their houses damaged or destroyed.

Witnesses said army forces had bulldozed the main cemetery in Bani Suhaila, the town on the eastern outskirts of Khan Younis that was the main focus of the raid, as well as houses and roads nearby.

"I am coming back and I have faith in God. I don't know whether we will live or die, but it is all for the sake of the homeland," said Etimad Al-Masri, who had walked for at least five kilometers back to her home.

"Despite the suffering, we are patient and God's willing we will have victory."

Many residents said they had been displaced from their homes several times, reports Reuters.

Landslides kill 123 in Kerala

Dozens missing

AGENCIES

Landslides swept through tea estates and villages in southern India's Kerala yesterday, killing at least 123 people while they slept as unexpected heavy rain collapsed hillsides and triggered torrents of mud, water and tumbling boulders.

The hillsides gave way after midnight following torrential rainfall on Monday in the Wayanad district of Kerala, a state known as one of India's most popular tourist destinations. Most of the victims were tea estate workers and their families who lived in small houses or makeshift shelters.

Television images showed rescue workers scrambling through uprooted trees and flattened tin structures as boulders lay strewn across the hillsides and muddy water gushed through. Rescuers were being pulled across a stream, carrying stretchers and other equipment to rescue people.

At least 123 people were killed in the landslides, 128 injured and dozens

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Relief personnel carry the body of a victim during a search and rescue operation at a site following landslides in the Wayanad district of Kerala, India yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Israel targets Hezbollah commander

AFP, *Beirut*

Israel struck Hezbollah's stronghold in southern Beirut on Tuesday in retaliation for rocket fire from Lebanon that killed 12 children over the weekend, saying it had targeted the commander responsible for the attack.

"The IDF [army] carried out a targeted strike in Beirut on the commander responsible for the murder of the children in Majdal Shams and the killing of numerous additional Israeli civilians," the military said in a statement, referring to the Druze Arab town in the annexed Golan Heights where the children were killed on Saturday.

Lebanon's Prime Minister condemned the Israeli strike on Hezbollah's stronghold in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Najib Mikati "condemned the blatant Israeli aggression on the southern suburbs of Beirut", the premier's office said in a statement, describing it as a "criminal act" in a "series of aggressive operations killing civilians in clear and explicit violation of international law."

A source close to the Iran-backed militant group confirmed that "a leading commander" was the target of the strike, which hit near the group's decision making body, the Shura Council.

The source added that two people were killed in the strike, but was unable to confirm if the commander was among them.

Minutes after the explosions rocked Beirut, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant posted on social media site X that "Hezbollah crossed the red line".